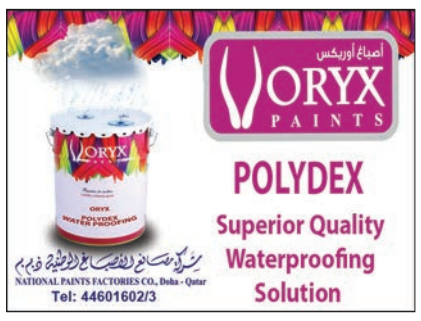
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BUSINESS | Page 1

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Qatar inks pact as Gulf railway dream gathers steam



Qatar and its Gulf neighbours have taken a major step towards turning the long-envisioned GCC railway network into reality, signing a landmark agreement in Manama yesterday to establish a unified rail corridor linking all six member states and opening new avenues for trade, tourism and economic integration.

The agreement, signed on the sidelines of the 30th meeting of GCC transport ministers in the Bahraini capital, lays the groundwork for a seamless regional railway system designed to transform the movement of passengers and goods across the Gulf.

The signing ceremony was attended by GCC transport ministers and GCC Secretary-General Jasem Mohamed Albudaiwi.

The General Agreement to Connect GCC Countries through the Railway Project establishes a comprehensive framework for co-ordination between member states and the GCC Railways Authority, aimed at overcoming implementation challenges and ensuring the technical and operational integration of the regional network.

It also sets out the responsibilities of individual countries, establishes timelines for construction and operation, and harmonises technical standards, safety requirements and operational procedures to ensure seamless connectivity between national railway systems.

HE the Minister of Transport Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdullah bin Mohammed al-Thani described the agreement as a strategic milestone in advancing Gulf integration and building a modern, interconnected regional transport ecosystem.

He said the initiative reflected the shared commitment of GCC countries to strengthening their historic and fraternal ties while deepening co-operation in vital sectors to fulfil the aspirations of their peoples and advance sustainable development.

The minister stressed that the agreement would provide a crucial framework for co-ordinating efforts to deliver the ambitious railway project and integrate national transport networks into a cohesive regional system.

By facilitating the movement of people and goods, the railway network would improve logistics efficiency, unlock new opportunities for trade and tourism, and strengthen economic ties among member states, he said.

The project would also enhance the Gulf's global competitiveness and reinforce its emergence as a major regional hub for transport and logistics.

HE Sheikh Mohammed reaffirmed Qatar's commitment to supporting joint GCC initiatives that promote regional integration, accelerate economic and social development, and deliver advanced infrastructure capable of meeting future needs and ambitions.

The GCC railway project has been a longstanding pillar of the bloc's vision for greater economic connectivity. The GCC Supreme Council approved the establishment of a railway network linking the six member states in 2009.

In December 2021, the council took another significant step by establishing the GCC Railways Authority to oversee co-ordination of the project's implementation and ensure compatibility with the national railway networks of member states. (**QNA**)

Sheikha Al Mayassa opens doors to AISP, honours Doha Design Prize winners



HE Sheikha Al Mayassa bint Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani, Chairperson of the Board of Trustees of Qatar Museums, opened the inaugural Artists Intensive Study Programme (AISP) exhibition at Fire Station, showcasing works by 22 artists from Qatar and 14 countries.

The show is the culmination of a nine-month programme of research, experimentation, critical dialogue and mentorship, curated by Wael Shawky, Artistic Director of Fire Station.

She also honoured the four winners of the Doha Design Prize 2026 at the Museum of Islamic Art yesterday.

It is the first exhibition to open under the institution's new name, Fire Station — Centre for Contemporary Art Practices, which will place greater emphasis on artistic research, critical dialogue and creative production. ● Detailed stories on Page 12

MWC26 opens new chapter in Qatar's digital ambitions

By A Staff Reporter
Doha



Qatar positioned itself at the forefront of the next technological revolution yesterday as MWC26 Doha opened with a powerful call for smarter, more resilient global connectivity, greater international co-operation and an accelerated embrace of artificial intelligence that promises to transform economies, industries and everyday life.

The second edition of the landmark technology gathering, inaugurated at the Doha Exhibition and Convention Centre (DECC) in the presence of HE the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Defence Affairs Sheikh Saud bin Abdulrahman bin Hassan al-Thani, brought together global technology leaders, policymakers and innovators at a defining moment for the digital economy.

Held under the theme "The IQ Era", the three-day conference, organised by the GSMA in partnership with the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology (MCIT), is placing Doha at the heart of conversations about the future of artificial intelligence, next-generation telecommunications and the infrastructure needed to power an increasingly connected world.

The opening also coincided with the release of compelling new industry forecasts showing that mobile technologies, already contributing a staggering $380bn to the Middle East and North African economy, are on course to generate $470bn annually by 2030.

Addressing the opening ceremony, HE the Minister of Communications and Information Technology Mohammed bin Ali al-Mannai outlined the profound technological shifts confronting the industry, warning that conventional telecommunications infrastructure must evolve rapidly to meet the demands of an AI-driven future.

As artificial intelligence moves beyond generating information towards independently executing complex tasks through intelligent agents, he said, the need for resilient networks, sophisticated computing capabilities and diversified international connectivity has become increasingly urgent. To Page 8

● Related stories on Pages 3, 6, 7

HIA launches 'Made in Qatar' screening room

New cinema space offers 24hr access to Qatari films

By Sara Eljack
Staff Reporter


The screening room will operate 24 hours a day until December 27.

Hamad International Airport (HIA), in partnership with the Doha Film Institute (DFI), launched a dedicated 'Made in Qatar' screening room yesterday, giving international passengers an opportunity to discover Qatari cinema while waiting for their flights.

Located at Concourse D near Lancôme Café, the screening room will operate 24 hours a day until December 27. Passengers can walk in at any time and watch locally produced films without following a fixed screening schedule.

The initiative aims to introduce travellers to Qatar's culture and creative talent through independent films. It also provides Qatari filmmakers an opportunity to reach international audiences who might not otherwise see their work.

Speaking at the launch ceremony, Ali Darwish, vice-president of Terminal Operations at HIA, said the partnership reflects the airport's commitment to promoting Qatari culture and offering passengers experiences beyond travel services.

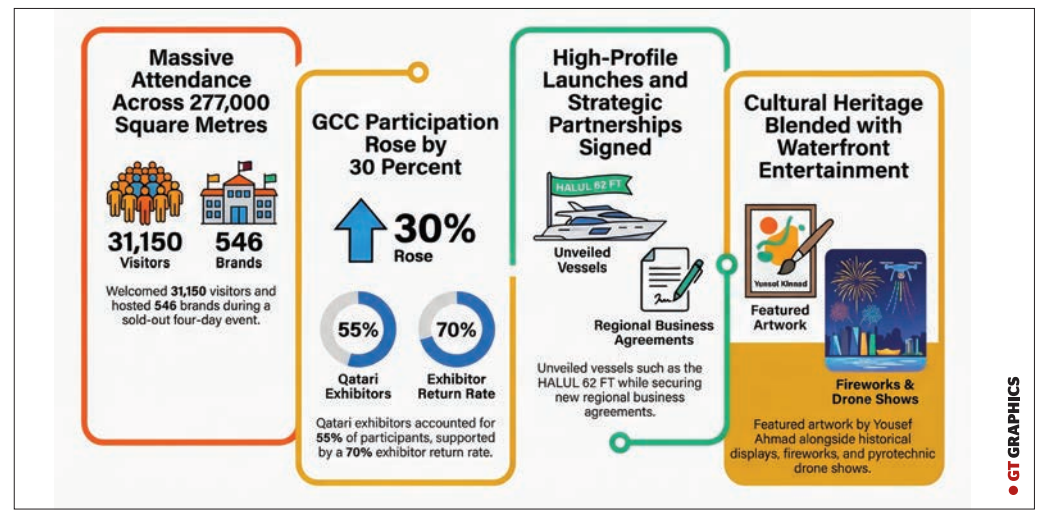
"For the millions of passengers passing through our airport, this space transforms time-waiting from a flight into a meaningful cultural exchange," Darwish said.

He highlighted the airport's role as a gateway to Qatar, particularly for transit passengers who may not have the opportunity to explore the country.

"For many of our passengers, Hamad International Airport is our first introduction to Qatar. And for those who are only transiting, it might be the only stop," he said.

Darwish added that the initiative aims to encourage travellers to learn more about Qatar through stories told by local filmmakers. To Page 8

Qatar Boat Show makes waves with record GCC participation



By Joey Aguilar
Staff Reporter

Qatar Boat Show 2026 has strengthened its standing as a major regional maritime showcase, drawing 31,150 visitors and hundreds of international and local brands to Old Doha Port, while delivering a surge in Gulf participation, high-profile yacht launches and business agreements that promise to open new markets for Qatari boat builders.

The third edition, held from November 4-7, brought together 546 brands across 277,000sq m, with tickets selling out during the four-day extravaganza that combined cutting-edge marine technology with Qatar's seafaring heritage, art and waterfront entertainment. To Page 8

QATAR

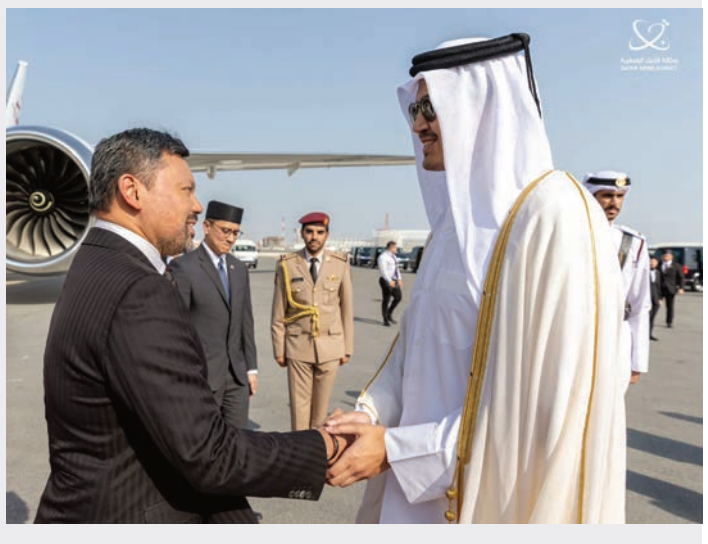
Minister of Transport meets Saudi counterpart



HE the Minister of Transport Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdullah bin Mohammed al-Thani met yesterday with Minister of Transport and Logistic Services of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia Saleh bin Nasser al-Jasser. The meeting took place on the sidelines of the 30th meeting of the Ministerial Committee for Transport and Communications of the Gulf Co-operation Council (GCC) member states, held in the Kingdom of Bahrain. During the meeting, the two sides reviewed bilateral co-operation relations between the two brotherly countries in the fields of transport and communications, and discussed ways to strengthen and expand them into broader horizons. (**QNA**)

Crown prince of Brunei arrives in Doha

Crown Prince and Senior Minister at the Prime Minister's Office of Brunei Darussalam, Prince Al-Muhtadee Billah, arrived in Doha yesterday, on an official visit to the country. The Crown Prince and his accompanying delegation were welcomed upon arrival at Hamad International Airport by HE the Chairman of the Board of Directors of Qatar Fund for Development, Sheikh Thani bin Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani, ambassador of Brunei Darussalam to the State of Qatar, Mohamed Bahrin Abu Bakar, and ambassador of the State of Qatar to Brunei Darussalam, Abdullah Hamad Ali al-Adham al-Marri. (**QNA**)



Qatar, Brunei mark 35 years of diplomatic ties

QNA
Doha



Ambassador of Brunei Darussalam to Qatar, Mohamed Bahrin Abu Bakar

Ambassador of Brunei Darussalam to the State of Qatar, Mohamed Bahrin Abu Bakar, affirmed that the visit of Crown Prince and Senior Minister at the Prime Minister's Office of Brunei Darussalam, Prince Al-Muhtadee Billah, to the State of Qatar, holds great significance, especially as it coincides with the 35th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries.

In exclusive remarks to Qatar News Agency (QNA), the ambassador said that the visit reflects the depth of the longstanding friendship, mutual trust, and close fraternal ties between the two countries. The visit also reaffirms their shared commitment to continuing to strengthen and develop bilateral relations across various fields, he added, noting that high-level visits serve as significant milestones in maintaining momentum of communication and engagement between the two sides, providing valuable opportunities to deepen mutual understanding, enhance co-operation, and explore new areas of partnership in pursuit of the shared interests of both countries and their peoples.

Brunei's ambassador pointed out that relations between the two countries are founded on shared values of mutual respect and friendship, emphasising that the bonds between their peoples constitute a fundamental dimension of this relationship. He highlighted the contributions of citizens residing and working in Qatar to the country's development across various sectors, particularly energy and aviation, noting that they serve as an important bridge of communication between the two countries.

He also pointed out both sides' commitment to strengthening coordination and co-operation within multilateral organisations and forums, including the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) Sectoral Dialogue Partnership, Asean-Gulf Co-operation Council (GCC) relations, the Organisation of Islamic Co-operation (OIC), and the United Nations, particularly on issues of mutual interest. Such efforts contribute to promoting peace, stability, and prosperity at both the regional and international levels, he added.

Regarding economic and trade co-operation, the ambassador noted that there is considerable scope for expanding trade and investment between Brunei Darussalam and the State of Qatar, stressing the importance of encouraging greater engagement between private sector institutions and companies in both countries, while creating more opportunities for businesses to explore potential partnerships and joint ventures.

The Halal industry, food security, tourism and hospitality, and education are among the most promising sectors for furthering economic co-operation, he noted, emphasising that fostering greater engagement between companies and investors from both sides would open up new avenues for co-operation and help establish stronger and more sustainable economic ties.

He noted that Brunei Darussalam could serve as a strategic gateway for Qatari companies seeking to access Southeast Asian markets, while the State of Qatar represents an important gateway for Bruneian companies looking to enter the markets of the GCC countries, indicating that this would enhance opportunities for economic and investment integration between the two sides.

He affirmed that strengthening connectivity between the two countries, particularly in air transport, is an important factor in supporting business travel, tourism, trade, and investment, pointing out that improving air connectivity goes beyond reducing geographical distances, as it also helps create a more conducive environment for expanding trade and fostering closer ties between the business communities of both countries.

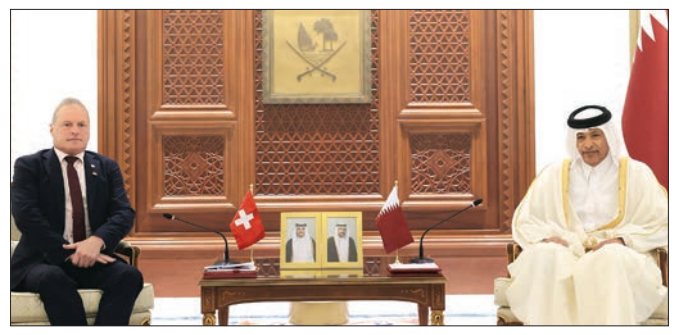
On promising sectors for future co-operation, he stressed that the two countries are exploring new areas to expand their economic co-operation, noting that efforts to strengthen bilateral relations should not be confined to government co-operation or partnerships between private sector institutions and companies, but should also extend to greater exchanges and direct interaction between the two peoples, given their role in fostering mutual understanding, strengthening bonds of friendship, and building closer ties between the two societies.

Tourism represents one of the key areas in which the two countries could explore opportunities for enhanced co-operation, he explained, highlighting Brunei Darussalam's readiness to launch the Visit Brunei Year 2027 (VBY 2027) initiative, which is a comprehensive national initiative aimed at revitalising the tourism sector, supporting economic diversification efforts, and showcasing the country's unique identity internationally.

The year-long initiative would showcase Brunei Darussalam's rich culture and heritage, pristine natural environment, renowned hospitality, and diverse tourism experiences, he noted, expressing his hope that it would attract more visitors from the State of Qatar to explore the country's tourism offerings, while also welcoming more Qatari tourists to visit Qatar and discover Brunei Darussalam's cultural heritage, modern attractions, and renowned hospitality.

He stressed the importance of air connectivity in achieving these objectives, highlighting Qatar's position as a major international aviation hub through Hamad International Airport, which connects travellers to destinations around the globe. He also noted that this offers significant opportunities to leverage the air connectivity network to boost tourism between the two countries.

He emphasised that increasing flight services, alongside strengthening co-operation among tourism authorities, travel agencies, and private sector institutions, would help promote Brunei Darussalam as an attractive tourist destination for travellers from Qatar and around the globe, while opening up new opportunities for tourism co-operation and cultural exchange between the two countries.



Shura Council speaker, Swiss National Council president discuss bilateral ties

HE the Speaker of the Shura Council, Hassan bin Abdullah al-Ghanem, met yesterday with President of the National Council of Switzerland, Pierre-André Page, who is visiting Qatar, as part of efforts to strengthen parliamentary co-operation between the two friendly countries.

The meeting reviewed the distinguished bilateral relations between Qatar and Switzerland and ways to strengthen and develop them, particularly in the parliamentary field. The two sides also exchanged views on several issues of mutual interest.

They discussed regional and international developments amid the challenges and tensions facing the region. Both sides stressed the importance of intensifying diplomatic efforts to de-escalate tensions, strengthening regional security and stability, and ensuring the security of waterways and freedom of international navigation.

On the situation in the Palestinian territories, the two sides emphasised the need to protect civilians, respect international law and international humanitarian law, and ensure the delivery of humanitarian aid. They also underscored the importance of strengthening multilateral action and co-ordinating international efforts to alleviate humanitarian suffering and support efforts to achieve peace and stability.

HE the Speaker of the Shura Council reaffirmed Qatar's commitment to supporting the peaceful resolution of conflicts and prioritising dialogue and diplomacy. He highlighted Qatar's role in mediation and bringing opposing views closer together, in keeping with its consistent policy of supporting international peace and security.

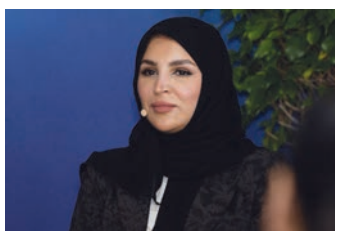
For his part, the President of the National Council of Switzerland praised Qatar's mediation and conflict-resolution efforts and its contributions to supporting security and stability at the regional and international levels. He stressed the importance of continuing diplomatic efforts to contain tensions.

He also highlighted the strength of relations between the two friendly countries and expressed his desire to expand parliamentary co-operation and exchanges of visits and expertise between the two councils in a way that serves their mutual interests.

