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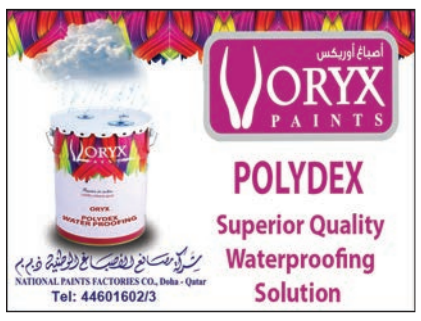

BUSINESS | Page 1

Commercial Bank wins 5 awards at Global Finance's AI in Finance Awards 2026







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Qatar calls on all parties to show restraint in crisis

By Ayman Adly
Staff Reporter

Qatar will continue its mediation efforts to resolve the crisis between the United States and Iran, holding out hope that a positive resolution can be reached for the good of all, stressed HE Dr Majed al-Ansari, Adviser to the Prime Minister and Spokesperson for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Speaking at the Ministry's weekly media briefing yesterday, he denounced any escalation of the crisis, warning that it would pose a serious risk to ongoing mediation efforts and make their success even harder. He said attacks on the Gulf region would have severe consequences for the whole region and for global stability and security. He explained that undermining the safety and security of the Gulf region, and freedom of navigation through the Strait of Hormuz, could ultimately hinder any chance of reaching a peace agreement among the parties involved.

He therefore called on all parties to exercise greater self-restraint and avoid any escalation or unnecessary confrontation. He stressed that Qatar will always maintain its hope of reaching a peaceful resolution through its serious and ongoing mediation efforts, which aim to bring the parties closer together and bridge the gaps between their various points of view.

He noted that the continued "no peace, no war" situation is damaging the world economy and stability and security well beyond the region, as it has pushed up energy and food prices and disrupted global supply chains.

Qatar, he said, seeks to maintain its safety, security, territorial integrity and sovereignty by enhancing its defence systems and the partnerships that safeguard its national security. He further stressed that the joint defence agreement with Turkiye is part of Qatar's efforts to strengthen its defence capabilities, safeguard security and address regional challenges, describing relations with Turkiye as excellent across various fields.

He said all countries of the region are working to enhance their security through effective defence agreements and partnerships, as well as by developing and improving their defence industries. He also welcomed the Makkah Defence Alliance as part of efforts to maintain overall security in the Gulf region. Friendly and brotherly talks, communications and consultations between Qatar and regional countries are ongoing as part of efforts to de-escalate tensions. To Page 7

Qatar, UAE, Jordan discuss peace efforts

HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani held separate telephone conversations with UAE Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed al-Nahyan and Jordan's Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates Ayman Safadi to discuss regional developments and diplomatic efforts to de-escalate tensions.

The discussions focused on strengthening joint coordination to promote regional security and stability, alongside bilateral relations and ways to enhance co-operation with both countries.

The prime minister reaffirmed Qatar's support for all diplomatic initiatives aimed at ensuring freedom of maritime navigation and paving the way for a comprehensive agreement that would secure lasting peace in the region. (**QNA**)

Qatar slams Iranian attacks on Bahrain

Qatar has strongly condemned Iran's continued attacks on Bahrain, describing them as a flagrant violation of the kingdom's sovereignty and territorial integrity and a grave escalation threatening regional security and stability.

In a statement yesterday, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs denounced the attacks in the strongest terms, saying they constituted a clear breach of international law and the principles of good neighbourliness, while undermining diplomatic efforts to ease regional tensions.

The ministry stressed the need to uphold international law and prioritise dialogue and diplomatic solutions to prevent further escalation and avert a wider regional crisis.

Qatar also reaffirmed its full solidarity with Bahrain and its support for all legitimate measures taken by the kingdom to safeguard its sovereignty, security and territorial integrity. (**QNA**)

Amir to visit Switzerland, Germany from today

GT Report
Doha

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani will undertake state visits to Switzerland and Germany beginning today, with talks expected to focus on strengthening bilateral relations, expanding economic and energy co-operation and addressing regional security challenges.

HH the Amir will begin a two-day state visit to Switzerland at the invitation of the Swiss Federal Council, headed by President Guy Parmelin. The two-day visit reflects the growing partnership between Qatar and Switzerland.

Official discussions will focus on expanding co-operation in trade, investment, finance and scientific research, alongside regional conflicts, mediation efforts, international co-operation and energy security.

Diplomatic relations between Qatar and Switzerland date back to 1973, with both countries opening embassies in 2013. Bilateral economic ties have been strengthened by an investment protection agreement in force since 2004 and the free trade agreement between the European Free Trade Association and the Gulf Co-operation Council, concluded in 2014.

Qatar is a significant investor in Switzerland, while energy trade remains an important component of bilateral relations.

HH the Amir will subsequently visit Germany on Friday for talks with Chancellor Friedrich Merz, focusing on bilateral relations, economic co-operation and efforts to achieve sustainable stability in the Middle East.

The consecutive visits come amid heightened regional tensions and underline Qatar's continuing



diplomatic engagement with key European partners, particularly in promoting dialogue, strengthening economic partnerships and advancing efforts towards lasting regional peace.

Meanwhile, German ambassador to Qatar Oliver Owcza has underscored the growing scope for co-operation between the two countries in technology and innovation, describing HH the Amir's forthcoming visit to Germany as an important milestone in bilateral relations.

Speaking at the German Unity Day celebration at The St. Regis Doha yesterday, the ambassador highlighted the contribution of German technology to Qatar's energy and transport sectors, stressing that the economic partnership extended well beyond trade figures and commercial transactions.

"The economy is another pillar of our partnership, yet too often reduced to sales figures or trade balances. As a matter of fact, it's much more," he said.

See also Page 11

Qatar brings AI to the classrooms and campuses



By Tawfik Lamari
Staff Reporter

In a major push to reshape the future of learning, Qatar is bringing artificial intelligence into classrooms and university campuses, unveiling two national initiatives designed to transform how students learn, teachers teach and academic advisers guide the next generation.

The ambitious projects, launched yesterday by the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology (MCIT), the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MoEHE) and Qatar University, mark a significant step towards translating Qatar's AI ambitions into practical educational solutions.

Developed in technical partnership with Scale AI, the initiatives comprise a Smart Assistant for school students and teachers and an Academic Adviser Assistant for university students, promising personalised learning, more effective teaching and streamlined academic guidance.

Unveiled at the Four Seasons Hotel Doha under the theme "Renewed Possibilities, Lasting Impact", the projects aim to harness AI without diminishing the indispensable role of educators in shaping young minds.

HE the Minister of Communications and Information Technology Mohammed bin Ali al-Mannai said the initiatives reflected Qatar's commitment to accelerating AI adoption through practical applications addressing real-world needs.

He emphasised that combining technological capabilities with educational expertise would produce meaningful improvements in learning experiences while advancing national AI priorities.

HE the Minister of Education and Higher Education Lolwah bint Rashid bin Mohammed AlKhater said the Smart Assistant would provide curriculum-based educational support tailored to students' abilities and learning needs, while equipping teachers with tools to plan lessons and monitor progress. To Page 7

MoEHE issues first private school rulebook to streamline system

The Ministry of Education and Higher Education has issued its first regulatory guide for private schools and kindergartens, setting clear responsibilities designed to cut repeat violations and protect students, parents and employees. The guide, issued through the Ministry's Private Education Affairs Sector, aims to strengthen governance, improve institutional performance and raise educational quality across the sector.

It gives schools a practical reference for complying with legislation and approved policies. It covers school administration, human resources, tuition fees, financial affairs, student registration, teaching and learning, health and safety, student behaviour and assessment.

The ministry said the guide grew out of observations and violations recorded in private institutions over recent years. It is intended to reduce recurring



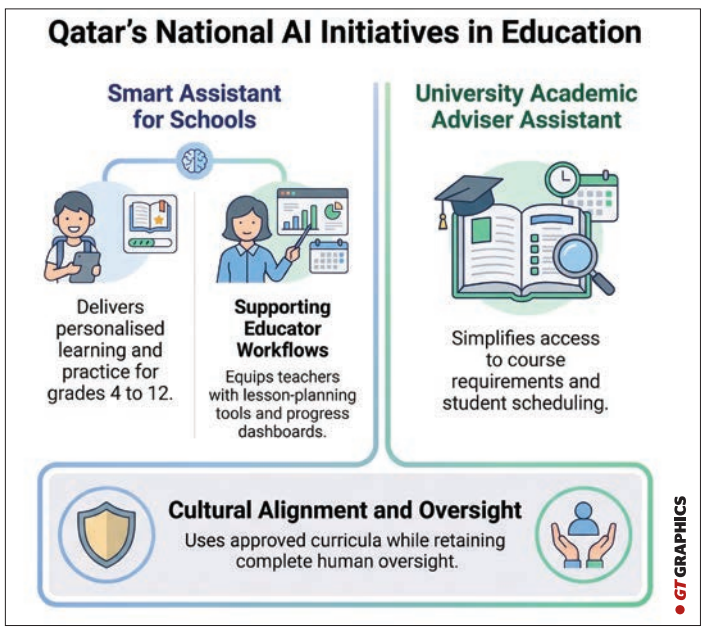
breaches, improve compliance and establish consistent procedures across the sector.