Following the meeting, the Swiss National Council President and his accompanying parliamentary delegation toured the Shura Council building, visiting Tamim bin Hamad Hall. During the tour, they were briefed on the modern technologies utilised in managing sessions and received an overview of the operational mechanisms and procedures governing the council's work. (**QNA**)

MCIT official says honing future skills is quite important to foster digital inclusion

QNA
Doha



Director of the Digital Society and Digital Competencies Department at the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology (MCIT), Duha al-Buhendi, underscored the importance of continuously developing the education system, keeping pace with global trends and figuring out future skills to help empower all segments of society to adopt cutting-edge technology, foremost among them artificial intelligence, while ensuring its safe and responsible use.

The official was speaking during her participation in a panel discussion on digital inclusion and human capital, held as part of MWC26 Doha, which is taking place under the theme of the IQ Era from Nov 8 to 10 at the Doha Exhibition and Convention Centre (DECC).

The session, moderated by Executive Producer at Euronews, Leila Hamira, featured a contingent of experts and specialists, including Inclusive Growth and Digital Transformation Team Leader at the UN Development Programme (UNDP) in Egypt, Dr Abeer Shakweer; Chief People Officer at VEON, Jameel Asghar; and Founder and CEO of Qatar-based climate-tech startup Vora, Anas Rustom.

Al-Buhendi said that modern technology and technological innovations are bringing about fundamental changes in the nature of jobs and working methods, requiring continued study of future skills and the risks accompanying these transformations.

She also spotlighted a raft of national initiatives in the State of Qatar, including the Future Skills Observatory, which works to anticipate future jobs and identify expected gaps in the labour market, thereby helping develop more accurate projections of the skills required.

Al-Buhendi highlighted that MCIT's programmes aim to bolster digital inclusion and address the needs of various segments of society by embedding technological concepts among children at an early age, providing training and skills development programmes for the workforce to gird it to deal with current and future technologies, and extending support to older people to build their confidence in technology and empower them to use it to make their daily lives easier.

The Qatar Government Readiness Academy has successfully trained more than 40,000 government functionaries in emerging technologies to promote innovation in the government sector, while expanding its services to the private sector and startups, recalled al-Buhendi.

She also drew attention to SafeSpace, a digital safety platform dedicated to raising awareness of cyber risks and empowering students, parents and teachers to use technology safely.

Regarding efforts to empower groups most in need of digital inclusion, al-Buhendi said the Ministry had implemented the digital connection programme in collaboration with several entities. Over the course of a decade, she added, the programme helped train nearly one mn blue-collar workers, while also recycling digital devices to help facilitate their access to essential government services and strengthen their communication with their families.

Al-Buhendi concluded by affirming that the State of Qatar bets on the Digital Inclusion Index to identify digital gaps and support workers with lower skill levels, in partnership with the private sector and startups.

She stressed that the objective is not limited to helping individuals use technology; it extends to empowering them to participate actively in the digital transformation process and ensuring that no one is left behind.



Qatar attends 30th meeting of GCC Committee of Ministers of Transport, Communications

QNA
Manama

The State of Qatar took part in the 30th meeting of the Committee of Ministers of Transport and Communications of the GCC states, hosted by the Kingdom of Bahrain, where Their Excellencies the Ministers discussed a raft of issues and initiatives aimed at bolstering co-operation and deepening integration among member states in the transport sector.

Foremost among the agenda items were a study on enhancing logistics integration, the General Agreement on Linking GCC States to the GCC Railway Project, and the findings of a study on the project's operational plan.

The meeting also examined the Unified Law of International Land Transport between GCC states, its executive regulations and implementation mechanisms, as well as the conclusion of an agreement to facilitate the movement of recreational marine craft among member states. Ministers further discussed the possibility of GCC states jointly acceding to the Agreement concerning the International Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Road (ADR).

They likewise delved into the challenges and underlying factors contributing to rising freight costs in the road and maritime transport sectors, weighing proposed solutions to address them. Discussions also covered the latest developments in preparing a GCC land transport strategy and drawing up a risk register for the marine environment.

The meeting further examined the Green Corridors Initiative for ports among GCC states, the rules governing the entry of conventional commercial vessels into member states' waters and ports, and unified requirements and regulations for issuing licenses to operators of marine craft not covered by international maritime conventions.

In addition, ministers took stock of a range of administrative, financial and regulatory matters related to the Authority's operations, along with the relevant recommendations and decisions deemed appropriate.

Zakat Affairs Department adopts National Authentication Portal

Zakat Affairs Department at the Ministry of Endowments (Awqaf) and Islamic Affairs announced the adoption of the National Authentication Portal as a mandatory requirement for submitting and tracking Zakat assistance applications electronically, aiming to enhance beneficiary data reliability, streamline service access, and accelerate application processing within a secure digital framework.

Head of Zakat Disbursement Section Abdullah Saeed al-Marri explained that this step forms part of the Department's ongoing efforts to improve services, elevate the beneficiary experience, and leverage modern digital solutions for identity verification and data protection.

Al-Marri noted that using the portal is now compulsory for completing application procedures and tracking requests via the Department's official website www.zakat.gov.qa, ensuring data accuracy, minimising errors, and saving time and effort for both beneficiaries and staff.

He emphasised that the expansion of electronic procedures aligns with the Ministry of Endowments (Awqaf) and Islamic Affairs' strategy (2025-2030) and Qatar National Vision 2030, both of which focus on fostering sustainable social solidarity, achieving complete digital transformation, and developing an advanced technological environment that enhances institutional efficiency and ensures Zakat funds reach eligible recipients in accordance with Shariah-compliant guidelines. (**QNA**)

Vodafone Qatar showcases 10 tech demos at MWC26

By Shaima Sheriff
Staff Reporter



Vodafone Qatar is showcasing 10 technology demonstrations at Mobile World Congress (MWC) Doha 2026, highlighting solutions for uninterrupted connectivity, business development and smarter decision-making across different sectors.

Returning for the second consecutive year as a strategic partner of the event, the telecommunications company is presenting its innovations across four sections at its exhibition stand, including a vehicle connectivity solution developed in collaboration with Kuwaiti security forces.

Speaking to *Gulf Times*, Abdulhadi al-Sahli, head of Media Relations and Corporate Social Responsibility at Vodafone Qatar, said the demonstrations were designed to highlight how technology could address practical challenges and create opportunities for businesses and communities.

Among the featured demonstrations is a specially equipped vehicle designed to maintain connectivity even when the network connection is disrupted. Developed in collaboration with Kuwaiti security forces, the solution highlights the importance of reliable communications when uninterrupted connectivity is critical.

The demonstration highlights how resilient communications technology can support security operations and help maintain contact in challenging circumstances, where conventional network availability may be limited.

Vodafone Qatar is also presenting Pineapps, a solution aimed at supporting aspiring entrepreneurs and those looking to establish new businesses.

The platform helps users identify suitable business opportunities by providing insights into business types, potential locations and relevant demographic groups. By offering these insights, it aims to help entrepreneurs make more informed decisions before entering the market.

"We have Pineapps, which is a demo that we are presenting for people that want to do new businesses. It can show them their business type and the best location and the best demographic that they can use," al-Sahli explained.

He said the initiative was intended to create opportunities for enterprises to improve their operations and make better use of available business insights.

"So we're hoping that we give good opportunities for enterprises to be better in their businesses as well," he added.

The demonstrations form part of Vodafone Qatar's wider participation in MWC26 Doha, which brings together telecommunications companies, technology providers, policymakers and industry leaders to discuss the future of connectivity and digital innovation.

Qatar, Bahrain sign MoU in land transportation, logistics services

QNA
Manama



The State of Qatar, through its Ministry of Transport, and the Kingdom of Bahrain, through its Ministry of Transportation and Telecommunications, signed yesterday a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to substantially strengthen bilateral co-operation in land transportation and supporting logistics services.

The MoU, signed on the margins of the 30th Meeting of Their Excellencies the GCC Ministers of Transport, hosted by the Kingdom of Bahrain, intends to expand their strategic partnership and advance regional connectivity.

The MoU was signed on behalf of the State of Qatar by HE the Minister of Transport Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdullah bin Mohammed al-Thani, and on behalf of Bahrain by Minister of Transportation and Telecommunications, Shaikh Dr Abdullah bin Ahmed al-Khalifah.

HE the Minister of Transport said the MoU comes as part of the two nations' shared commitment to substantially strengthening bilateral co-operation and expanding the scope of their partnership in the transportation sector, to the advantage of their mutual interests and to bolster regional connectivity.

The MoU provides an important framework for exchanging knowledge and expertise in transportation infrastructure planning and development, as well as strengthening co-operation on rail and road connectivity projects and supporting logistics services, HE Sheikh Mohammed highlighted, affirming that this will enable both sides to leverage their respective capabilities and expertise to advance connectivity projects and substantially enhance logistics efficiency.

HE Sheikh Mohammed stressed that the State of Qatar attaches great importance to expanding avenues for joint co-operation with other GCC member states in the transportation sector and adopting innovative solutions and advanced technologies.

These efforts will support the GCC nations' drive to build a more efficient and enduring regional transportation system that facilitates the movement of people and goods, supports trade flows and advances comprehensive development, he assured.

For his part, the Minister of Transportation and Telecommunications of Bahrain stressed that the signing of the MoU reflects the brotherly relations between the Kingdom of Bahrain and the State of Qatar, as well as their shared commitment to broadening co-operation across vital sectors in pursuit of strengthening the mutual interests of the two nations and their brotherly peoples and advancing economic integration and regional connectivity.

He explained that the MoU unlocks broad avenues for sharing expertise and co-operating on the planning and development of public transportation systems, metro networks, railways and logistics services.

This includes exploring options for rail and road connectivity between the two countries and linking them to the GCC Railway Project, as well as leveraging advanced technologies, artificial intelligence and sustainable and smart transportation solutions, Shaikh Dr Abdullah outlined.

He said co-operation in these areas would help develop a more efficient and sustainable transportation system, improve service quality and strengthen connectivity across GCC transportation networks, keeping up with the region's economic development requirements.

Overall, the MoU is laser-focused on several areas of mutual interest, including exploring options for bilateral rail and road connectivity between the two nations, examining ways to link these networks to the GCC Railway Project of the GCC, and exchanging expertise and lessons learned in transportation and warehousing systems and strategies aimed at optimising transportation efficiency and supporting logistics services.

Areas of co-operation also include developing road safety systems and regulations and upgrading relevant technical specifications and standards, alongside research and development into future trends of mutual benefit that support an integrated and environmentally friendly land transportation system.

In addition, the MoU provides for the exchange of technical specifications, measurements and standards, as well as policies, legislation and regulatory frameworks governing modern transportation methods. It also covers the interchange of relevant technical information and data pertinent to the transportation sector and supporting logistics services.

Under the MoU, the scope of co-operation includes jointly conducting trials and tests related to the outcomes of projects implemented under the agreement, exchanging visits by experts and specialised official delegations, and undertaking joint research in the transportation sector and supporting logistics services.

These efforts will strengthen the exchange of expertise and practical and technical knowledge while supporting the development of the sector in both countries.

AlRayan Bank introduces new generation payment cards designed for inclusion, sustainability

AlRayan Bank has announced the launch of a new generation of payment cards designed to bring inclusion and sustainability into the everyday banking experience.

The new cards feature a blind notch to help visually impaired customers identify the card's orientation by touch, while the card body incorporates 80% recycled PVC to reduce reliance on standard PVC.

Omar al-Emadi, acting GCEO at AlRayan Bank, said: "This launch demonstrates how responsible banking can be translated into product innovation. By combining inclusive design with more sustainable materials, we are creating solutions that respond to our customers' needs while supporting Qatar's broader sustainability and inclusion ambitions."

The blind notch provides a tactile reference point that helps visually impaired cardholders identify the card's orientation and use their cards more independently. Integrated directly into the card design, the feature requires no separate tool or accessory.

For AlRayan Bank, financial inclusion extends beyond access to banking to how customers experience and interact with its products.

Using 80% recycled PVC in the card body supports more circular and resource-efficient material use, while helping to reduce the environmental footprint associated with the Bank's payment cards.

The initiative forms part of AlRayan Bank's broader 'responsible banking' approach, bringing together financial inclusion, sustainability and innovation. It supports the bank's ESG Strategy 2026–2030 and its ambition to become a leading Islamic Sustainable Finance and Transition Partner.

By embedding these priorities into everyday banking products and services, AlRayan Bank is advancing its ESG agenda and contributing to the ambitions of Qatar National Vision 2030 for a more inclusive and sustainable future.

Assets Group reveals over QR250m investment in 18 luxury yachts for Maldives hospitality portfolio

The acquisition highlights the Group's investment in marine assets supporting two luxury resorts, extending destination development beyond traditional hospitality infrastructure.





Assets Group, a subsidiary of Power International Holding, has disclosed that its acquisition of 18 luxury yachts from Italian manufacturer Azimut Yachts represents an investment exceeding QR250m, marking a significant commitment to the marine infrastructure supporting its hospitality portfolio in the Maldives.

The acquisition, previously announced without a disclosed transaction value, will support two luxury hospitality destinations: Waldorf Astoria Maldives Ithaafushi and Rosewood Ranfaru Maldives. The fleet is intended to complement the resorts' hospitality offerings, supporting the integration of marine experiences into their wider guest services.

For Assets Group, the investment reflects an approach to destination development that extends beyond traditional hotel and resort facilities. By incorporating dedicated marine assets into its hospitality portfolio, the Group is investing in additional elements of the guest journey that contribute to the overall destination experience.

Commenting on the investment, Mr. Khaled Zi Alnon, Group Chief Executive Officer of Assets Group, said: "Investing in world-class hospitality requires looking beyond the physical resort to the infrastructure and services that shape the overall guest experience. This acquisition reflects our commitment to developing integrated destinations, where every investment contributes to the quality, accessibility and long-term value of our hospitality assets."

The 18-yacht acquisition forms part of an existing commercial relationship with Azimut Yachts, supported by dedicated local service capabilities in Maldives.

The investment highlights Assets Group's continued focus on developing and supporting luxury hospitality assets through a combination of destination infrastructure, premium services and long-term asset ownership.



For Assets Group, the investment reflects an approach to destination development that extends beyond traditional hotel and resort facilities. By incorporating dedicated marine assets into its hospitality portfolio, the Group is investing in additional elements of the guest journey that contribute to the overall destination experience.

QATAR

Qatar participates in special meeting for heads of Haj offices

The State of Qatar participated yesterday in the special meeting for heads of Haj affairs offices, held in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, as part of the 6th edition of the Haj and Umrah Conference and Exhibition.

The Qatari delegation was headed by HE the Minister of Endowments (Awqaf) and Islamic Affairs and Head of the Qatari Haj Mission Ghanem bin Shaheen al-Ghanem, with the attendance of Minister of Haj and Umrah of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia Dr Tawfiq bin Fawzan al-Rabiah.

The meeting comes within the framework of early co-ordination and preparations for the 1448 AH Haj season, discussing arrangements for the upcoming season, and strengthening co-ordination and integration among entities concerned with serving the guests of Allah. This contributes to finalising procedures and contracts related to Qatar's pilgrims, facilitating their journey, and elevating the level of services provided to them.



HE the Minister of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs praised the extensive efforts exerted by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in serving the guests of Allah, and the continuous development witnessed in Haj system's services, capabilities, and technologies, which facilitate the performance of rituals and enhance the quality of the pilgrim's experience.

He also expressed Qatar's appreciation for the Kingdom's efforts in caring for the pilgrims of the Sacred House of Allah, affirming ongoing co-operation and co-ordination with Saudi Ministry of Haj and Umrah and relevant authorities to complete arrangements for Qatar's pilgrims early, ensuring the highest standards of care and service and facilitating their rituals in an atmosphere of security and tranquillity.

Preparations for Haj season encompass various services provided to pilgrims, including transportation, accommodation, catering, healthcare, safety, and crowd management, requiring coordinated efforts and heightened readiness across all stages of the pilgrim's journey from departure to return.

The meeting took place as part of the 6th edition of Haj Conference and Exhibition, hosted in Jeddah from November 8 to 11 under the slogan "From Makkah to the World."

This edition features participation from over 520 entities across governmental, private, and non-profit sectors, alongside officials, specialists, and Haj affairs delegations from various countries. The accompanying exhibition spans an area exceeding 67,000 square metres, with participation from entities and solution providers from more than 150 countries.

Through its sessions, events, and accompanying exhibition, the conference explores ways to develop Haj services system, reviewing initiatives and solutions in infrastructure, operational services, empowerment, integration, and sustainable development, while strengthening partnerships and exchanging expertise among relevant bodies. (**QNA**)

Minister of Municipality meets Charge d'Affaires at Embassy of Honduras



HE the Minister of Municipality, Abdullah bin Hamad bin Abdullah al-Attiyah, met yesterday with Charge d'Affaires at the Embassy of Honduras in Qatar, Sophia Escobar Lanza. During the meeting, they discussed bilateral co-operation relations, in addition to several topics of mutual interest. (**QNA**)

NOTICE OF CAPITAL REDUCTION

Notice is hereby given that

Doha Professional Services Holding Co LLC,
company registered under

Qatar Financial Center, State of Qatar
and having **Commercial Registration No. 00643,**
and its registered office address at
Office No.4, Level 4 Tower A,
Al Mana Business Tower, Doha, Qatar

has resolved to reduce its paid-up share capital from Qr.19.1 Million to Qr.13.55 Million to through purchase of its own shares of Qr.5.55 Million.

Any person having a claim against the Company and wishing to raise an objection to the proposed reduction of share capital is invited to submit such objection, together with supporting documents, in writing to the Company within 7 days from the date of publication of this notice through email to the Senior Executive Function and Director

Mr. Yasir Nainar through email
dpshcorporate@dpsmisdoha.com.

By Order of the Board of Directors
Doha Professional Services Holding Co LLC



Aspetar signs medical partnership accord with Spanish Padel group

Aspetar, Orthopaedic and Sports Medicine Hospital, signed a medical partnership agreement with the Spanish Padel Federation yesterday at the hospital in Doha, establishing a framework for medical support, knowledge exchange and scientific collaboration.

The agreement was signed by Acting Director-General of Aspetar Khalid Ali al-Mawalawi and President of the Spanish Padel Federation Javier Rodríguez Piris.

Al-Mawalai said: "Partnering with the Spanish national padel team, the world champions, reflects Aspetar's international vision and our commitment to excellence in elite sport. By combining our expertise in sports medicine with the needs of world-class athletes, we aim to advance player health, safety and performance. For Aspetar, excellence in performance always begins with excellence in athlete health."

President of the Spanish Padel Federation stated: "From our very first visit to Doha, we were struck by the world-class facilities and the exceptional care Aspetar provides to athletes. Our team features some of the best players in the world, and to ensure they arrive at the World Cup in peak condition and go on to become world champions, they need the specialised care that Aspetar offers. Our agreement is built on one principle which keeping our athletes at their best so they can achieve their goals."

Under the agreement, Aspetar will serve as the federation's official medical partner, providing medical support to the federation and Spain's world champion national padel teams. The partnership will also include the exchange of expertise and collaboration on scientific and research initiatives, bringing together Aspetar's specialist sports medicine capabilities and the federation's experience in elite padel.

The collaboration will support an approach to athlete health that extends beyond treating injuries to encompass prevention, diagnosis, rehabilitation and the scientific understanding of sporting demands. Its focus is on helping players maintain their health while supporting performance and the longevity of their sporting careers.

The agreement builds on Aspetar's existing work in professional padel. In March 2025, the hospital signed a memorandum of understanding with the International Padel Federation (FIP) and Premier Padel to advance research into player health, safety and performance.

That collaboration includes research into injury and illness patterns, the physiological demands of professional padel, and comparisons with other racket sports. The initiatives are intended to strengthen the evidence available to inform injury prevention, training and player workload management.

The new partnership with the Spanish Padel Federation extends Aspetar's engagement in the sport, creating further opportunities to connect specialist medical expertise with the needs of national-team players and to exchange knowledge across clinical practice and sports science. (**QNA**)



Qatar Tec WLL honoured with Hempel Achievers Club – Silver Membership Award 2026

Qatar Tec WLL announced it has been honoured with the Hempel Achievers Club (HAC) – Silver Membership Award for 2026, recognising its valued partnership and business contribution to Hempel in Qatar.

The award was presented during the second edition of the Middle East-wide Hempel Achievers Club event, held at the Holiday Inn Resort, Bali, Indonesia.

The five-day event brought together 47 distinguished trade partners from across the GCC to celebrate business excellence, collaboration and innovation.

Qatar Tec WLL received this recognition in appreciation of its business performance, valuable contributions and continued partnership with Hempel during the 2025 financial year.

Jebi Kolkunnel John, managing director of Qatar Tec WLL, received the Silver Membership Award during the grand gala dinner and awards ceremony.

Hempel's senior leadership team attended the occasion, including director Jacob Kuruvilla, head of Product Management Sam Scaria, and head of Customer Marketing Hariprasad, along with Shiju Varghese, sales manager – Hempel Oman, and Vimal PM, sales manager – Qatar.

This achievement marks an important milestone for Qatar Tec WLL and reflects the company's commitment to business excellence, customer relationships and long-term strategic partnerships.

Qatar Tec WLL sincerely appreciates Hempel for this recognition and looks forward to further strengthening its partnership and achieving greater milestones together.

Qatar Tec WLL – Celebrating Partnership, Performance and Excellence.



QATAR FERTILISER COMPANY

QAFCO
شركة قطر للأسمدة الكيماوية
QATAR FERTILISER COMPANY

INVITATION TO TENDER

QAFCO ANNOUNCES THE FOLLOWING TENDER

TENDER NO.	DESCRIPTION OF WORKS	TENDER FEE (QAR)	TENDER BOND (QAR)	TENDER FEE RECEIPT SUBMISSION DATES	TENDER CLOSING DATE
RFQ 6000006904	A7 Decommissioning Cost Estimate Study	500/- (Non-refundable)	72,000 /- (seventy-two thousand Qatari Riyals)	09.11.2026 10.11.2026 11.11.2026	12.11.2026

GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

- During the period this tender is offered, the interested bidders shall first deposit appropriate Tender Fee amount in cash (Cheque will not be accepted) into Company's following Account at any QNB branch:
  - Account Name : **QATAR FERTILISER COMPANY (QAFCO)**
  - Account Number : **0013-025828-058**
  - IBAN : **QA51QNBA000000000013025828058**
  - Bank Name : **QATAR NATIONAL BANK**
- The interested Bidders shall mention their company's name and Tender Number on the payment receipt provided by the bank and submit it as Tender Fee receipt.
- Besides the Tender fee receipt (which should have the Tender Number and bidder's name clearly mentioned on it), interested bidders shall also submit a copy of the valid Commercial Registration, an authorization letter from their company with the name, telephone, fax and e-mail ID of the focal point for this tender ***(Very Important)***, during the submission of Tender Fee Receipt for ensuring electronic receipt of the Tender Document.
- Tender Fee Receipt along with the specified documents shall be submitted to purchase@qafco.com.qa/rmendoza@qafco.com.qa/nalamoudi@qafco.com.qa on the dates indicated above, after payment of Tender Fee (nonrefundable).
- After submission of the documents to the above email, Tender Document will be provided through an electronic platform separately after the last date of Tender Fee Receipt Submission Date.
- For any queries related to non-receipt of the tender documents after the last date of Tender Fee Receipt Submission Date, you may contact at purchase@qafco.com.qa or on 44227797.
- Bidders not registered on the SAP Portal who have paid the tender bond are requested to contact Vendor Management at vm@qafco.com.qa or +974 4422 5762 to complete their registration process.
- Technical & Commercial details and Submission Procedures will be specified in the Tender Documents.
- The Company will not consider any offer without the enclosure of Tender Bond.
- **The Tender shall be strictly submitted using QAFCO's Supply Chain Portal – SAP / Ariba,** on or before the "Tender Closing Date". Tenderers who fail to adhere to this requirement will result in disqualification of their Tender.

mowasalat مواصلات

The Transport Company
MOWASALAT (KARWA)

Mowasalat (Karwa) announces the following tender:

Tender Ref. No.	Tender Title	Tender Fee	Electronic Tender Fee Payment Dates	Tender Bond	Bid Closing Date
TC/041/MTS/2026	Supply, Installation, Operation and Maintenance of Tyre Retreading Line	QAR 800	9 to 16 November 2026	QAR 18,250	10 December 2026

CONDITIONS:

- **Interested bidder shall pay the tender fee to Mowasalat Bank Account details as shown:**

Beneficiary Name	MOWASALAT-KARWA COMPANY
A/C No.	0013 - 011272 - 060
IBAN	QA07 QNBA 0000 0000 0013 0112 7206 0
Swift Code No.	QNBAQAQA
Branch Address	Corporate Branch, P.O Box 1000, Doha - Qatar
Currency	QAR
CR No.	26887

- Bidder must submit proof of tender fee payment (Bank Deposit Slip + A Signed & Stamped Expression of Interest (indicating Tender Ref. No. and Title / Company Name and details of nominated contact person i.e., Tel. No., Fax No., and Email address) + Copy of valid Commercial Registration to Mowasalat Secretary - Tender Committee at email: **tenders@mowasalat.com**
- **Tender documents will be released via email on the next working day after the tender fee payment date to all bidders who have submitted the bank deposit slip and other documents requested.**
- **Bonds: Tender Bond & Performance Bond:** Bids must be accompanied by Bonds issued by a local bank operating in the State of Qatar as per the Qatar Central Bank template. Further details of bonds can be found in the tender documents. ***Bids without Tender Bond shall not be considered.***
- **Tender validity:** Bid validity period shall be 180 days from the bid closing date.
- **Tender documents submission:** Bids must be submitted in 3 separately sealed (**IN RED WAX**) envelopes addressed to **Secretary - Tender Committee** clearly highlighting the Tender Ref. No. & Tender Title:
  - **Envelope 1# must** include the Technical Bid submission (1 Original + 1 non-Editable copy in a USB)
  - **Envelope 2# must** include Commercial Bid submission (1 Original + 1 Editable MS Excel spreadsheet copied in a USB)
  - **Envelope 3# must** include the Tender Bond (1 Original) + 3 years Audited Financial Statements.
- **Bid Closing Date:** Bid submission deadline is **12.00 noon Doha Local Time** as on the Bid closing date shown above. The 3 envelopes must be handed over to the Office of The Secretary - Tender Committee, located at Mowasalat Head Office, Industrial Area. Any tender submitted after the deadline will not be considered.

Tel.: 4458 8724 Fax: 4458 8850

Supplier Registration *Mowasalat Location*

Karwa | dohalimousine | karwa services | mowasalat medical center | Karwa Academy | Karwa Technologies

10 million Beneficiaries of Winter Relief Campaigns over Three Years



قطـــر الخيرية
QATAR CHARITY

"Winter Heroes": An Opportunity to Sustain the Impact

As the new winter season begins, Qatar Charity seeks, through its "Winter Heroes" campaign, to sustain this impact and reach internally displaced people, refugees and families most in need.

Attention is given to areas where harsh winter conditions intersect with conflict, displacement, deprivation and inadequate shelter. The campaign aims to mobilize QAR 120 million in donor support to deliver humanitarian interventions for these vulnerable groups.

Over the past three winter seasons, generous donations have helped transform Qatar Charity's winter relief campaigns into wide-ranging humanitarian interventions, with a total value of approximately QAR 315 million, reaching or targeting more than 10 million people. Most were internally displaced people, refugees, families affected by conflicts and disasters, and communities facing harsh climatic conditions.

These interventions ranged from providing food, clothing, blankets and heating supplies to improving shelter and delivering water, healthcare, hygiene supplies and sanitation services. They helped protect the most vulnerable groups, particularly children, older people and those who are ill, while easing the financial pressures on families during the winter months.

The achievements of these three seasons take on particular significance as Qatar Charity launches this year's "Winter Heroes" campaign. The need to support families facing the cold in tents, displacement centers and inadequate housing is renewed, particularly in crisis-affected areas such as the Gaza Strip. Through their generosity, donors continue to create an impact that goes beyond immediate assistance to protect health and lives and uphold human dignity.

In crisis-affected areas, winter represents "a crisis within a crisis". According to UNICEF's estimates for this year, more than 1.76 million people around 84% of the Gaza Strip's population are living in overcrowded displacement sites or damaged, inadequate housing, leaving families with limited protection against the cold, heavy rainfall and flooding. Heavy rains on 7 November this year affected 350,000 displaced people in the Gaza Strip and flooded 70,000 tents.

As the current winter season begins, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) stated in a report that 4.3 million people in 16 areas of Somalia are at risk of flooding associated with heavy rainfall expected between October and December 2026, with impacts potentially extending into 2027.



2023–2024: Significant Outcomes of the "One Heart" Campaign

The 2023–2024 season, under the "One Heart" campaign, was one of Qatar Charity's largest winter seasons in terms of the scale of its response. More than 7.5 million people benefited from their interventions, at a total cost of approximately QAR 188 million. The campaign reached 14 countries outside Qatar, in addition to projects implemented within the country.

The interventions covered food, health, water and sanitation, shelter, non-food items, comprehensive relief and livelihoods, reflecting an integrated response to families' needs during winter.

The interventions also extended to other countries, including Jordan, Pakistan, Somalia, Kyrgyzstan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Kosovo, Lebanon, Nepal and Albania.

The campaign's impact was not limited to communities abroad. Within Qatar, approximately 4,500 workers benefited from projects that included winter kits, food baskets, medical assistance and health awareness activities.



2024–2025: "How Long?"—Support Reaching 25 Countries

For the 2024–2025 season, Qatar Charity launched the "How Long?" campaign, with a response covering 25 countries, including Qatar. At launch, the campaign's estimated cost was approximately QAR 72 million, while the number of beneficiaries was around 1.4 million people.

The campaign prioritized affected communities in Palestine, Lebanon, Sudan, Yemen and northern Syria, alongside communities facing severe cold spells. Its interventions included food, shelter, clothing, heating, healthcare, water and hygiene assistance.

In the Gaza Strip, the interventions demonstrated how winter assistance can meet several needs at once. In southern Gaza during December 2024, Qatar Charity distributed approximately 6,000 food baskets, benefiting 30,000 people from displaced families, as well as more than 4,600 blankets and 18,000 complete winter clothing kits, including shoes for children and adults.

Assistance also reached orphans and sponsored children in 16 countries through the "Rofaqa" initiative, alongside programmes within Qatar that provided workers with food, winter kits, medical check-ups and health awareness activities.





2025–2026: A Winter Campaign Supporting Displaced People

Qatar Charity continued this approach during the 2025–2026 season, focusing its interventions on internally displaced people, refugees and families most in need. The campaign's projects were valued at approximately QAR 55 million and benefited nearly 1.1 million people.

The season's interventions covered nine countries: Palestine, Jordan, Yemen, Pakistan, Syria, Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Djibouti and Sudan. Emphasis was placed on displaced people in the Gaza Strip, who face acute shortages of adequate shelter, clothing, blankets, food and other necessities.

The campaign continued to priorities families spending winter in difficult housing conditions, providing support to help them withstand the cold and reduce the associated health risks and pressures on their livelihoods.



An Impact Beyond Numbers

The experience accumulated over these three seasons shows that the impact of winter campaigns goes beyond the number of food parcels, blankets and other supplies distributed. Food helps safeguard the food security of families whose resources have been depleted by crisis. Blankets, clothing and heating supplies protect children and older people from the cold, while improved shelter gives families greater security. Healthcare, water and hygiene services help reduce the risks and diseases that worsen during displacement and winter.

The nature of the projects implemented also reveals how winter assistance has evolved from the provision of specific seasonal aid into a multisectoral response grounded in the interconnected needs of families. A blanket is not enough if rainwater enters the tent; a heater cannot serve its purpose without fuel; and protection against the cold remains incomplete if a family lacks food, medicine or clean water.

Donor support thus creates a chain of interconnected benefits: warmth that protects against the cold, food that eases hunger, shelter that provides safety, healthcare that protects lives, and assistance that preserves families' dignity at their most difficult moments.



"Winter Heroes": An Opportunity to Sustain the Impact

As the new winter season begins, Qatar Charity seeks, through its "Winter Heroes" campaign, to sustain this impact and reach internally displaced people, refugees and families most in need. Attention is given to areas where harsh winter conditions intersect with conflict, displacement, deprivation and inadequate shelter. The campaign aims to mobilize QAR 120 million in donor support to deliver humanitarian interventions for these vulnerable groups.

Qatar Charity therefore calls on generous donors in Qatar to continue supporting the "Winter Heroes" campaign, in keeping with its mission to reach more of those most in need and extend a helping hand to ease the risks posed by winter, while sustaining the impact their generosity has made in previous seasons.

QATAR



Qatar, UAE seal air transport pact

Qatar and the United Arab Emirates signed in Doha yesterday the record of exchange of instruments of ratification of an air transport agreement aimed at strengthening bilateral co-operation and facilitating air traffic between the two countries.

The document was signed on behalf of Qatar by Director of the GCC Affairs Department at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Abdullah bin Saif al-Mansouri, and on behalf of the UAE by its ambassador to Qatar, Saeed Abdulla al-Qemzi. The agreement is expected to further strengthen bilateral ties and expand cooperation in the air transport sector. (**QNA**)

Qatar slams Houthi strikes on Saudi

Qatar has condemned in the strongest terms the continued attacks by the Houthi group on several areas of Saudi Arabia, most recently two ballistic missiles fired at Riyadh. It described the assaults as shameful, aggressive and an unacceptable disregard for civilian lives, a flagrant violation of Saudi sovereignty and a clear breach of international law.

In a statement yesterday, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs stressed Qatar's categorical rejection of attacks on civilians and civilian objects and called for an immediate halt to what it termed irresponsible actions.

The ministry also renewed Qatar's full solidarity with Saudi Arabia and its support for all legitimate measures the kingdom takes to preserve its sovereignty, security, territorial integrity and interests. It reaffirmed that Saudi security is an integral part of Qatar's security and of the collective security system of the GCC states.

Reuters reported windows being blown out across several floors of Saudi oil giant Aramco's corporate office in the heart of the financial district of the capital Riyadh yesterday by what the energy ministry said was debris from an attempt to attack the building.

The ministry said damage to the Aramco Tower was limited and there were no injuries or fatalities, without assigning responsibility for the attack. The Saudi-led coalition said air defences also intercepted a Houthi missile yesterday in the province, where most of the oil and gas reserves of the world's largest crude exporter lie. It said they had also destroyed two ballistic missile launchers in Saada used by the Houthis in the Sunday attack on Riyadh. (**QNA, Reuters**)

Es'hailSat chief says satellites are a core part of telecom networks

QNA
Doha



President and CEO of Es'hailSat, Ali bin Ahmed al-Kuwari, affirmed that satellites achieve interoperability with mobile networks, fifth-generation (5G) technology and non-terrestrial networks (NTN), enabling the delivery of reliable and secure solutions to users.

Al-Kuwari was speaking during a panel discussion held as part of the Satellite and Non-Terrestrial Networks Summit, on the margins of the second MWC26 Doha.

It is quite important to note that satellites shouldn't be approached as an alternative solution or backup to be resorted to should there be any potential malfunction, but must be part and parcel of the network from the outset, al-Kuwari underlined.

Regarding the differences between geostationary Earth orbit (GEO) satellites, non-geostationary (Non-GEO) satellites and terrestrial networks, al-Kuwari said there's no technology that can outperform the other by far across the board, but each has its own distinct strengths. He highlighted that terrestrial networks offer high-capacity connectivity in densely populated areas, while GEO satellites provide extensive and secure coverage across vast geographical areas.

Non-GEO satellites, meanwhile, are set apart by their lower latency and greater flexibility, he noted.

Al-Kuwari recalled that the company intends to offer combined and thoroughgoing solutions that layer all these kinds of technology, emphasising the importance of capitalising on international partnerships while simultaneously safeguarding national sovereignty.

The official pointed out that what matters most is ensuring the operation of critical infrastructure even in times of crises or turmoil, adding that Es'hailSat contributes to achieving that objective through its national assets in the form of satellites, alongside operating a Tier IV-certified ground station in Al Ghuwayriyah, northwest Qatar.

Through this station, he highlighted, Es'hailSat controls satellites and provides managed services, offering comprehensive solutions to ensure business continuity and disaster recovery for its clients, including broadcasters and other entities.

The CEO of Es'hailSat emphasised the importance of combining satellite technology, non-terrestrial networks (NTN) and non-terrestrial 5G networks to deliver a highly reliable solution for disaster and crisis recovery. He stressed the need for advance coordination between mobile network operators and government entities to ensure that crisis-management operations are carried out in a timely and highly efficient manner.