Dr Rania Yousri Mohamed, Director of the Private Schools and Kindergartens Department and Acting Director of the Private Licensing Department, told Qatar News Agency (QNA) the guide reflects a commitment to governance, transparency and accountability. She said it would clarify institutions' obligations and reduce differences in how rules are interpreted.

Dr Mohamed said the ministry will monitor compliance through its existing inspection system, including field visits, follow-up on complaints and checks that shortcomings have been fixed. Schools will also be encouraged to conduct regular internal reviews and prevent violations before they occur.

She stressed that success would be judged not by penalties imposed, but by fewer repeated breaches and a more stable, higher-quality learning environment. The ultimate objective, she said, is for students to feel safe, parents to trust institutions and employees to be treated fairly.

Education consultant Rashid al-Awda al-Fadhli welcomed a unified framework that turns general legislation into practical guidance. He told QNA that shifting from penalising violations after they occur to prevention and self-monitoring could significantly improve performance, reduce the cost of correcting mistakes and encourage schools to see compliance as a professional duty. To Page 7



QATAR

Al-Muraikhi meets vice-minister of Thailand, Turkish ambassador



HE the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Sultan bin Saad al-Muraikhi met yesterday with the Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Thailand, Sarun Charoensawan, who is visiting the country. The meeting discussed co-operation relations and ways to support and strengthen them, in addition to a number of issues of common interest. (**QNA**)



HE the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Sultan bin Saad al-Muraikhi met yesterday with with the ambassador of the Republic of Turkiye to the State of Qatar, Yakup Caymazoglu. The meeting discussed co-operation relations and ways to support and strengthen them, in addition to a number of issues of common interest. (**QNA**)

Interior minister meets former chief of UK's M16



HE the Minister of Interior and Commander of the Internal Security Force (Lekhwiya) Sheikh Khalifa bin Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani met yesterday with Sir Richard Moore, former chief of the United Kingdom's Secret Intelligence Service (MI6). During the meeting, they discussed several matters of mutual interest and explored ways to strengthen co-operation and exchange expertise in security-related fields. (**QNA**)

MSDF to host childhood awareness event at Old Doha Port to mark World Children's Day

The Ministry of Social Development and Family (MSDF) is hosting an event at Old Doha Port tomorrow and Friday to mark World Children's Day and substantially enhance awareness of children's rights, encourage children to express themselves and participate through a plethora of interactive, educational and recreational activities for children and families, under the theme of childhood as a responsibility.

The event underscores MSDF's commitment to providing children of different age groups with an interactive and educational experience that combines awareness-raising with recreation, helps familiarise them with their rights, develops their skills and encourages them to express their dreams and aspirations, while strengthening meaningful participation by parents, families and those involved in childhood and child protection.

The Family Development Department is offering a myriad of awareness-raising and interactive activities, including an emotion garden corner designed to substantially enhance children's emotional awareness by drawing connections between feelings and plants.

Through this activity, children learn to identify their different emotions and express them, thereby strengthening their ability to understand and manage their feelings in a healthy way. A separate family message corner gives parents the opportunity to convey messages of love and encouragement to their children through handwritten notes that the children can keep as mementos, further strengthening emotional bonds and family communication.

Building healthy and happy children, strengthening family bonds and fostering their interaction with all segments of society remain central to the Ministry of Social Development and Family's efforts to support childhood, Director of the MSDF's Family Empowerment Department, Fatima al-Nuaimi, said.

She said the event forms part of the ministry's plans to prioritise childhood and endeavour to raise healthy, happy children, while substantially strengthening their interaction and ties with different segments of society.