Al-Kuwari suggested that relying solely on satellites as a backup solution isn't the optimal approach; rather, they should be integrated with mobile networks and non-terrestrial networks from the outset.

Es'hailSat is seeking to transition from being solely a satellite capacity provider to becoming a fully integrated solutions provider, Al-Kuwari said, pointing out that this will require the company to substantially strengthen its assets and ground infrastructure and explore opportunities across multiple satellite orbits.

The objective, he remarked, is to deliver secure, reliable and flexible solutions that meet customers' needs while providing the State of Qatar with comprehensive, ready-to-deploy solutions. He highlighted that Es'hailSat plans to launch its Suhail 3 satellite within the next five years. The satellite is expected to provide additional capacity, enabling the company to substantially expand the scope of its services to include mobile network operators and the enterprise sector.

The Satellite and Non-Terrestrial Networks Summit featured several sessions involving experts from various global communications technology companies, who discussed the foremost strategic priorities and promising potential of satellite networks to significantly transform global connectivity by integrating them with mobile networks.

They also explored revenue-generation strategies across the individual consumer segment, the business-to-business (B2B) sector and the Internet of Things (IoT), in addition to the impact of satellite technologies on data sovereignty requirements, various mergers and acquisitions among telecommunications firms, anticipated transformations in the structure of the global telecommunications market, and the need to strike a balance between different spectrum options and a combination of regulatory frameworks.

Head of Research and Consulting at GSMA Intelligence, Tim Hatt, outlined the findings of a GSMA study against the backdrop of the global satellite communications landscape.

QU moves research closer to market with four technology licensing deals

By Shaima Sheriff
Staff Reporter



Prof Aiman Erbad

Qatar University (QU) is taking research closer to the marketplace at Mobile World Congress (MWC) 2026, unveiling six live demonstrations and licensing four technologies developed by its researchers for applications in marine science and healthcare.

The agreements mark a step towards turning university research into commercially viable products, with innovations ranging from artificial reefs designed to help increase fish populations in the Gulf to new healthcare materials and rapid disease detection tools.

Speaking to *Gulf Times* at MWC26 Doha, Prof Aiman Erbad, vice-president for Research and Innovation at QU, said the university was using the international technology event to showcase its research capabilities and strengthen links between academia and industry.

"This is our second year of participating in this excellent event. This event is a regional platform to present research in AI, telecommunications infrastructure, cybersecurity, cloud and edge computing. So this is our platform to show the world what we have," he said.

QU is participating with six live demonstrations and six granted intellectual property (IP) rights that are being developed and prepared for commercialisation.

A major highlight of its participation is the signing of licensing agreements covering four technologies developed by university researchers. Two of the technologies are related to marine science and were developed at the university's Centre for Environmental Sciences.

Erbad said the research had already reached a stage where it could be applied beyond the university, with a company licensing the intellectual property to develop artificial reefs to support marine ecosystems.

"The centre developed technologies that are now used regionally through this company that is licensing this IP with us to build artificial reefs that will help grow the fish population in the Gulf," he said.

The initiative highlights the potential of university research to support environmental sustainability while developing solutions tailored to the region's marine environment.

The other two technologies being licensed are related to healthcare and were developed by researchers at Qatar University's College of Health Sciences.

One involves developing a material for skin-related applications, which Erbad described as similar to cosmetics, while the other is a rapid detection tool for certain diseases.

"We have really deep technology that we are licensing to these start-ups, and we are with them working to ensure that these technologies go to the real world, benefit humanity, benefit the region, and bring some funding to the researcher, company and to Qatar University," he said.

Beyond the technology demonstrations, the university is also using MWC26 Doha to launch its entrepreneurship, innovation and technology transfer framework, bringing together four entities within the institution to strengthen the journey from research to commercial application.

The framework is designed to support researchers and entrepreneurs at different stages, whether through licensing agreements with established companies or by helping turn research into start-ups.

Erbad said the university is also hosting an entrepreneurship clinic in collaboration with its College of Business, where students present their start-up ideas alongside researchers showcasing their technologies.

The initiative aims to strengthen connections between academic research, business expertise, and potential investors, giving emerging entrepreneurs opportunities to develop their ideas into viable ventures.

He noted that the licensing arrangements involved both smaller start-ups and larger companies seeking to benefit from technologies developed at the university.



GSMA, ExonNet sign MoU to support small enterprises

A strategic memorandum of understanding (MoU) was signed yesterday between GSMA Industry Services and ExonNet on the sidelines of the MWC26 Doha conference, aiming to support and foster digital transformation of micro and small enterprises.

The agreement was signed by Chief Executive Officer of Events and Industry Services at the GSMA Sianne Ryder and CEO of ExonNet Anthony Rodrigo.

The partnership seeks to enable mobile network operators to offer tailored digital services to micro and small enterprises via telecommunications networks, helping integrate underserved segments by providing advanced solutions that go beyond traditional connectivity.

During the signing ceremony, Sianne Ryder emphasised that the partnership is the result of months of dedicated work, with plans to extend the initiative to the upcoming MWC event in Barcelona, reaffirming a commitment to leaving no one behind and serving those with the least access to services.

For his part, Anthony Rodrigo explained that the agreement is grounded in a digital ecosystem developed and tested over several years across various regions in Africa and Asia, noting that both parties look forward to delivering tangible services that address the specific needs of target groups beyond telecommunications sector. (**QNA**)

Six UDST academics recognised among World's Top 2% Scientists List

The University of Doha for Science and Technology (UDST) has announced that six of its academics have been recognised in the 2026 World's Top 2% Scientists List, published by Stanford University Professor John P A Ioannidis in collaboration with Elsevier, highlighting their research contributions and impact across a range of scientific disciplines.

The prestigious list recognises the world's most influential researchers based on standardised citation indicators from Scopus data. It includes researchers whose scientific contributions rank among the top 2% within their respective fields, reflecting the global impact and influence of their published research.

The UDST academics featured in the 2026 list include Dr Zakaria Maamar, dean of the College of Computing and Information Technology, and Dr Mueen Uddin, associate professor of Data and Cybersecurity, in the field of Artificial Intelligence and Image Processing; Dr Farhat Abbas, professor and Senior Researcher, in Agronomy and Agriculture; Dr Daniel K Maduku, associate professor, in Marketing; Dr Walid Ben-Amar, associate dean of the College of Business, in Business and Management; and Dr Adnan Akhundzada, professor of Data and Cybersecurity, in Networking and Telecommunications.

UDST president Dr Salem Al-Naemi said: "The recognition of our academics among the world's top 2% scientists is a testament to the quality, impact, and relevance of the research being conducted at UDST. We take great pride in our faculty members whose dedication to advancing knowledge and addressing real-world challenges continues to strengthen our University's research standing internationally.

"At UDST, we remain committed to leveraging a research-driven environment that encourages innovation, supports academic excellence, and contributes to Qatar's ambitions of becoming a leading knowledge-based economy."

The recognition covers two categories: the career-long impact ranking, which assesses researchers' citation records from 1996 to 2025, and the single-year ranking, which reflects citations received during 2025. The inclusion of UDST academics across these categories demonstrates the breadth of research expertise and scholarly contributions within the University.

Experts discuss transition toward 6G networks at MWC26

QNA
Doha



A panel discussion held during the second edition of MWC26 Doha at the Doha Exhibition and Convention Center shed light on the future of 6G networks, artificial intelligence, and connected infrastructure in shaping the next phase of the global telecommunications sector.

Titled '6G, AI, and Connected Infrastructure', the session was moderated by Director of Technology at GSMA Dr Nadia Brahmi and featured leading experts and specialists from regional and international technology firms.

Participants included Professor at Khalifa University and head of 6G R&D programmes Merouane Debbah; Head of Networks of Ericsson in Middle East and North Africa, Ante Mihovilovic; Global Head of Spectrum Standardisation at Nokia, Eiman Bushra; Director of Networks at Ooredoo Group Brahim Ben Mustapha; and Head of Future Technology at UAE Etisalat Group, Bushra Abdelaziz.

Head of Networks of Ericsson in Middle East and North Africa Ante Mihovilovic emphasised that the global telecommunications sector is undergoing a strategic shift toward 6G supported by artificial intelligence, underscoring that continued investment in 5G is vital as 6G represents a gradual, evolutionary path extending toward 2030 rather than a sudden leap.

For his part, Professor Merouane Debbah explained that the technology sector is experiencing an unprecedented structural transformation driven by rapid AI advancements and the proliferation of intelligent agents, noting that telecommunications networks will increasingly serve these systems alongside human users.

Head of Spectrum Standardisation at Nokia in Middle East and North Africa Eiman Bushra highlighted that 6G standardisation is progressing steadily through co-ordination between the 3rd Generation Partnership Project (3GPP) and the International Telecommunication Union (ITU). She noted that 3GPP Release 21 will serve as the initial milestone for defining 6G specifications ahead of commercial deployment expected between 2029 and 2030, adding that 6G will build upon existing 5G infrastructure facilitated by Multi-Radio Spectrum Sharing (MRSS) technology.

Meanwhile, Head of Future Technology Bushra Abdelaziz stated that successful deployment requires a flexible approach tailored to individual market characteristics rather than a universal model, requiring the integration of legislative and technical readiness, spectrum availability, and commercial co-operation.

Director of Networks at Ooredoo Group Brahim Ben Mustapha highlighted a strategic partnership launched at MWC26 Doha between GSMA Industry Services and Exponent, noting that the initiative empowers mobile operators to offer advanced digital services to small and micro-enterprises, bridges the digital divide, and supports inclusive development.

Panellists concluded by emphasising the importance of fostering regional and international co-operation and aligning efforts of operators and technology providers to harness 6G and AI potential for sustainable smart economies.

‘Global policy alignment critical for next gen digital connectivity’

By Joseph Varghese
Staff Reporter

Global alignment on areas such as spectrum allocation, international standards, and digital inclusion is critical to shaping the next generation of mobile technology and ensuring billions of people are not left behind, International Telecommunication Union (ITU) Secretary-General Doreen Bogdan-Martin has said.

In a conversation with GSMA director general Vivek Badrinath at the Mobile World Congress Doha 2026, Bogdan-Martin stressed the need for greater interoperability, harmonised spectrum, and globally agreed standards as the telecommunications industry prepares for the transition to 6G. “It’s important that we get in place the right spectrum allocations and the international global standards, which I think are critical,” she said.

She noted that progress in establishing common standards for 5G should carry forward into the next generation of mobile networks, with governments and industry working together to ensure emerging technologies can operate seamlessly.

“The next phase of technological development would extend beyond connectivity to encompass artificial intelligence, connected devices and satellite communications, making interoperability increasingly important,” she noted.

Bogdan-Martin also highlighted the need to build trust and security into digital infrastructure, ensuring that networks and systems are secure and reliable.

Equally important, she said, is ensuring that technological progress does not widen the digital divide, particularly as the world moves towards more advanced digital services. Badrinath said early engagement between governments, regulators and the telecommunications industry was essential to translating policy alignment into investment and tangible results.

Given the long investment cycles in telecommunications, he stressed the importance of predictable policies and long-term regulatory frameworks.

Badrinath emphasised that planning for these requirements must begin well in advance, highlighting the ITU’s role in co-ordinating international spectrum policies.

He also reaffirmed the industry’s commitment to global standards, noting that chief executives of major mobile operators had reiterated their support for a unified global approach. The common standards established for 4G and 5G had enabled economies of scale and global innovation, and the industry should preserve these benefits as it moves towards 6G, he said.

Turning to digital inclusion, Bogdan-Martin said that although considerable progress had been made in expanding network coverage, a substantial usage gap remained, with affordability, digital literacy and online safety continuing to prevent many people from accessing digital services. She called for stronger partnerships between governments, international organisations and industry to address these barriers. The official noted that smartphone costs remain a major obstacle in many markets, with entry-level handsets costing as much as 76% of monthly income in some countries.

Badrinath said the affordability challenge has become harder because rising memory chip prices, driven by demand from the artificial intelligence sector, have increased costs. Looking towards 2030, he also warned of the risk of a new digital divide emerging around artificial intelligence. “Since AI systems are largely trained using languages spoken by people who are already online, those without connectivity risk being further disadvantaged if their languages are not adequately represented in AI development,” he noted.



GSMA director general Vivek Badrinath in conversation with ITU Secretary-General, Doreen Bogdan-Martin. **PICTURE**: Shaji kayamkulam.

Qatar making unrelenting efforts to strengthen digital resilience: Minister

By Joseph Varghese
Staff Reporter



Minister of Communications and Information Technology HE Mohammed bin Ali bin Mohammed al-Mannai. **PICTURE**: Shaji Kayamkulam.

‘Qatar has opened its ecosystem for the new satellite operators such as Starlink and the country is among the first to license them in the region,’ — Minister of Communications and Information Technology, al-Mannai

Qatar is stepping up efforts to integrate satellite and terrestrial communications infrastructure through various steps, including launching another satellite and a new regulatory policy to be announced soon, disclosed the Minister of Communications and Information Technology HE Mohammed bin Ali bin Mohammed al-Mannai.

Speaking at a ministerial panel discussion at the ongoing Mobile World Congress Doha 2026, Minister al-Mannai said: “We have invested in satellite communications for more than 15 years. We have launched two satellites and a third one is coming. Hopefully by the end of this year we will be issuing a new policy and we will be consulting with the industry on how we set the right licensing regime to open more competition to provide more capacity.”

The minister was interacting with Doreen Bogdan-Martin, the secretary general of the International Telecommunication Union, and a number of ministers from various countries were co-panellists in the discussion.

According to the minister, these steps are being handled through multiple partners, and the right policy direction is set to deliver appropriate incentives. He noted that efforts are accelerating to strengthen digital resilience, enhance technological sovereignty, and boost the digital economy’s competitiveness.

“Qatar has opened its ecosystem for the new satellite operators such as Starlink and the country is among the first to license them in the region. We have started a lab for the 6G testing last year and during this week, there will be an announcement around the 6G trials. We have reached 100% national level fibre connectivity across all the populated area. We have 99% mobile coverage, 5G coverage in specific,” highlighted the minister.

Al-Mannai highlighted the strategic importance of convergence between terrestrial and space communication as a strategic enabler to support Qatar’s digital transformation under its Digital Agenda 2030.

“Our digital agenda focuses on three major technological trends: hyper automation, hyper computing and hyper connectivity. Hyper connectivity is the area we will be aiming to discuss for the convergence between terrestrial and satellite communications together, ” explained the minister.

The minister described this convergence as a strategic enabler of Qatar’s digital economy, identifying digital resilience, digital sovereignty and economic competitiveness as its three principal objectives.

“So for us to achieve those three targets, convergence has always been at the core of our hyper connectivity model that we have designed on the digital agenda,” he continued.

He stressed, however, that infrastructure investment alone would not be sufficient to achieve the country’s ambitions. “We need to do a lot when it comes to interoperability. It used to be a very challenging from making sure that there is a right spectrum capacity for the satellite providers to provide the required capacity to reach their resilience and move from the redundancy or through modernising our regulatory regime. So we need to accommodate more providers to integrate with our system going forward.”

The minister particularly highlighted the growing importance of Low Earth Orbit satellite technology, noting that it could deliver service quality comparable to conventional mobile and fibre networks.

A key priority, he said, is moving beyond the traditional use of satellite networks as backup systems towards a more comprehensive model of digital resilience. Al- Mannai noted that Qatar aims to develop an integrated communications infrastructure in which both systems complement one another to ensure continuity, reliability and nationwide connectivity.

The minister expressed confidence that Qatar could achieve this transition in the near future and share its experience with other countries seeking to strengthen their own digital resilience strategies.

Al-Ahli Hospital inaugurates expanded NICU

Expanded 13-bed unit combines modern medical equipment with integrated engineering design to strengthen specialist neonatal care.



His Excellency Sheikh Abdullah bin Thani Al Thani, Chairman of Medicare Group, together with members of the Board of Directors, inaugurated the upgraded Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) at Al-Ahli Hospital, in the presence of the hospital’s executive management.

The development underscores the hospital’s commitment to strengthening its specialist services through investment in clinical capabilities, medical equipment and a care environment designed around the needs of newborns and their families.

During a tour, attendees were briefed on the unit’s facilities, equipment and improvements to the arrangement of bedside care stations and services surrounding the incubators. The comprehensive redevelopment has increased capacity from eight beds, including one isolation bed, to 13 beds, comprising 12 arranged in a crescent-shaped layout and one dedicated isolation bed.

The upgrade includes five additional incubators and five resuscitation devices, with the unit now equipped with a total of ten ventilators. Greater space around each bed facilitates staff movement and access to infants and equipment, while redesigned bedside care stations support daily clinical procedures and the efficient organisation of equipment. Sensor-operated handwashing basins have also been installed to support infection prevention and control practices.

His Excellency Sheikh Turki bin Khalid bin Thani Al Thani, Vice Chairman of Medicare Group, said the development reflects the Board’s shared vision, under the chairmanship of His Excellency Sheikh Abdullah bin Thani Al Thani, to advance healthcare services and strengthen specialist care.



“The Board of Directors is committed to the continued development of Al-Ahli Hospital through investment in medical expertise, modern equipment and an integrated care environment,” he said. “The upgraded Neonatal Intensive Care Unit gives practical expression to this commitment, supporting quality of care and infant safety while providing families with greater confidence and reassurance. It also reflects our enduring commitment to serving our country and its people, and contributing to the health and wellbeing of the wider community.”



Khalid Mohamed Al-Emadi, Chief Executive Officer of Al-Ahli Hospital, said the project forms part of the hospital’s ongoing programme to improve its medical services and strengthen coordination across care delivery.



“Our priority is to ensure that investment in our facilities and equipment translates into meaningful improvements in the care we provide to our guests,” he said. “Neonatal intensive care requires meticulous attention to detail, reflecting the clinical needs of newborns and the support their families require.”

He added: “By bringing together medical and nursing expertise, modern equipment and a carefully planned care environment, the upgraded unit strengthens our teams’ ability to deliver specialised care tailored to each infant. Clear communication with families remains central to this approach, ensuring they are informed and supported throughout their child’s care.”

A key feature of the redevelopment is an integrated service-column system conceived by Eng. Jamal Hammad, Deputy Chief Executive Officer and Director of Projects, and developed in collaboration with the hospital’s engineering and biomedical engineering teams and Italian company Transforma.