Meanwhile, the Social Protection Department is taking part in the event with three main activity areas. These include a children's house area focused on familiarising children with their rights and substantially enhancing their awareness of them; a future dreams area that gives children an opportunity to express their dreams and aspirations; and a games area offering a plethora of recreational and interactive activities suited to different age groups, bringing enjoyment and benefit together in a safe and stimulating environment.

Director of the Social Protection Department Abdulaziz al-Mohannadi asserted that protecting children's rights, substantially strengthening public awareness of those rights and ensuring a safe environment for every child remain fundamental priorities in the ministry's efforts.

Raising awareness of children's rights and familiarising children with them through accessible, interactive methods would substantively strengthen their understanding of those rights and bolster their ability to express their needs and views, al-Mohannadi underlined.(**QNA**)

FM's special envoy meets Norway's special envoy to Somalia

HE the Special Envoy of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Jassim bin Mohammed al-Asmakh, met yesterday with the Special Envoy of the Kingdom of Norway to Somalia, Einar Rystad, who is visiting the country. During the meeting, they discussed co-operation relations between the two countries and the latest developments in Somalia. (**QNA**)

Al-Khulaifi meets UK minister



HE the Minister of State at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Dr Mohammed bin Abdulaziz bin Saleh al-Khulaifi met yesterday in London with the UK Minister of State for the Middle East and North Africa Stephen Doughty. During the meeting, they discussed bilateral relations and ways to strengthen and develop them, discussed activating the memorandum of understanding signed between the two countries on mediation, and explored co-operation in efforts to resolve conflicts peacefully. They also addressed the latest developments in the Palestinian territories, Lebanon, Syria and Afghanistan, particularly diplomatic efforts and joint coordination to de-escalate tensions and enhance regional security and stability. Dr al-Khulaifi affirmed Qatar's support for all diplomatic efforts and endeavours aimed at reaching a solution that ensures freedom of maritime navigation and paves the way for a comprehensive agreement that achieves lasting peace in the region. (**QNA**)

Al-Khulaifi meets British NSA

HE the Minister of State at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Dr Mohammed bin Abdulaziz bin Saleh al-Khulaifi met in London yesterday with the National Security Adviser (NSA) of the United Kingdom Jonathan Powell.

During the meeting, both sides discussed co-operation between the two nations and ways to enhance and expand it, as well as the latest regional developments, particularly ongoing diplomatic efforts and close coordination to de-escalate tensions and strengthen security and stability in the region. Dr al-Khulaifi emphasised during the meeting that the State of Qatar fully backs all diplomatic efforts and endeavours to reach a resolution that ensures freedom of maritime navigation and paves the way for a comprehensive agreement that achieves enduring peace in the region. (**QNA**)

Thousands visit VCUarts Qatar's Exhibition at Venice Biennale

An official Collateral Event of the 61st International Art Exhibition, Aghrab Idrak brought research from ten Doha-based creative labs to Venice

VCUarts Qatar reached a milestone when it brought the work of its creative research community to the 61st International Art Exhibition of La Biennale di Venezia. Presented as an official Collateral Event, Aghrab Idrak: Thresholds of Perception introduced research developed in Doha to audiences at one of the world's leading platforms for contemporary art. As the exhibition enters its final week, it has welcomed more than 26,000 visitors to Palazzo Cavanis on Venice's Zattere waterfront.

Virginia Commonwealth University School of the Arts in Qatar (VCUarts Qatar), a Qatar Foundation partner university, brought together work from ten labs within its Institute for Creative Research for the exhibition. Faculty, alumni and students collaborated on projects spanning kinetic sculpture, film, sound, artificial intelligence, Arabic typography, textiles and experimental publishing. The exhibition gave international audiences a view of how research at the university develops through collaboration and experimentation across disciplines.

"What made this exhibition especially meaningful was that it grew out of the collective research taking place across our university," said Amir Berbic, Dean of VCUarts Qatar. "It is rare for an educational institution to be invited to present an official Collateral Event at the Venice Biennale, and that recognition speaks to the originality and ambition of the work being developed at VCUarts Qatar."

Co-curators Dr. Hesperia Iliadou and Chase Westfall developed the exhibition by tracing connections among projects already underway in the research labs. The works explored subjects including migration, ecology, cultural resilience, language and the changing relationship between people and technology. Across those subjects, the curators found a shared interest in how surroundings, movement, memory and relationships shape what people perceive.

"Often, you start with a thematic or a material throughline," said Westfall, Head of Gallery at VCUarts Qatar. "In this case, what the projects share is a methodology."

The exhibition's Arabic title can be understood as "strange knowledge" or "unusual perception." It reflected an interest in forms of understanding that are difficult to define or measure, from knowledge passed down through oral histories to insights gained by listening, moving through a space or working with a material. At Palazzo Cavanis, those ideas shaped the visitor experience. As audiences moved through the building's rooms and passageways, changes in light, sound and material invited them to find their own connections among the works.







The exhibition grew out of the Institute for Creative Research's faculty-led lab model, which brings people with different forms of expertise together to pursue shared questions. Field recordings, archival research and experiments with sound and materials helped determine the form of the works visitors encountered in Venice.

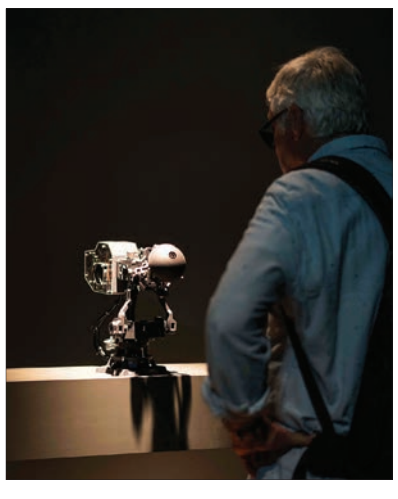
For Dr. Diane Derr, Associate Dean for Research and Development at VCUarts Qatar, the model gives participants room to shape a project through the perspectives and experiences they bring to it. "It's really about celebrating a diversity of perspectives and creating a non-hierarchical structure, which lends itself to a new educational paradigm," Derr said.

International arts and culture media took note of the exhibition's experimental approach. ARTnews highlighted how the work reconsidered the teaching of art and technology, while Dazed described the exhibition as "boundary-pushing," drawing attention to its sound-based installations, zine collectives and interactive robotics, as well as its engagement with culture, heritage and lived experience.

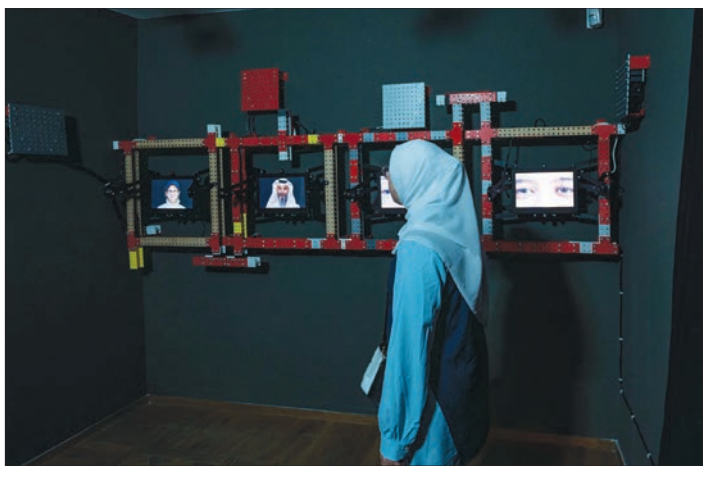
For VCUarts Qatar, the milestone was an opportunity to share how creative research takes shape in Doha. The exhibition made visible the work that happens across the university's labs as faculty, alumni and students develop questions together, test ideas and draw on one another's expertise. In Venice, those projects opened new conversations with audiences and collaborators from around the world.

Aghrab Idrak: Thresholds of Perception remains on view at Palazzo Cavanis through November 22, 2026.

For more information, visit https://qatar.vcu.edu/our-impact/biennale-arte-2026.







almeera takes part in Kids Expo Qatar 2026



Al Meera Consumer Goods Company is participating in Kids Expo Qatar 2026, taking place from November 17-21 at the Qatar National Convention Centre (QNCC). The exhibition opened yesterday under the patronage of HE Lolwah bint Rashid AlKhater, Minister of Education and Higher Education, bringing together organisations dedicated to children, families and their well-being.

Through a dedicated pop-up store, almeera is bringing a selection of its extensive product range to the exhibition, offering visitors an opportunity to discover products and brands while connecting with families beyond its retail network.

The participation reflects almeera's continued commitment to serving families across Qatar, not only through its nationwide store network and digital platforms, but also through community events that bring retailers, brands and customers together.