The design brings medical gas outlets, electrical and backup power connections, and vital signs monitor mounts together within a unified structure. A curved lighting system complements the installation, providing illumination across the care area.

Eng. Hammad said the concept was informed by the practical requirements of day-to-day care within the unit.

“We set out to organise the services around each incubator in a way that makes them readily accessible while providing medical and nursing staff with a functional workspace,” he said. “Equipment positioning, service connections and lighting were considered as interconnected elements, with each contributing to the overall needs of care delivery.”

He added: “The project highlights the value of close collaboration between clinical and engineering teams. Effective design begins with understanding how a space is used and translating those requirements into practical solutions. Our focus was on combining clinical functionality, quality execution and efficient use of the available space.”

Dr. Abdul Azim Hussein emphasised that medical and nursing professionals remain at the centre of neonatal intensive care, supported by equipment and a working environment that facilitate close observation, continuous assessment and coordination across the treating team.

“Neonatal care depends on the integration of medical and nursing expertise, careful monitoring and a responsive approach to the needs of each infant,” he said. “The upgraded unit supports these requirements by improving access to infants, equipment and essential services, enabling teams to deliver care according to each child’s individual clinical needs.”

He added: “Quality must be maintained throughout every stage of care, supported by continuous coordination among healthcare professionals and clear communication with families about their children’s condition and treatment plans. The redevelopment provides an environment that better supports these responsibilities and the collective efforts of the team.”

The upgraded NICU reinforces Al-Ahli Hospital’s commitment to placing quality of care and guest safety at the centre of its development. By combining specialist expertise, modern medical equipment and practical engineering solutions, the hospital continues to strengthen the care it provides to its youngest guests and the support available to the teams responsible for their wellbeing.



QATAR

Qatar, Brunei share deep-rooted bonds

QNA
Doha

The fraternal relations between the State of Qatar and Brunei Darussalam are characterised by their deep-rooted strength, grounded in ties of religion, shared interests, and mutual visions regarding regional and international issues, as well as support for dialogue, security, and international peace.

The visit of Crown Prince and Senior Minister at the Prime Minister's Office of Brunei Darussalam, Prince Al-Muhtadee Billah, to Doha on Sunday reflects the mutual desire to elevate these relations to more distinguished horizons across various fields. The visit, which is his first to Doha, also constitutes a prominent milestone in giving momentum to the trajectory of bilateral relations between the two countries and exploring innovative partnerships that fulfill their aspirations in achieving sustainable development and economic prosperity.

Reciprocal visits

Since the establishment of official diplomatic relations between Doha and Bandar Seri Begawan on October 2, 1991, the fraternal cooperation between the two countries has witnessed steady development, alongside reciprocal visits by senior officials and the signing of agreements and memoranda of understanding across numerous fields and sectors of common interest.

Brunei Darussalam opened its embassy in Doha on June 20, 2001, at the level of Charge d'Affaires, while the State of Qatar opened its embassy in Brunei Darussalam on October 11, 2008, at the same level. During the visit of His Highness the late Father Amir Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani to Brunei on January 17, 2012, diplomatic representation between the two countries was elevated to ambassadorial level.

Frequent high-level meetings between the two nations, coupled with active diplomacy and consultations on the sidelines of international forums, reflect a shared political will to reinforce relations built upon mutual respect and common interests, as well as to develop bonds of friendship and opportunities for co-operation across various fields.

In the context of these meetings, Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah of Brunei Darussalam received HE Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Sultan bin Saad al-Muraikhi, in Bandar Seri Begawan on November 10, 2025. During the meeting, co-operative relations between the two countries and ways to support and develop them were reviewed, alongside several topics of mutual interest.

In November 2024, HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani received Second Minister of Foreign Affairs of Brunei Darussalam, Erywan Pehin Yusof, in Doha. During the meeting, co-operative relations, and ways to support and reinforce them were reviewed, and both parties underscored the strength of the ties between the two countries, which are characterized by co-operation and synergy across various fields thanks to the wise visions of their leaderships.

In the realm of economic, commercial, and investment co-operation, the two nations share similar economic profiles, given the pivotal role of the oil and gas sector in national development, which opens wide avenues for integration and co-operation. Within this framework, both sides seek to activate investment partnerships in renewable energy, petrochemicals, and food industries, in alignment with Qatar National Vision 2030 and Brunei Vision 2035.

Economic activity

Qatar is actively developing its industrial, service, transport, and investment sectors, while Brunei Darussalam, through its National Vision 2035, seeks to enhance human capital and diversify economic activity. The two countries are linked by a series of agreements and memoranda of understanding, including the Agreement on Economic, Trade, and Technical Cooperation, and the Agreement for the Avoidance of Double Taxation and the Prevention of Fiscal Evasion to promote capital flows, while the Air Services Agreement regulates mutual aviation movement to support tourism and trade exchange between the Gulf and Southeast Asia.

International relations expert and consultant, Dr Ahmed Ghaith al-Kuwari, highlights the importance of the anticipated visit of Crown Prince Al-Muhtadee Billah to Qatar. He believes it should not be viewed merely as a new stop in the record of official reciprocal visits between the two nations, but rather as an occasion to reassess their positions within an international system where the relationship among geography, energy, economy, and diplomacy is changing rapidly.


Dr Ahmed G al-Kuwari


Dr Maryam al-Kuwari

Speaking to Qatar News Agency (QNA), Dr al-Kuwari pointed out the unique nature of relations between the two countries, adding: "We are before two nations belonging to distant geographical spaces that nevertheless converge in core elements relating to Islamic identity, national sovereignty, hydrocarbon resources, economic openness, and a keenness to develop multi-directional international relations."

He stated that if international relations are traditionally measured by the volume of trade and investment and the frequency of official visits, the relations between Doha and Bandar Seri Begawan demand an additional criterion: the ability of two nations to transform points of similarity between their national experiences into sustainable strategic interests.

Al-Kuwari touched upon the meeting held in New York in September 2026, which brought together HE Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Sultan bin Saad al-Muraikhi and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Brunei Darussalam Prince Abdul Mateen, on the sidelines of the 81st session of the United Nations General Assembly. During that meeting, emphasis was placed on enhancing high-level visits, developing interconnectedness between the two countries, expanding co-operation within international organisations, and exchanging views on regional and international developments.

He added: "From here, the anticipated visit can be read as an extension of an existing diplomatic trajectory rather than a separate event," serving as an opportunity to transition the bilateral relations to a new advanced phase, define joint priorities, and establish practical mechanisms to follow up and measure results periodically.

Dr al-Kuwari noted that the visit gains additional importance in the context of ongoing transformations in relations between the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) member states and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean). Asia is no longer viewed by the Gulf merely as a vast market for exporting oil and gas, nor is the Gulf viewed by Asian economies merely as an energy source or capital destination. The relationship between the two regions has become more complex due to entangled supply chains, expanding cross-border investments, and growing interdependence in transport, services, technology, and advanced industries.

He opined that the principles binding Qatar and Brunei Darussalam grant them a political foundation upon which they can build to expand consultation on international issues. Furthermore, co-operation between them can transcend the traditional framework of bilateral relations to become one of the supporting pathways for dialogue between the Gulf and Southeast Asia regarding energy stability and trade.

For her part, Director of the Gulf Studies Center at Qatar University, Dr Maryam al-Kuwari, affirms that the visit of Crown Prince Al-Muhtadee Billah to Qatar gains additional strategic importance considering the growing development of bilateral relations, as well as relations between Gulf Cooperation Council and the Asean bloc, of which Brunei Darussalam is a member state.

Shared identity

Speaking to QNA, Dr al-Kuwari stated that relations between Qatar and Brunei are not confined to their bilateral framework; rather, they form part of a broader trajectory aimed at strengthening political and economic partnerships between two regions possessing growing significance in the global economy and international balances.

She reviewed the journey of fraternal relations between the two countries since their establishment in 1991 and the notable momentum they have gained in recent years, pointing out their shared Islamic identity, possession of significant oil and natural gas resources, and adoption of developmental orientations aimed at diversifying the economy and strengthening international partnerships.

She mentioned that expanding co-operation between Qatar and Brunei would contribute to enhancing institutional communication between the GCC and Asean, opening new horizons for integration in energy, investment, food security, technology, education, and halal industries, alongside coordinating positions regarding regional and international issues of common interest.

Brunei Darussalam is situated on the northwestern coast of Borneo, overlooking the South China Sea to the north, while surrounded by Malaysian territory across most of its land borders. Spanning an area of no more than 6,000 sq km with a population of under half a million, the Sultanate possesses substantial oil and gas wealth, a high level of income, and an economy striving to diversify its industrial, commercial, and service activities.

Oil and natural gas represent the backbone of Brunei's economy, while its foreign trade relies on exporting energy and related industrial products in exchange for importing a large portion of its needs for machinery, equipment, consumer goods, and foodstuffs.

The Sultanate seeks to boost production of rice, vegetables, poultry, and fish, and to develop food industries with the aim of reducing import dependency and improving food security. The halal food industry also presents an additional opportunity, leveraging its Islamic identity and national standards for halal food production to create avenues for expansion into major Asian and Islamic markets.

Brunei also possesses tourism assets including tropical rainforests, nature reserves, rivers, beaches, Islamic architecture, and historical sites. Dr Maryam al-Kuwari viewed that current developments make enhancing regional integration and co-operation among economic blocs an urgent strategic priority, stressing that the visit reflects the desire to foster connectedness and integration between the two sides across various fields and sectors, including the economic and tourism dimensions.

She pointed out that expanding relations, alongside direct economic gains, represents a strategic orientation toward broadening diplomatic activity and diversifying international partnerships within the framework of "multi-alignment" or "multiple strategic partnerships," which allows states to build balanced relations with multiple international actors without being beholden to a single international axis. These gains increasing importance amid an international system characterized by fragmentation and escalating competition among major powers.

She affirmed that the visit represents an additional opportunity for Qatar to expand its economic and political presence beyond its immediate geographic scope, whereas Brunei Darussalam seeks, in turn, to widen its network of international partnerships and enhance its political and economic options amid escalating major power competition in the Indo-Pacific region.

She concluded her statement by noting that the visit of Crown Prince of Brunei Darussalam to Qatar represents an opportunity to strengthen the strategic dimension of bilateral relations, consolidate the role of both countries in supporting Gulf-Asian partnership, and contribute to diversifying economic and diplomatic relations while fostering stability and sustainable development in both regions.

MWC26 opens new chapter in Qatar's digital ambitions

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These developments, coupled with global challenges threatening service continuity, are pushing the industry towards a new generation of solutions, including 6G networks and the seamless integration of terrestrial, submarine and satellite communications.

"These issues are central to discussions at MWC Doha, providing an opportunity to strengthen cooperation among telecommunications operators, technology companies and investors, and accelerate the development of practical solutions that support the growth of the digital economy," al-Mannai said.

He reaffirmed Qatar's commitment to investing in advanced digital infrastructure under its Digital Agenda 2030, strengthening national capabilities and unlocking fresh opportunities for innovation and investment.

Following the inauguration, HE Sheikh Saoud, accompanied by al-Mannai and other ministers, toured the exhibition, including the Qatar Pavilion, where pioneering national projects demonstrated how artificial intelligence and emerging technologies are transforming public services and accelerating digital development across sectors.

The opening day's discussions brought another crucial dimension into focus: ensuring that the benefits of technological progress reach populations still excluded from the digital world.

In a fireside conversation, GSMA Director General Vivek Badrinath and International Telecommunication Union (ITU) Secretary-General Doreen Bogdan-Martin examined the future of connectivity across the Middle East and North Africa, highlighting the importance of common international standards, interoperable networks and bridging the persistent digital divide.

"Progress only counts if everyone shares in it," Badrinath declared, emphasising the twin imperatives of globally compatible digital infrastructure and concerted efforts to bring those still offline into the connected economy.

He said the convergence of MWC26 Doha and the ITU Plenipotentiary Conference offered an exceptional opportunity for policymakers, innovators and industry leaders to align technological ambitions with the regulatory frameworks needed to realise them.

The economic stakes were underscored by two major GSMA reports unveiled alongside the conference.

The Mobile Economy MENA 2026 report revealed that mobile technologies and services generated approximately $380bn in economic value across the region in 2025, representing 5.8% of GDP. That contribution is projected to climb to $470bn by the end of the decade, highlighting the sector's increasingly pivotal role in regional growth.

Meanwhile, the 5G Monetisation MENA report showed that 17 of the region's 24 markets had launched commercial fifth-generation mobile services by September 2026.

The expansion is expected to be dramatic, with 5G connections forecast to surge from 67mn in 2025 to approximately 350mn by 2030, opening enormous possibilities for intelligent industries, digital services and new business models.

Yet the reports also pointed to the challenges ahead, particularly the need to extend connectivity to underserved communities while ensuring sustainable returns on the substantial investments required for advanced networks.

Adding further weight to Doha's growing prominence in global technology governance is the simultaneous hosting of the ITU Plenipotentiary Conference (PP-26), organised by Qatar's Communications Regulatory Authority from November 9-27.

The convergence of the two international gatherings brings together the architects of digital policy and the companies developing tomorrow's technologies, creating a rare platform for aligning regulation, investment and innovation.

MWC26 Doha concludes today, with specialised discussions, technology showcases and announcements of new initiatives and partnerships expected to reinforce the momentum generated by its opening.

For Qatar, the significance extends well beyond hosting another major international event. As artificial intelligence redraws the boundaries of what technology can achieve, Doha is increasingly positioning itself not merely as a participant in the digital future, but as a meeting ground for those determined to shape it.

HIA launches 'Made in Qatar' screening room

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The screening room offers passengers a space to relax and watch a selection of Qatari films during their journey. Its walk-in format allows travellers to choose how much time they spend watching, depending on their flight schedules.

Abdulla al-Musallam, deputy CEO of the Doha Film Institute, said the partnership provides a platform to share Qatari stories with audiences from different cultural backgrounds.

"Cinema has the power to carry country's stories far beyond its borders," al-Musallam said.

He explained that films can connect people through shared experiences, aspirations and different perspectives, helping audiences understand cultures beyond their own.



HIA and DFI officials open a dedicated 'Made in Qatar' screening room yesterday at Concourse D, near Lancôme Café. PICTURES: Shaji Kayamkulam

The collaboration combines DFI's work in supporting local filmmaking talent with HIA's role as Qatar's international gateway.

HIA is also the official airport partner for this year's Doha Film Festival, reflecting continued co-operation between the two organisations.

Boat Show makes waves with record GCC participation

From Page 1

Among the standout achievements was a 30% increase in GCC participation, including the largest contingent of Gulf boat builders in the show's history. Qatari exhibitors accounted for 55% of participation, against 45% from overseas, while a 70% exhibitor return rate reflected growing commercial confidence in the event.

A succession of new launches added to the excitement, including Emirates Boats' Emirates Boat 63, Azimut's Seadeck 6, Seven Craft's Due Mari, Ocean Boats' Monohull 40S and Al Shaali Marine's Asmaraty 77 and Asmaraty 100.

Homegrown manufacturers also commanded attention, with Halul Boats unveiling its HALUL 62 FT, the largest vessel produced by the Qatari factory, designed for luxury family cruising and sport fishing. The sailing, fishing and watersports segment registered a 19% increase in exhibitors.



Beyond the gleaming yachts, the show generated significant business opportunities. Old Doha Port signed an agreement with The Pearl Island Marina for joint events and reciprocal customer benefits, alongside a three-year deal with All Marine for Marine Services to manage Mina Link shuttle boats.

Assets Group entered a strategic partnership with Azimut Yachts, while Doha Craft appointed Al Boom Marine Company its official agent in Kuwait. Halul Boats also secured an agreement with Aqua Speed for representation in the Maldives.

Engineer Mohammed Abdulla al-Mulla, CEO of Old Doha Port and Chairman of the Qatar Boat Show Organising Committee, said the growing Gulf presence, successful launches and international partnerships demonstrated the industry's expanding ambitions.

He welcomed the sell-out visitor response, saying the exhibition was helping establish Qatar as a destination for yachting and marine tourism.

The event also celebrated the country's maritime identity through a historical exhibition tracing Old Doha Port's transformation from a trading dock into a modern waterfront destination. Works by Qatari artist Yousef Ahmad, including his distinctive Qatar Sea blue, added a cultural dimension. A premium hospitality experience hosted by The Ned Doha sold out throughout the event, while senior officials and dignitaries toured the exhibits.

Across the waterfront, film screenings presented with Qatar Creates and the Doha Film Institute, live music, fireworks and pyrotechnic drone displays transformed the harbour into a lively celebration of Qatar's maritime past and its ambitions for the future.

Eisenkot given tough task of forming new government in Israel over Netanyahu

AFP
Jerusalem

Israel's former military chief Gadi Eisenkot was set yesterday to be given the tough task of forming a government, giving him weeks to cobble together a coalition to replace Benjamin Netanyahu, the country's longest-serving prime minister.

Eisenkot, 66, a political novice who has vowed to bridge Israel's deep polarisation under Netanyahu, was due to meet President Isaac Herzog who will formally give him the mandate to form a government with an initial deadline of 28 days.

Eisenkot, born to a family of working-class Moroccan immigrants, would be the first Sephardic prime minister — a descendant of Jews from the Middle East or North Africa — in a country long dominated by an Ashkenazi elite with ties to Europe.

Netanyahu, who has been prime minister on and off for nearly two decades and has led war on Gaza, Lebanon and Iran, lost support in last month's election but no side claimed an outright majority.

In consultations last week with Herzog, Eisenkot received recommendations from parties accounting for 67 lawmakers, against 46 for Netanyahu.

But the vote count included Israeli Arabs, whose seat haul surged to a historic high on anger over Netanyahu's government, which includes far-right firebrands who have openly sought to marginalise the community.

Avigdor Liberman, a former Netanyahu aide turned sharp critic who nonetheless shares his hawkish views, has been adamant against any alliance with Israeli Arabs, descendants of Palestinians who stayed after Israel's creation in 1948.

Taking back one of his signature campaign pledges, Liberman instead voiced an openness to an alliance with ultra-Orthodox Jews, whose almost singular priority is ensuring that they remain exempt from military service.

The exemption for the ultra-Orthodox — whose two main parties had been aligned with Netanyahu but could push Eisenkot to a majority — has been a source of growing resentment for many Israelis as reservists fight on multiple tours of duty.