At the exhibition, almeera has created a pop-up convenience store featuring a curated selection of products, allowing visitors to browse and shop within the exhibition.

The experience reflects the breadth of almeera's wider retail offering, which includes fresh food, groceries, snacks, beverages, baby and children's products, personal care, and household goods. The company continues to expand its assortment to introduce new brands, respond to changing customer preferences and provide greater choice for households across Qatar.

Families visiting the stand will also have the opportunity to meet Mero, who will be making special appearances throughout the exhibition to welcome children and engage with visitors.

Behind almeera's offering is an extensive network of approximately 750 suppliers, connecting customers with local products and international brands across a broad range of categories.

Supporting Qatari producers is an important part of this network. almeera works with approximately 200 local companies, with locally produced products contributing around 25% of total sales. Through these partnerships, the company continues to expand the visibility and accessibility of Qatari products while introducing customers to a wider selection of brands.

'Just and comprehensive solution to Palestinian cause is only guarantee of lasting peace in region'

The State of Qatar affirmed that the only guarantee of achieving lasting peace in the region is reaching a just and comprehensive solution to the Palestinian cause, in accordance with international legitimacy resolutions and the New York Declaration on the Peaceful Settlement of the Question of Palestine and the Implementation of the Two-State Solution, which encompass the restoration of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, foremost among them their right to self-determination and return, and the establishment of an independent, sovereign state within the 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

This came in the State of Qatar's statement, which was delivered by the Second Secretary of Qatar's Permanent Mission to the United Nations Sheikh Jassim bin Abdulaziz al-Thani, during the meetings of the Fourth Committee of the 81st session of the United Nations General Assembly, under agenda item 48, entitled "the report of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices affecting the human rights of the Palestinian people and other Arabs of the occupied territories," at the UN headquarters in New York.

He pointed out that the reports submitted under this agenda item document the continued Israeli measures in violation of international law in the occupied Palestinian territory and the occupied Syrian Golan Heights, which include settlement expansion, forced displacement, land confiscation, home demolitions, escalating settler attacks, and other violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law.

He noted that the State of Qatar condemns the incursion by Israel's National Security Minister and groups of settlers into Al-Aqsa Mosque compound in late October, describing it as a flagrant violation of international law, stressing that Al-Aqsa Mosque is an exclusive place of worship for Muslims and that all unilateral measures aimed at changing the existing historical and legal status



quo in Jerusalem and its holy sites are null and void.

He further affirmed that the State of Qatar condemns the escalation of settler attacks in the occupied West Bank under the protection of occupation forces and calls for the protection of the Palestinian people and accountability for those responsible for these attacks. He also stressed that Israeli settlements are illegal, violate UN Security Council Resolution 2334, and constitute an obstacle to the two-state solution.

He affirmed that the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territory constitutes a flagrant violation of international law, the Charter of the United Nations, and relevant UN resolutions. He reiterated Qatar's welcome of the advisory opinion issued by the International Court of Justice in July 2024, which affirmed that Israel is obligated to end its unlawful presence in the occupied Palestinian territory, and that the West Bank, East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip constitute a single territorial unit whose unity, contiguity, and integrity must be preserved.

The Second Secretary of Qatar's Permanent Mission to the United Nations explained that Qatar had continued its mediation efforts in partnership with the Arab Republic of Egypt, the Republic of Turkiye, and the United States of America. These efforts culminated in a ceasefire agreement in the Gaza Strip, signed in Sharm El-Sheikh on October 13, 2025.

He also expressed Qatar's strong condemnation of the Israeli occupation's targeting, on Nov 12, of the surgical department at Nasser Medical Complex in Khan Younis. (**QNA**)

GAC, MoPH launch 2nd phase of Al Nadeeb-Watheq integration

The General Authority of Customs (GAC) and the Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) have launched the 2nd phase of the electronic integration project between Al Nadeeb Customs Clearance System and Watheq Food Safety System.

This step further strengthens Qatar's food control framework, enhancing the efficiency of procedures in the country's ports of entry, and supporting the smooth and timely movement of goods into the local market.

The launch of the 2nd phase comes as part of the strategic partnership between the General Authority of Customs and the MoPH and builds on the success of the first phase of integration between Al Nadeeb and Watheq systems.