Liberman said yesterday he still backed conscription for all Israelis but that he had to make "difficult decisions" for the higher priority of ousting Netanyahu, who faces corruption charges that could land him in jail if he loses power.

But he remained adamant that he would never ally with Israeli Arabs. "I will not lend a hand to the establishment of such a government, which in my view will harm security and bring Netanyahu back to power," Liberman wrote on X.

Liberman, whose party at seven votes is the smallest within the opposition bloc, denied speculation he was trying to engineer a deadlock that could result in him becoming prime minister.

Born in Moldova and with a party base originally from Russian-speaking immigrants, Liberman said that commentators' views on his motives had "sometimes a distinctly racist tone".

Naftali Bennett, the second strongest opposition leader after Liberman, has also been outspoken against the ultra-Orthodox community's military exemption and has stayed quiet since Liberman's about-face. Eisenkot has called for a "national emergency" government that would remove Netanyahu, calling him "a fundamental threat to the very existence of Israeli democracy".

He has ruled out a unity government with Netanyahu, who has repeatedly called for a broad coalition with himself at the top.

Eisenkot appears to be suggesting that he is willing to start off with a minority government — relying on outside votes from Israeli-Arab parties — while still working to find a stable government with majority support.

Assaf Shapira, a political expert at the Israel Democracy Institute, said that Eisenkot would face an especially fragile government if it only has 48 lawmakers, even if others promise to keep it in power.

"To pass laws, you need strong support from other parties," Shapira said, explaining that an Eisenkot minority government would be forced into extensive negotiations on every piece of legislation.

Eisenkot has vowed to repair Israel's international reputation and put an end to rampant violence against Palestinians by extremist West Bank settlers supported by Netanyahu's government.

Impeached Pena charged over implosion of bank

AFP
Asuncion



Paraguayan impeached President Santiago Pena at the court in Asuncion. (**AFP**)

Paraguayan prosecutors charged ex-president Santiago Pena and took him into custody Saturday over a banking crisis that saw millions cut off from their money and sparked major protests.

Pena, Paraguay's youngest-ever president, was removed from office by the Senate on Friday, just three days after the collapse of a leading bank with which he had business links.

He had offered to resign but lawmakers impeached him instead, thereby stripping him of the immunity he would have enjoyed had he stepped down. In a fast-moving sequence of events, he was brought before prosecutors on Saturday and charged with "breach of trust and mismanagement for personal gain."

After a hearing with Pena, Judge Hernan Otazu told reporters he had ordered the former president taken into pre-trial custody and held at the same Asuncion facility where he was taken after his removal from office on Friday. An indictment against Pena states that "between 2023 and 2026, UENO BANK SA allegedly received deposits and loans from public and pension entities" and that it "was also allegedly granting loans to companies linked to the bank's economic group in an irregular manner."

Pena was grilled for around three hours over his links to Ueno Bank, a digital-first fintech company with which nearly half of Paraguay's population of 6.5mn have accounts.

The 47-year-old economist owned shares in Ueno Holding, the controlling company of the bank, until he sold them last year. Prosecutors asked that his assets and those of former Central Bank president Carlos Carvallo, who is charged with the same offenses, be frozen. During the hearing Pena declined to make a statement, Otazu said. Pena spent Friday night in custody after being arrested within an hour of his lightning-fast Senate impeachment trial.

Protesters gathered outside his home to demand he be locked up in a regular prison. "We want to see the person responsible for this tragedy in jail. Jail for Pena!" Macarena Chilavert, a 33-year-old lawyer, told AFP near the prosecutor's office.

Pena was replaced by former vice president Pedro Alliana, who promised not to abandon the almost three million depositors.

Trump vows comeback as he enters 'lame duck' period

AFP
Washington



President Donald Trump speak as his White House Deputy Chief of Staff Stephen Miller stands beside him in the Oval Office at the White House in Washington DC. (**Reuters/File Photo**)

US President Donald Trump vowed a political comeback yesterday after his Republican Party lost control of both houses of Congress in midterm elections that amounted to an unequivocal repudiation of his turbulent presidency.

The devastating result leaves Trump politically hamstrung as he enters the remaining two-year 'lame duck' period of his White House tenure, while opening the door to multiple investigations by the Democrat-controlled Congress of the president, his family and senior members of his administration.

"America took a giant step back in History with the results of the last Election," Trump said in a post on Truth Social, adding that the stock market that had grown during his tenure took a loss after the vote. "But have no fear, we will be back, BIGGER AND STRONGER THAN EVER BEFORE!"

While the resounding election loss last Tuesday has prompted soul-searching among Republican lawmakers, Trump has sounded defiant.

On Friday, he appointed hardline advisor Stephen Miller as his new chief of staff, signaling a bare-knuckle fightback.

Democrats, meanwhile, have pledged to hold the Trump administration to account and fight against Miller, architect of Trump's tough immigration policy.

Amid Democrat threats for administration officials to "lawyer up," Trump said Saturday he was ordering the Justice Department to examine Democratic threats to impeach members of his administration, likening it to "extortion."

That stance stoked a war of words between top Republicans and Democrats on US political shows yesterday.

Attorney General Todd Blanche, a former personal lawyer for Trump and now head of the Justice Department, vowed to actively defend Trump and senior members of his administration.

"You have members of Congress who, after Tuesday, have done nothing but threaten everything that's happening in this administration," Blanche told CNN, citing impeachment threats against Miller after his appointment.

"If they try to come after Stephen Miller...instead of actually just conducting oversight and leading, of course the Department of Justice will be there to defend him."

Robert Garcia, the ranking Democrat on the House Oversight Committee, took aim at Blanche, saying one role of Congress under the US constitution is to hold the executive branch to account.

"All he wants to do is protect Donald Trump, is protect Donald Trump's cabinet and administration officials. That is not his job," Garcia told CNN, vowing to stop corruption and investigate "those that are committing crimes against the American public."

"They can come after us however they want. We're not going to be intimidated," added Garcia.

With control of committees in both chambers, Democrats can summon officials, demand documents and hold public hearings, , putting Trump and his senior aides under intense scrutiny.

Likely subjects include the Trump family's business and cryptocurrency dealings, government contracts involving billionaire Elon Musk, cuts to federal agencies, immigration enforcement and the conduct of the Iran war.

During his first presidency, Trump himself was impeached by the House of Representatives twice, but on both occasions he was acquitted by the Senate.

Sudan army arrests former ruling party leader

AFP
Khartoum



Ahmed Haroun talks during a Reuters interview in Khartoum. (**Reuters/File Photo**)

Sudan's army-aligned authorities yesterday arrested Ahmed Haroun, the head of ousted dictator Omar al-Bashir's ruling National Congress party and a leading figure, a security official told AFP yesterday. Haroun was "taken into custody based on legal procedures", the source said, requesting anonymity because they were not authorised to speak to the media.

The leader, who is wanted for war crimes and crimes against humanity by the International Criminal Court, was first arrested in April 2019, after Bashir was ousted following mass protests.

He was jailed until 2023, when he and other former regime leaders escaped prison in an apparent jailbreak at the start of the war between Sudan's army and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces.

Haroun has since reappeared rallying support for the Sudanese army, drawing accusations against army chief Abdel Fattah al-Burhan that he had welcomed militants from the former regime back into the fold.

He had maintained a relatively low profile until Friday, when he gave a high-visibility four-hour interview to a podcast, in which he affirmed support for Burhan, who he said was "affected by publicity" and "international pressure" against the militants.

Burhan, a career soldier who rose through the ranks of Bashir's military dictatorship, has used leaders to rally political and military support, according to sources in his government. But Sudan's de facto leader has come under pressure from the US, which has tried to broker peace talks, along with his allies Saudi Arabia and Egypt, to distance himself from militants. Bashir's ouster in April 2019 had raised hopes for a transition to democracy, before Burhan and his then-deputy, RSF commander Mohamed Hamdan Daglo, ousted civilians from a transitional government in 2021.

A long-simmering feud between them broke out in war in April 2023, after a final power struggle over the planned integration of the RSF into the regular army. The army has since relied on a coalition of militias to fight the RSF, including fighters.

The ICC has for years called for the surrender of Haroun and Bashir himself, who was moved from an army hospital before the onset of the war and remains in an undisclosed location.

Delhi world's most polluted major city on eve of Diwali, Swiss group ranking says

Reuters
Bengaluru

Delhi was the world's most polluted major city on Saturday morning, according to Swiss group IQAir's live ranking, as the Indian capital faced severe pollution forecasts a day before Diwali, the Hindu festival of lights.

India has ordered schools in and around Delhi to offer online classes, and encouraged people to work from home ahead of Diwali yesterday, which is usually marked by the widespread use of firecrackers that further worsen the air quality.

IQAir ranked Delhi first among the world's major cities at 10:35am, with a US air quality index reading of 581, double that of Lahore in neighbouring Pakistan, at 285.

IQAir's reading, based on concentrations of air pollutants, is not directly comparable to India's official index, which uses a different scale and methodology.

India's Central Pollution Control Board put Delhi's air quality index at 363 at 10am, in the "very poor" category. Friday's air quality in Delhi was the worst pre-Diwali air in eight years, local media said, citing official data.

Pollution is an annual problem in many parts of northern India from the onset of winter as cold, heavy air traps vehicle emissions, construction dust and smoke from crop-waste burning.

Aramco skyscraper damaged in Houthis attack on Riyadh's financial district

AFP
Riyadh

An Aramco building in Riyadh was targeted in an "attempted attack", the Saudi energy ministry said yesterday, with eyewitnesses telling AFP the skyscraper sustained damage, after the Saudi-led coalition fighting Yemen's Houthis said it had intercepted missiles launched by the group.

Aramco facilities and infrastructure have been repeatedly struck by the Houthis in recent months, with tankers, refineries, storage areas and the company headquarters all targeted by the group.

"Aramco tower in KAFD has been targeted, that's the sure thing," an eyewitness told AFP, referring to the King Abdullah Financial District. Two other witnesses confirmed seeing damage to the building.

A 2022 truce that had paused fighting in Yemen's long-running conflict fell apart in July, and Saudi Arabia has since traded blows with the Houthis, who have struck Saudi airports, energy infrastructure and military sites.

The Iran-backed Houthis seized the Yemeni capital Sanaa in 2014, with the Saudi-led coalition entering the conflict a year later in support of the government.

One eyewitness in the area of the Aramco skyscraper told AFP they saw a projectile strike the building but they were unsure what type of projectile it was.

The King Abdullah Financial District is one of the most visible manifestations of the kingdom's ongoing economic and social reforms drive, with towering glass skyscrapers, high-end retail outlets and green spaces dotting the area.

KAFD is home to some of the kingdom's biggest home-grown companies and blue-chip international firms like Goldman Sachs.

The headquarters of the kingdom's influential sovereign wealth fund — the Public Investment Fund — and the Saudi stock exchange are also located in the heart of the district.

Targeting the area, which is also home to residential housing and a large metro station with heavy commuter traffic during the morning rush hour, would mark a major escalation in the kingdom's fight with the Houthis.

"I see this as an attack on the credibility of Vision 2030 as much as on Aramco itself," Andreas Krieg of London-based risk consultancy MENA analytica told AFP, referencing Saudi Arabia's economic diversification plan.

"It raises the political costs of Saudi Arabia's Yemen campaign, strengthens those demanding military escalation and undermines the argument that Riyadh can restore deterrence through airpower. The Houthis are making Saudi Arabia's economic transformation hostage to an increasingly unwinnable war."

Multiple floors of the Aramco tower appeared to have sustained damage, said a witness, with glass shattered and damage to part of the tower's facade visible.

The energy ministry said in a statement that "an administrative building belonging to Saudi Aramco in Riyadh was subjected to an attempted attack today".

"The incident resulted in falling shrapnel that caused minor damage to the building, with no injuries or fatalities reported, thankfully."

The kingdom's interior ministry has repeatedly warned residents against filming and publishing images of drones, missiles, air defence interceptors and the impacts of barrages.

The attack comes hours after the kingdom's education ministry announced, late on Saturday, the return of in-person learning at schools after weeks of remote learning in Riyadh following an earlier wave of strikes.

Coalition spokesperson Turki al-Malki, in yesterday's morning social media post, said that "air defences intercepted and destroyed two ballistic missiles launched by the Houthi terrorist militia towards Riyadh", as loud explosions were heard in the Saudi capital.

The kingdom has been pressing allies for help as it comes under daily fire from the Houthis that recently seized swathes of the Red Sea coastline from the Riyadh-backed government.

Thousands of Syrian troops are set to deploy to Saudi Arabia and Yemen, with some already on the ground, multiple Yemeni officials told AFP.

The United Nations says more than 1,600 people have been killed and more than 300,000 displaced since fighting resumed in impoverished Yemen.

The fragile 2022 truce fell apart after the Houthis allowed an Iranian plane to land in Yemen's capital Sanaa in defiance of Saudi control over Yemeni airspace, setting off a spate of attacks.

Later, the Houthis declared a maritime blockade of Saudi Arabia and began hitting its ships, territory and oil facilities, before seizing Yemen's entire Red Sea coast in a lightning campaign.

OPINION

What's next after NZ vote?

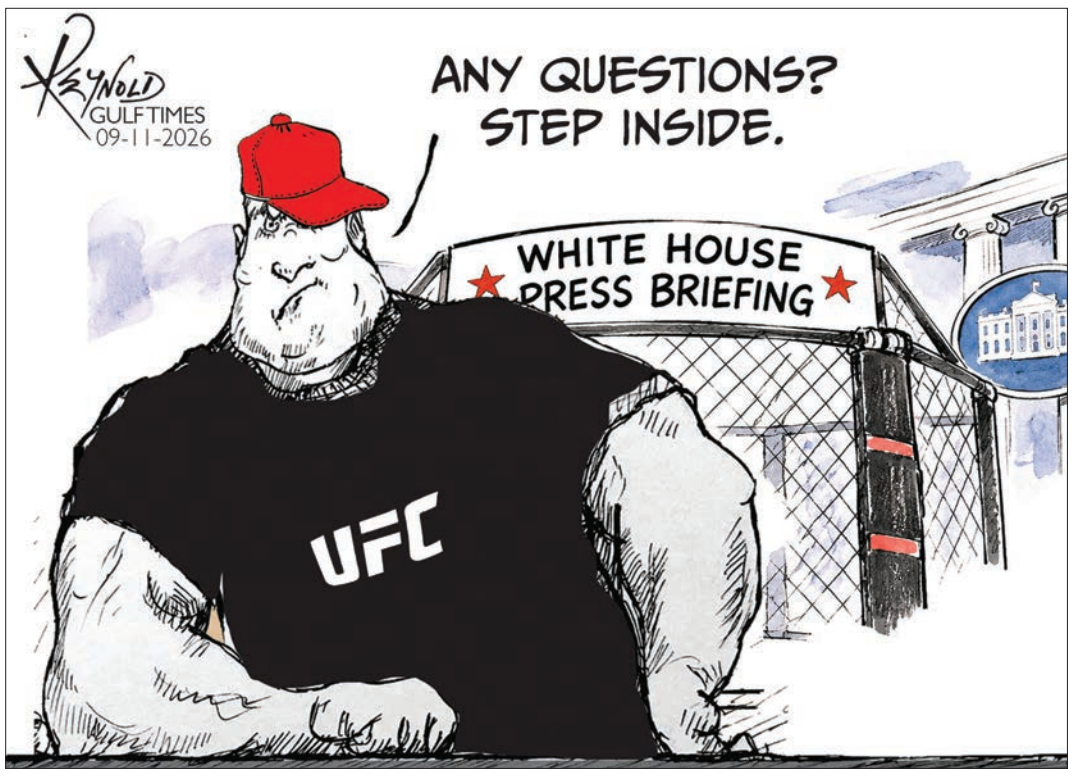
New Zealand's governing coalition hoped to hang on to power based on an initial vote count in the general election on Saturday, but the shape of the next government will not become clear until official results are announced on November 27. An initial vote count showed the current governing coalition of the centre-right National Party, the right-wing ACT Party and the nationalist New Zealand First with a slim majority of 67 seats in the 131-seat parliament, according to provisional results from the Electoral Commission. National won 42 seats, ACT netted 13 and New Zealand First got 12. That gives the trio a chance to remain in power.

But the outcome could change. About 14% of the vote or 399,365 ballots must still be counted. These "special votes" include ballots from voters away from home, who have historically favoured left-leaning parties. The beneficiaries could include the Green Party, Te Pati Maori and the Labour Party. Labour is currently the biggest party in Parliament not part of the governing coalition. Official final results are due on November 27. Once special votes are in, parties will know how many seats they need to form a government and will start negotiating either a coalition or looser alliances known as confidence and supply agreements.

Under those deals, a smaller party agrees to support a larger party's government on key votes, without taking cabinet seats. The final tally could give the centrist Opportunity Party, which is entering parliament for the first time and argues for evidence-based policies, a kingmaker role.

National leader and Prime Minister Christopher Luxon has previously ruled out working with the party, but Opportunity has said it is willing to discuss joining forces. Both Luxon and Labour leader Chris Hipkins have said they will wait for the final result before starting coalition discussions. Hipkins in late October said he would like to have a government in place before Christmas. Parliament has to meet on or before January 14.

The incumbent government, the National-led coalition, will continue to operate as a caretaker government while the new government is formed. According to New Zealand's parliamentary website, a caretaker government can continue the normal business of the country but cannot make any significant decisions on its own except in an emergency or crisis. — Reuters



The Crown took its cut



By Jasim al-Azzawi

On October 30, British Prime Minister Andy Burnham said he was open to apologising for Britain's role in the transatlantic slave trade. But he ruled out financial reparations before the proposed dialogue had begun. "I do not believe that is the right answer," he wrote. Caribbean leaders identified the omission: "An apology without repair is incomplete."

The history Britain must confront is not confined to Bristol merchants and Liverpool shipowners. Britain transported more than 3mn enslaved Africans across the Atlantic. The Crown did not merely tolerate the business. It supplied ships, granted monopolies, and acquired financial interests in it.

In 1564, Elizabeth I lent John Hawkins the 700-tonne Jesus of Lübeck for his second slave-trading voyage. His expedition acquired captives through purchase and violence, then sold more than 400 Africans in the Spanish Caribbean. The following year, Hawkins received a coat of arms whose crest depicted a bound African. Enslavement had become a public emblem of advancement.

The Stuarts institutionalized royal participation. Charles II chartered the Company of Royal Adventurers in 1660; its successor, the Royal African Company, received its charter in 1672. His brother James, Duke of York, governed and invested in the enterprise. Captives were branded "DY," for the duke, or with company initials. The Smithsonian describes the company as having shipped more enslaved Africans to the Americas than any other institution.

In 1689, Edward Colston transferred £1,000 of company stock to William III. Protesters pulled Colston's statue into Bristol Harbor in 2020. The royal recipient deserves a place in the same reckoning. Under Queen Anne, the 1713 Utrecht settlement secured Britain the asiento, the contract to supply enslaved Africans to Spanish America. Anne assigned it to the South Sea Company. Proposed financial arrangements reserved her a personal share of its profits. George I and George II subsequently served as company governors.

Royal resistance to abolition followed. In 1799, the Duke of Clarence, the future William IV, defended West Indian planters, claiming he could "bear witness to their good conduct." He was king when Parliament legislated to compensate the owners of enslaved people.

That payment is the clearest entry in the ledger.

The Slavery Abolition Act of 1833, effective the following year, formally emancipated more than 800,000 people in most British colonies. Parliament allocated £20mn to their owners, approximately 40% of annual government expenditure. The formerly enslaved received nothing. Many were compelled to continue working without pay under "apprenticeship."

The scheme was financed partly through borrowing. The government refinanced that debt into later securities, one of which was redeemed in 2015. How much original borrowing survived into the consolidated debt is unknown. The familiar repayment claim therefore needs qualification. The beneficiaries do not: public money compensated owners for losing their claims over human beings.

Caribbean governments propose education, healthcare, development programs, voluntary repatriation, debt cancellation and monetary compensation. These are matters for negotiation, not demands that every British citizen confess inherited guilt. Burnham offers debt restructuring, with Gordon Brown helping lead the effort.

Such measures could bring benefits. But CARICOM's chair drew the necessary distinction: "Debt relief, however welcome, cannot be offered as a substitute for reparatory justice." Debt cancellation negotiated as repair differs from restructuring offered instead of responsibility.

In March, 123 countries supported a UN declaration calling the trafficking and racialised chattel enslavement of Africans "the gravest crime against humanity." The United States, Israel and Argentina opposed it. Britain and all 27 EU members abstained.

Britain objected to the legal framing and ranking of atrocities. The declaration was not a damages judgment; abstention was not support for slavery. But objections to one resolution do not answer the demand for repair.

Kemi Badenoch says Britain should not pay for "a crime we helped eradicate". Abolition deserves recognition. It does not cancel centuries of exploitation. Nor does personal innocence resolve institutional responsibility. Britain carried obligations to compensate owners across generations. Why should negotiations about their victims founder on the discovery that generations have passed?

Reform UK proposes denying new visas to nationals of countries demanding reparations. That would punish individuals for their governments' pursuit of a historical claim. Britain's institutions can make finer distinctions. In 2024, an employment tribunal found David Miller's particular anti-Zionist beliefs protected and his dismissal from Bristol University unfair, wrongful and discriminatory.

It also called his conduct toward students "culpable and blameworthy" and ordered a 50% reduction in unfair-dismissal awards. The 2026 appeal upheld the central findings but remitted part of the compensation analysis. This was not blanket protection for every anti-Zionist statement.

Jewish students deserve protection from antisemitism and mistreatment. Lawful criticism of Israel must not automatically be treated as hostility toward Jewish people. Palestinian rights, however, do not depend on a professor winning an employment case. In July 2024, the International Court of Justice concluded that Israel's continued presence in the Occupied Palestinian Territory was unlawful and must end as rapidly as possible.

It identified obligations to make reparation and duties on other states not to recognize or assist the unlawful situation. This was an advisory opinion, not a damages award against Britain. Elizabeth supplied the ship. Hawkins received the coat of arms. Generations later, Parliament found money to compensate the owners. Their victims' descendants are still being told that repair is the wrong answer. The Crown took its cut. The bill is still open.

• *The writer is a prominent news anchor, programme presenter and media instructor.*



British PM Andy Burnham speaks at a conference in Liverpool. (**Reuters**)

After 11 years, laws of political gravity catches up with Trump



By Kristian Coates Ulrichsen

More than 11 years since he descended a golden escalator in Trump Tower to declare his run for president, the laws of political gravity have finally caught up with Donald Trump. The significant gains which saw the Democrats take back control of both the Senate and the House of Representatives will mean that the final two years of the second Trump presidency will be mired in political feuding and likely investigations into administration decisions.

In addition, the jockeying for position ahead of the 2028 presidential election will increasingly take centre-stage, as the long-awaited transition to a post-Trump area at last takes shape.

With two Senate and about 25 House seats still to declare a result, the Democrats have matched their 41-seat gain in the House in the 2018 midterms, during Trump's first term, and may yet record their biggest majority in the lower chamber since 1992.

Back then, the Democrats had held the House majority for 40 years, a remarkable run which has since given way to an era of alternating control and, in recent years, often wafer-thin margins. Not since 2010, when Republicans gained 63 seats during Barack Obama's first midterm contest, has a party in opposition done so much political damage to the incumbent in the White House.

Whereas successive rounds of electoral redistricting (or gerrymandering) have steadily reduced the potential for parties to make significant gains in the House, the pattern of results in the Senate provide a fuller picture of the defeat suffered by Republicans on November 3. Democrats not only held onto all the seats they were defending, including those in Michigan and Georgia that were considered marginal contests earlier in the year, and won the seat in North Carolina that most observers had expected, but they also flipped six other races, including in Kansas, which elected a Democratic Senator for the first time since 1932, and Texas, which did so for the first time since 1988 amid Democrat wins in other state contests.

Similar results up and down the ballot compounded the scale of the setback for the White House, as Democrats won five governorships from Republicans, including in Texas, to give them a majority of governors the first time since 2010.

Further down the ballot, the Democrats also gained control of hundreds of statewide positions and flipped at least 12 legislative chambers across the 50 states. In five of the seven swing states which decided the presidential election in 2024, the Democrats now control a 'trifecta' of governor's office and upper and lower chambers, in Arizona, Michigan, Nevada, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin. These gains may become consequential in shaping electoral decisions in the 2028 election.

By and large, the midterm results amount to a repudiation of Trump's second-term agenda rather than an overwhelming endorsement of the Democrats' message. Too many people felt directly affected by policy decisions which worsened the cost of living pressures that had made affordability the central plank of Trump's successful campaign two years ago.

Having promised to bring down prices on day one, voters across the country felt the pinch from sharply rising petrol and diesel prices as a result of Trump's war of choice against Iran,

which also went against another promise to keep out of 'stupid foreign wars that never end! Heavy-handed actions by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents also horrified many Americans, including Hispanic voters who abandoned the Republicans in droves.

Historians of the future may look back at the 'MAGA Age' in American politics as a bounded era which started in 2015 and ended in 2026, at least in its current version.

After all, the Make America Great Again movement grew out of the Tea Party which erupted onto the political scene in the late-2000s, and, before that, from Pat Buchanan's fiery advocacy of right-wing populism in his 1992 challenge to George H W Bush for the Republican nomination. This is to say that the populist forces which Trump was able to mobilise so powerfully for a decade are unlikely to subside but rather will evolve into an as-yet unknown new political form.

From the start of its current inception in 2015, MAGA has been intertwined with Trump to the extent that it is difficult to imagine the one without the other. This inseparability has enabled Trump to withstand setbacks that would have definitively derailed the careers of most other politicians, not least in the wake of the January 6 riots at the Capitol in 2021.

The feeling that Trump could do (almost) anything and get away with it was also foreshadowed in the then candidate Trump's infamous comment, in January 2016, that "I could stand in the middle of Fifth Avenue and shoot somebody, and I wouldn't lose any votes." It is this perception of impunity, at least in the eyes of the voters, that has been shattered by the midterm results.

Signs of fracturing within MAGA were already becoming evident in 2025, especially in the aftermath of the assassination of Charlie Kirk in September. Kirk, the youthful founder of the Turning Point USA movement, had emerged as a critical unifying figure in the movement and his sudden death created a void which others rushed to try and fill.

It was noticeable that intra-MAGA rivalries and splits intensified in the months after Kirk's death as notable figures turned on each other, whether on issues related to Israel, the Iran war, or the Epstein files. In addition, Kirk had been a key supporter of Vice-President J D Vance and had been expected to play a central role in securing MAGA support for Vance as the appointed heir to Trump.

Going forward, Trump's control of a disillusioned MAGA base will likely ebb further just as his political authority slips away as Republicans position themselves for the campaign to secure the party's nomination in 2028. Ron DeSantis's failed campaign in 2024 showed how hard it was to inherit Trump's mantle, and others, such as Vance or Secretary of State Marco Rubio, may similarly find it an insurmountable challenge.

• *The writer is a leading scholar specialising in Gulf politics and international political economy, and a fellow at the Baker Institute and co-director of the Middle East Energy Roundtable.*



US President Donald Trump speaks to reporters at the White House in Washington, DC. (**AFP**)

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Demonstrators holding Palestinian flags gather during a Red Line protest outside the Van Gogh Museum in Amsterdam. (**AFP**)

Dutch take to the streets in support of Palestinians

AFP
Amsterdam

Tens of thousands of people dressed in red thronged the streets of Amsterdam yesterday to denounce ongoing violence against Palestinians in Gaza, carrying signs reading "Stop the Genocide". Organisers said some 20,000 people attended the "red line" protest, demanding that the Dutch government take action against Israel.

"Stop sending weapons to Israel," one of the protesters, Steven Eisinger, a 33-year-old robotics engineer originally from the US, told AFP, wearing a red scarf around his neck. "I'm Jewish myself, I have family that's actually in Israel, living, and I wanted to really say, look I support Palestine and I'm anti-genocide."

A fragile ceasefire between Hamas and Israel came into effect in October last year, after two years of war.

But an acute humanitarian crisis persists in the Gaza Strip, alongside regular Israeli strikes, while settler violence against Palestinians in the occupied West Bank has intensified. Unlike other European countries such as France and Belgium, the Netherlands has not recognised the state of Palestine.

Prime Minister Rob Jetten attended a similar protest when he was a parliamentary candidate in 2025. On Friday, he told reporters that it would now be "inappropriate" for him to take part.

At the end of September, the Dutch government brought in a ban on products from Israeli settlements in the occupied Palestinian territories, which are deemed illegal under international law.

Israel's Foreign Minister Gideon Saar revoked the accreditation of Dutch diplomats in response.

The Netherlands has withdrawn from the 2027 Eurovision Song Contest, with public broadcaster NPO citing the "sensitive" issue of Israel's participation.

Russia says hit power substations in Ukraine, 3 ships in Black Sea

Reuters
Moscow

Russia said yesterday overnight strikes by its forces had hit three cargo vessels that were carrying military goods for Ukraine and two electricity substations, which it said supplied power to the Ukrainian defence industry.

The Defence Ministry said Russian forces had struck a container ship delivering weapons and military equipment to the Black Sea port of Odesa, and another in the port of Chornomorsk, which is in the same southwestern region of Ukraine.

According to the ministry, the second container ship had delivered dual-use cargo to Ukraine. It said a third vessel, a dry cargo ship hit south-west of Odesa, was carrying weapons and military equipment for Ukraine's armed forces. The ministry also said Russia had hit two power substations in Ukraine's Dnipropetrovsk and Zhytomyr regions, both of which it said powered military-industrial enterprises.

Poland calls Krakow shooting rampage 'terrorist' attack

AFP
Kraków


A man with a dog passes by a makeshift memorial of flowers and candles on the main market in Krakow. (**AFP**)

Poland yesterday launched a terrorism probe as mourners brought candles and flowers to Krakow's cordoned-off Main Market Square in tribute to six people killed by a gunman who authorities said was "fascinated by far-right ideologies".

The 24-year-old Polish man opened fire at random Saturday in the historic centre of the country's second city, in what Prime Minister Donald Tusk called an act of "terrorism".

A 32-year-old British man and a 51-year-old Austrian woman were among the dead, the Malopolska region's governor Krzysztof Kleczar told reporters. The four others killed were Polish.

Among the 15 wounded were nationals from Germany, Portugal and Russia, an interior ministry spokeswoman said.

Three more bodies were found at the suspect's home in Ostrowiec Swietokrzyski, around 150 km northeast of Krakow. Police said they were his parents and a sister.

The gunman was wounded in a shootout with police and was in critical condition in hospital.

The National Prosecutor's Office said it had launched a terrorism investigation. "I'm absolutely devastated," Weronika Filar, 27, a Krakow resident, told AFP yesterday.

"It's one of the safest places on Earth, genuinely... I did not expect anything like this to happen to us," she said. "Our city will never be the same."

"We've heard of various incidents of this sort happening elsewhere in Europe," Krzysztof Stepien, a 28-year-old part-time city guide told AFP.

"Nothing like this has ever happened here, and I hope it never will again," Stepien said.

Two police officers were wounded as they chased the suspect, who was masked and dressed in military garb, including a bulletproof vest. The man left his car at an intersection and started shooting at the officers with a semi-automatic rifle, according to police.

Social media images showed the two police officers firing at the gunman, with one managing to wound him despite his own injuries. One police officer was in serious but stable condition, the interior ministry said, as quoted by PAP.

Police named him as "Jakub Kulik, who without hesitation confronted an armed attacker".

Yesterday, the usually busy site of the attack was sealed off with red-and-white tape. Most of the souvenir shops, restaurants and cafes remained closed.

Black flags and Poland's flags with black ribbons were seen in the city as Warsaw announced two days of national mourning for the victims from yesterday.

The suspect was named in the media as Michal O.

Police said the three bodies found at the gunman's home were those of his parents, a 53-year-old man and a 52-year-old woman, and of his 21-year-old sister.

Police officers were still inspecting the flat of the suspect in Ostrowiec Swietokrzyski, an AFP reporter saw.

"Injuries were found on the bodies, which were preliminarily assessed as gunshot wounds... Seven firearms were seized from the flat," police said.

Interior Minister Marcin Kierwinski said police had also found weapons in the suspect's car. According to investigators quoted in the Polish media, Michal O had no previous criminal record.

He was a member of a shooting club, along with his father.

Britain's Prime Minister Andy Burnham said he was "shocked and saddened by the appalling shooting".

Erdogan visits Azerbaijan to ease rift

AFP
Baku


President Erdogan and Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev hold hands during a press conference in Shusha, Azerbaijan, (**Reuters**)

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan arrived in Azerbaijan yesterday for Victory Day celebrations, hoping to ease an unusually public rift between two close regional allies.

Tensions flared in September, when Baku revised school uniform regulations to prohibit additions deemed incompatible with secular education, effectively barring Islamic headscarves from classrooms. Erdogan's government has dismantled restrictions on hijabs in Turkiye. Baku's move sparked protests at home and drew criticism from Erdogan's ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP), including presidential adviser Oktay Saral, who demanded that Azerbaijan reverse the restrictions.

Aliyev's ruling party, Yeni Azerbaijan, denounced such comments as "interference in Azerbaijan's internal affairs".

Baku also declared 31 Turkish nationals, including an opposition lawmaker and party leaders, persona non grata over critical social media posts. Erdogan subsequently dismissed Saral, but Aliyev stayed away from the October 30 summit of Turkic leaders in Ankara — despite a personal invitation from Erdogan. Instead, he sent Foreign Minister Jeyhun Bayramov.

Yesterday, Erdogan arrived in Azerbaijn's Fizuli district, which Baku recaptured in 2020 from Armenian separatist forces.

A guard of honour was lined up at the local airport, where Aliyev and First Lady Mehriban Aliyeva, welcomed Erdogan and his wife Emine, Azerbaijani media reported. Erdogan is expected to hold a joint press conference with Aliyev later in the afternoon.

Ahead of his visit, Erdogan congratulated "dear brother" Aliyev, on Azerbaijan's "great victory" in its 2020 war with Armenia.

Baku at the time retook part of the breakaway Karabakh region and surrounding districts, before seizing the rest of Karabakh in 2023. In the letter, Erdogan expressed confidence that "Drawing strength from our unwavering bonds of friendship and brotherhood, founded on the principle of 'One nation, two states,' the two countries would continue to work in "close co-operation and solidarity." He said earlier that he hoped the trip would provide an opportunity to take "necessary steps".

"There is no obstacle that the brotherhood between Turkiye and Azerbaijan cannot overcome," he told reporters on Thursday.

Analysts say the quarrel also reflects deeper disagreements over Baku's diplomatic independence and its close ties to Israel.

"Azerbaijan-Turkiye tensions stemmed from the fact that Baku does not see itself as the younger brother in this alliance and insists on relations between equal partners," Elkhan Shahinoglu, head of the Baku-based Atlas Research Centre, told AFP. "The hijab dispute is a symptom of a deeper rift," Gonul Tol, an analyst at the Washington-based Middle East Institute, wrote on X.

"Tensions have long simmered over a number of issues including Azerbaijan's sovereignty, Ankara's influence in Baku, diverging policies toward Israel, and Turkiye's rapprochement with Armenia."

Baku has forged strong military and economic ties with Israel, which supplied Azerbaijan with weapons during its 2020 war with Armenia over the breakaway Karabakh region.

This has angered Ankara, which has grown increasingly hostile towards Israel over the war in Gaza. Erdogan has accused the Jewish state of genocide.

Turkiye is also seeking to normalise relations with Armenia, whose border it closed in the 1990s in solidarity with Azerbaijan, while linking progress to Armenian-Azerbaijani peace efforts.

Zaporizhzhia nuclear plant loses power supply

Reuters
Moscow

The Russian-controlled Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant in south-eastern Ukraine has lost its external electricity supply and is again using backup generators for reactor cooling, the plant's management and the UN's nuclear watchdog said yesterday.

Zaporizhzhia, which produces no electricity but needs power supplied by two external links to keep nuclear fuel cool, lost its off-site electricity supply after the Ferosplavna power line disconnected, the International Atomic Energy Agency said. "The cause and location of the latest disconnection are not yet known," the IAEA said in an X post, adding that the plant currently has sufficient fuel reserves to operate a limited number of emergency diesel generators for about two weeks. The IAEA said on October 23 that the main Dniprovska power line remained unavailable.

In early September, a local ceasefire brokered by the IAEA took effect to allow repairs to restore external power to Zaporizhzhia, which at that time had been without it since August 20. Russia seized the nuclear plant, Europe's largest with six reactors, in the first weeks of the war that began with Moscow's February 2022 invasion of its smaller neighbour. Moscow and Kyiv have since regularly accused each other of military action that compromises nuclear safety.

The plant's Russian-installed management said the Ferosplavna line had been shut down by "automatic protection", adding that radiation levels on the site and in the surveillance zone were normal. "Staff at the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant are monitoring all operational parameters of the equipment.

'Europeans will join Ukraine talks in Abu Dhabi'

Reuters
Paris

Europeans will participate in talks on Ukraine in Abu Dhabi next week, French Foreign Minister Jean-Noel Barrot said yesterday.

"The Europeans will be well represented; France will be in Abu Dhabi to take part in these discussions," Barrot told French radio station RTL in an interview.

"I can't tell you yet who will be representing France on this occasion, but France will certainly be there," he added.

US envoy Steve Witkoff said on Monday Washington would bring delegations from Ukraine and Russia together in Abu Dhabi on November 10-11 to discuss ending Moscow's war against Ukraine, post-war security agreements and de-escalation.

How China's clean-tech machine is reshaping the global climate fight

Reuters
Beijing/Washington/ London

China sent $132bn in clean technology and investment to the developing world last year, by far the largest contribution to carbon-dioxide reduction of any country. In fact, the nation's green-manufacturing juggernaut, built in part through heavy subsidies from Beijing, nearly matches the current total of grants, loans and private finance that all wealthy countries sent to poorer ones in 2024 to help fight climate change, according to a Reuters analysis.

Those loans and grants stemmed from a climate-finance programme the world's wealthiest nations agreed to at a 2009 UN climate conference on the premise that industrialised nations made outsized contributions to the climate crisis — and had outsized means to help poorer countries pay to clean it up.

A Reuters investigation in 2024 found that most global climate finance comes in the form of loans — and sometimes at market interest rates that funnel billions of dollars back to rich countries.

China took a different approach, funneling billions in subsidies into its own green-energy industries, serving its own national interest to dominate next-generation manufacturing domestically and globally.

The result: massive and rapid market-share gains in solar panels, batteries and battery minerals, electric vehicles, wind turbines and other green products.

China remains by far the world's biggest greenhouse-gas emitter because of its large population, concentration of heavy industry and reliance on coal power. But its huge clean tech exports mean it has also become among the biggest global forces in reducing climate-damaging emissions.

Those exports alone will help the Global South avoid 257mn metric tons of carbon dioxide emissions ($MtCO_2$) per year once deployed — an amount equal to the annual carbon dioxide emissions of France, according to analysis by Lauri Myllyvirta, co-founder of the Helsinki-based Centre for Research on Energy and Clean Air. This year's exports from China, meanwhile, are on track to avoid 337 $MtCO_2$ in the Global South, the analysis shows.

The OECD estimates a fifth of all rich world climate giving in 2024 came from the private sector. The UN Framework Convention on Climate Change and the High Ambition Coalition — an informal coalition of nations that has advocated for substantial climate finance — did not immediately comment for this story.

The $132bn figure derived by Reuters for China's global climate contribution also includes an estimated $40bn of Chinese foreign direct investment into clean-technology projects in developing countries. The investment data was compiled by Mathias Larsen and Xiaokang Xue at the London School of Economics.

That brings China's contribution to nearly equal to the $137bn in climate finance that wealthy nations provided to poorer ones in 2024 under their UN climate pledges, according to the most recent figures provided by the OECD. The figures are not directly comparable. China's total largely reflects commercial transactions focused on clean energy development, while climate finance can also support other types of programmes like developing climate-resilient agricultural techniques or cleaning up damage from major storms or floods.

But the comparison illustrates the extraordinary scale at which China's manufacturing economy is now shaping the energy transition in poorer countries.

The findings point to a potential shift in the mechanics of the global energy transition, according to Li Shuo, a veteran observer of China at UN climate talks who heads the China Climate Hub at the Asia Society Policy Institute.

For years, climate talks focused on how much money and technology wealthy countries would provide to poorer ones to help them decarbonise. China's manufacturing boom is creating another pathway: Driving down the price of clean technology through self-interested innovation and scale — until developing countries adopt it for economic reasons.

"You can align it to your economic agenda," he said.

Beijing has so far shown little interest in translating its commercial might into diplomatic leadership at global climate talks since President Donald Trump withdrew the US from international climate co-operation in 2025. China's diplomatic role likely will take centrr stage as nations gather this month for the UN's COP31 climate conference in Antalya, Turkiye.

Bilateral agreements between heavyweights Washington and Beijing have traditionally paved the way for international climate agreements, including the landmark 2015 Paris deal to limit global warming. But Beijing may be unwilling to go on alone without its geopolitical counterweight at the table, according to former climate negotiators.

"How China engages on different levels in the coming years is the most fundamental thing that is going to happen on climate because of both their role in clean-tech deployment... but also because of their emissions profile," said Jennifer Morgan, Germany's former climate minister.

China's Ministry of Commerce said the country is an important contributor to the global green transformation, and that its wind and solar exports have cumulatively reduced global emissions by roughly 4.1bn tons of CO_2 over the past five years — the equivalent of around 80% of the total emissions of the US in one year.

"Against the backdrop of a global climate governance 'action deficit,' China will continue to uphold a responsible attitude, working with other countries to address challenges, overcome difficulties, and jointly promote global green and low-carbon transformation and sustainable development," it said.

China has been by far the world's biggest supplier of electric vehicles over the past few years, as dozens of subsidised automakers have waged a fierce price war in China and dramatically increased exports.

The green transition has been similarly pragmatic in Pakistan, which imported 17GW worth of solar from China last year, according to data from Ember, roughly on par with Germany's installations that year.

QATAR



Four winners of Doha Design Prize 2026 honoured at ceremony

QNA
Doha

HE Chairperson of Qatar Museums Sheikha Al Mayassa bint Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani honoured the four winners of the Doha Design Prize 2026 at the Museum of Islamic Art yesterday.

The prize ceremony was attended by HE Sheikh Thani bin Hamad al-Thani; CEO of Qatar Museums, Mohammed Saad al-Rumaihi; HE Director of the National Museum of Qatar Sheikh Abdulaziz bin Hamad Al-Thani; as well as a number of prominent figures, intellectuals, and artists.

The winners were selected across four categories: Craft (Bahrain-Denmark): Mesh! by Bahraini-Danish, comprising Batool Alshaikh, Maitham Al-Mubarak and Christian Vennerstrøm, based in Bahrain. The project is crafted from reclaimed Cape teakwood that reinterprets traditional Bahraini woodworking and weaving techniques through interlocking wooden modules, creating a versatile piece that can function as a screen, room divider or free-standing element.

Product Design (Lebanon): PSI-01 (Power Supply Indicator 01) by Post Design Studio, represented by Dia Mrad. PSI-01 connects to the household board and shows the live source in light: green for solar, yellow for generator, red for the grid, and a red "OFF" panel when the city goes dark.

Furniture Design (Lebanon): Low Tide by Shaha Raphael. The project is an ode to the Mediterranean and to Lebanese artisanship. Tables, stools, mirrors and tableware appear shaped by the sea, suspending the spiral of fossils in stone and bending metal as if by an invisible wave.

Emerging Talent (Iran): Yasamin Shaikhi for The Spoils: Lights From Waste, a sculptural lighting piece made from cooked rice waste and date pits, addressing food waste in Qatar. The materials are pulped and pressed into translucent surfaces that emit a soft glow, turning discarded materials into a functional sculpture.

Selected from more than 550 applications from across the Middle East, North Africa and South Asia (MENASA) and its diasporas, the four winners were recognised for their outstanding contributions to contemporary design and their innovative approaches to craftsmanship, materials and creative production.

The prize is chaired by HE Chairperson of Qatar Museums Sheikha Al Mayassa. The winners were selected by a 24-member international jury headed by India Mahdavi. The prize provides winners with opportunities to develop their work and build connections with international design institutions and commercial partners. The four winners will receive a combined financial award of QR 800,000 (approximately $220,000), alongside a two-week mentorship programme at the Vitra Campus in Weil am Rhein, Germany, and one year of studio space at Liwan Design Studios and Labs in Doha. Additional support includes retail opportunities through Liberty London at Liberty Home Msheireb in Doha, as well as logistical assistance and business mentorship from DHL.

Speaking at the Design Doha Prize 2026 ceremony, Sheikha Al Mayassa recognised the winning designers and the creative talent across the region, emphasising Design Doha's ambition to connect designers with industries, investors and professional opportunities. "Design Doha is an investment: connecting talent with industry, designers with architects and developers, and regional creativity with public and private capital projects."

Sheikha Al Mayassa also acknowledged the determination of regional designers and the growing international recognition of their work. "When few believed in the creative power of our region, our creators persevered. Today, no one doubts it. There is now a movement, driven by beauty, proud of its origins and rooted in our ancestry, and it is unstoppable."

Addressing the wider challenges facing the region, she spoke about the power of culture to bring people and communities together. "This is culture as resilience and resistance. This is Qatar as a platform that unites."

Director of Design Doha Fahad al-Obaidly said: "The Design Doha Prize is about what comes next for these talented designers. We want to see their work move from prototypes to production, reach new markets and create new possibilities for their careers. With the support of our partners, we are connecting designers with the expertise, resources and networks that can help them take their ideas further. I am excited to see how this year's winners build on this recognition and where their work takes them next."

Head of the Design Doha Prize 2026 Jury India Mahdavi said: "What impressed me most about this year' winners was the individuality of their work. Each approaches design from a different perspective, with a personal understanding of materials, craftsmanship and cultural identity.

These are designers with their own creative languages, and it is exciting to see how they are contributing to the future of contemporary design. I hope the prize gives them the freedom and confidence to take their ideas further."

Design Doha Biennial 2026 runs through 31 January 2027. Centred in Fereej Al Asmakh, the biennial-including its headline exhibition, Arab Design Now 2026, curated by Noura al-Sayeh-features exhibitions, Public Design Commissions and cultural programmes across the city.

Qatar committed to cultural ambitions despite adversities: Sheikha Al Mayassa

By A Staff Reporter
Doha


HE Sheikha Al Mayassa bint Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani at the 11th Art for Tomorrow conference.

HE Sheikha Al Mayassa bint Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani, Chairperson of Qatar Museums (QM), spoke about Qatar's ability to deliver its most ambitious cultural season yet despite ongoing global challenges, during a conversation with internationally renowned architect Lord Norman Foster at the 11th Art for Tomorrow conference.

Held on Thursday at Fereej Al Asmakh as part of Design Doha Biennial 2026 opening, the conversation, titled "The Future is a Design Question", was moderated by Aric Chen, director of the Zaha Hadid Foundation.

Sheikha Al Mayassa pointed to the extensive programme of exhibitions, cultural events and creative initiatives launched across Qatar over the past two weeks as part of the Qatar Creates Fall/Winter 2026–27 season.

She spoke about the country's determination to pursue its cultural ambitions despite the uncertainty and challenges affecting the wider region. "With the unlimited challenges that we face due to the geopolitics, we're still able to realise the most ambitious season yet," she said.

Her remarks followed two weeks of major cultural openings and international gatherings across Qatar as part of the Qatar Creates Fall/Winter 2026–27 season, including the opening of the second edition of Design Doha Biennial. The biennial has welcomed artists, designers, architects and cultural leaders from around the world, demonstrating Qatar's ability to continue developing its cultural sector and connecting creative communities despite the wider geopolitical climate.

Sheikha Al Mayassa also discussed how Qatar's cultural development is guided by a clear national vision, supported by investment in education, creative industries and opportunities for future generations. "I think what Qatar had with its leadership is a political will," she said, explaining that every development is guided by an intention and an understanding of what is needed in society.

She referred to the Qatar Blueprint initiative, which encourages co-ordination between stakeholders in planning neighbourhoods and public spaces, and Qatar National Vision 2030, initiated under the leadership of the late His Highness the Father Amir Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani and carried forward by HH the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani. Qatar Blueprint is a peninsula-wide initiative led by QM, integrating national development with cultural activation.

"You cannot think about the hardware without thinking about the software," she said, recalling her father's belief that Qatar's greatest asset is its people, including Qataris and those who have chosen to make the country their home.

She explained that this approach has guided QM's cultural development, where the construction of museums and creative institutions has been accompanied by investment in education, professional and vocational training and local expertise.

On vocational training, Sheikha Al Mayassa highlighted workshops with leading international architects and partnerships that connect young designers with professional practice.

The conversation also addressed Lusail City, including Lusail Stadium, which hosted the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 final, and the Al Sa'ad Plaza Towers designed by Foster + Partners. Sheikha Al Mayassa described the development as part of Qatar's national vision to create modern cities while maintaining a connection to the country's architectural heritage.

Lord Norman Foster discussed the towers' climate-responsive design, drawing on traditional shading and courtyard architecture. He also praised Qatar's vision and determination to transform ambitious plans into major developments. "The realisation of the city, as we experience it today, is the outcome of a political will," he said, describing the courage, determination and willingness to take risks behind Qatar's development as inspirational.

Turning to Design Doha Biennial 2026, Sheikha Al Mayassa explained that the event was established to showcase the region's creative talent, connect designers and artisans with international industries, and create new professional opportunities.

"Our intention with Design Doha is to show the talent that we have, which is enormous in our parts of the world," she said, emphasising the importance of connecting creative professionals with architects, developers and manufacturers to support the growth of the design industry.

The second edition of Design Doha Biennial features more than 500 objects by 300 designers from 20 countries, presented across 20 exhibitions and five public design commissions. Its flagship exhibition, Arab Design Now 2026, features 81 designers, 78 new commissions and 17 films, highlighting the relationships between designers and artisans, traditional craftsmanship and contemporary design practices across the region.

She also discussed the recently launched Qatar Fashion and Crafts Council, a regional initiative connecting industry leaders across the 22 Arab countries to share knowledge, preserve craftsmanship and create opportunities for artisans to contribute to major projects.

Addressing the growing influence of artificial intelligence, Sheikha Al Mayassa spoke about the importance of protecting human creativity and the relationships between artists, designers and craftspeople.

"I would never want to replace a creative with an AI," she said, describing the creative economy as a powerful and resilient response to technological change.

Sheikha Al Mayassa further emphasised that Qatar's international cultural ambitions begin with its own heritage and creative communities. "You have to invest in the local as well as global," she said, explaining that cultural authenticity and traditional knowledge can inspire contemporary design while attracting international interest.

Lord Norman Foster concluded by discussing the ingredients needed to create successful neighbourhoods, including public transport, pedestrian connections, shaded spaces and community life. He lauded Qatar's approach to planning and infrastructure investment for future generations.

The discussion formed part of Redesigning Dialogues, presented by Art for Tomorrow in collaboration with Design Doha Biennial 2026, with the Biennial's exhibitions running until 31 January 2027.

QM chairperson opens inaugural Artists Intensive Study Programme exhibition

Qatar Museums (QM) opened the inaugural Artists Intensive Study Programme (AISP) exhibition at Fire Station yesterday, presenting works by 22 artists from Qatar and 14 countries worldwide in a major presentation of new and evolving contemporary artistic practices.

QM Chairperson HE Sheikha Al Mayassa bint Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani led the opening of the exhibition. It marks an important new chapter for Fire Station as the first to open under the newly named Fire Station – Centre for Contemporary Art Practices, signalling the institution's development and evolving role in supporting emerging artists and nurturing Qatar's contemporary art scene.

Curated by Wael Shawky, artistic director of Fire Station, the exhibition is the culmination of an intensive nine-month programme of research, experimentation, critical dialogue and mentorship.

As Fire Station – Centre for Contemporary Art Practices, the institution will place greater emphasis on artistic research, critical dialogue and creative production, while expanding opportunities for artists to develop their practices and engage with peers, mentors and audiences in Qatar and internationally.

Shawky, also curator of the exhibition, said: "I am proud to celebrate the achievements of the inaugural edition of our Artists Intensive Study Programme, which has provided artists with an opportunity to strengthen their practices, exchange perspectives across cultures and explore new approaches to artistic expression.

"This exhibition reflects the programme's core mission of bringing together emerging artists from diverse backgrounds with internationally recognised artists and practitioners, fostering an environment of critical dialogue, intellectual exchange and new perspectives on contemporary art."



On view until February 6, 2027, the inaugural AISP exhibition spans five galleries and the Plaza at Fire Station, bringing together 22 artists: Amanda Assaley, W Rajaie, Aiza Ahmed, Mahesh Mothe, Jude al-Samman, Rab, Bokyoung Jeong, Latifa AlKhayat, Rund Alarabi, AZ OOR, Akka Hamdan, Hissa Alkuwari, Leena Kim, Noora al-Hardan, Hamad Alfayhani, Farah El-Shawarby, Dalila Hassanein, Jagdish Moktan, Saadia Batool, Deniz Bedir, Alla Abdunabi and Amentia Siard Brochard.

Working across diverse media and interdisciplinary practices, the artists explore cultural, social, historical and material conditions through approaches that navigate between personal and collective narratives.

At the heart of the programme is the studio, both as a physical space for artistic production and as an environment for experimentation, where ideas take shape, directions shift, and new layers unfold through the creative process.

The works presented trace a range of artistic investigations, reflecting how artistic practices evolve through exchange and discovery. The showcased works explore subjects ranging from migration, memory and belonging, to public space, cultural heritage and the relationship between people and their environments. These investigations take shape through sculpture, moving image, sound, immersive installations, painting and mixed-media practices.

This exhibition marks the first edition of AISP, a nine-month intensive study programme designed to support emerging artists through a period of artistic and intellectual development. Fire Station launched AISP as a successor to its Artist in Residence (AIR) Programme, introducing a new model centred on intensive study and sustained engagement that encourages participants to critically examine and expand their practices while developing new bodies of work.




HE Sheikha Al Mayassa bint Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani opens the AISP exhibition at Fire Station yesterday.


Jagdish Moktan's Weight of a Heartbeat (2026), made from interwoven repurposed safety harnesses, synthetic fibre and metal, is featured in an installation view of Design Doha 2026. ***PICTURES:*** *Qatar Museums.*

Throughout the programme, an international community of mentors supported the artists' development, introducing new perspectives and encouraging them to broaden their artistic approaches, experiment with new methods, and refine their practice.

AISP – First Edition exhibition is open to the public at Fire Station until February 6, 2027.

The exhibition forms part of the wider Qatar Creates Fall/Winter 2026/2027 season of exhibitions, public art presentations and initiatives designed to spark global cultural exchange and dialogue.