The initial phase helped accelerate customs clearance and release procedures for food consignments by reducing inspection times by 50%. It also enhanced the electronic exchange of data and information between the two entities and eliminated manual procedures, improving the efficiency of food inspection and control processes while facilitating the smooth flow of trade.

The 2nd phase will deliver a more comprehensive and effective level of electronic integration through enhanced real-time exchange and updating of data and decisions. It will improve customs release services, strengthen the management of food consignments and operational processes, and expand the scope of integrated categories, documents, and inspection data. The phase will also introduce new regulatory and operational services to further enhance efficiency at border ports.

This phase marks a significant milestone in electronic integration between the two entities, enhancing the efficiency of inspection and regulatory processes, improving the experience of traders and stakeholders, and facilitating the smooth movement of trade and goods while maintaining the highest standards of public health protection.

The integration project between Al Nadeeb Customs Clearance System and Watheq Food Safety System supports Qatar's ongoing digital transformation journey and the development of smart government services.

It also reflects the strong partnership and collaboration between the General Authority of Customs and the Ministry, as well as the commitment of both entities to continuous improvement, keeping pace with the latest technological advancements, and meeting evolving operational needs in a way that enhances government efficiency and advances the achievement of shared objectives. (**QNA**)

Qatar participates in 20th Francophonie Summit

The State of Qatar participated in the 20th Francophonie Summit, held at the level of heads of state and government from Nov 14-16 in the Cambodian capital, Phnom Penh, under the theme "Reinvesting in Peace for Shared Prosperity and Lasting Stability".

The Qatari delegation to the summit was led by the Qatar's ambassador to the French Republic and Representative to the International Organisation of the Francophonie (OIF), Sheikh Ali bin Jassim al-Thani.

The opening session featured the handover of the summit's presidency from France to Cambodia, which will assume the role for the next two years. Speeches were delivered by French President Emmanuel Macron; OIF Secretary-General Louise Mushikiwabo; Prime Minister of Cambodia Hun Manet; and King Norodom Sihamoni of Cambodia.

The biennial summit discussed ways to promote peace and stability across the Francophone world and strengthen co-operation and solidarity among member states and governments. Discussions also addressed shared political, economic and development challenges, as well as efforts to strengthen multilateral action in pursuit of shared prosperity and lasting stability.

The summit also considered the adoption of the Phnom Penh Declaration and a draft resolution on crisis situations, crisis recovery and peacebuilding in the Francophone world. The resolution particularly commends Qatar's mediation efforts to end the conflict and military escalation in the region since Feb 28, as well as efforts to reopen the Strait of Hormuz.

The summit's agenda also included consideration of Canada's bid to host the 21st Francophonie Summit in 2028 and the election of a secretary-general of the International Organisation of the Francophonie for a four-year term covering 2027-2030.

Qatar's participation in the summit reflects its commitment to strengthening cooperation with member states and governments of the International Organisation of the Francophonie, supporting international efforts to promote peace and stability, and advancing dialogue, understanding and multilateral co-operation.

The International Organisation of the Francophonie brings together 90 states and governments across several continents. Qatar joined the organisation as an associate member in 2012 and regularly participates in its meetings and programmes. (**QNA**)

Qatari diplomat awarded France's National Order of Merit

The French Republic has awarded Sara al-Saadi, Director of the Americas Department at Qatar's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the insignia of Chevalier (Knight) of the French National Order of Merit, in recognition of her contribution to Franco-Qatari relations and her career in public service.

The distinction was presented on behalf of the president of the French Republic by the French ambassador to Qatar, during a ceremony held at the French Residence in Doha.



The award recognises al-Saadi's longstanding commitment to strengthening cooperation between France and Qatar, as well as her role in fostering dialogue on key diplomatic and international issues, particularly during her tenure as Director of Human Rights at Qatar's Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Her contribution was particularly significant during the 2021 evacuation operations in Afghanistan, when she played an essential role in coordinating Qatari support for the evacuation of French nationals and vulnerable individuals.

A graduate of Northwestern University in Qatar, where she was part of the institution's first Qatari graduating class, al-Saadi also pursued legal studies at Columbia University in New York. Beyond her diplomatic responsibilities, she has demonstrated a longstanding commitment to education and opportunities for younger generations.

Msheireb Properties holds 2nd Downtown Tech Summit

Msheireb Properties, in partnership with INK Arabia, held the second edition of Downtown Tech Summit 2026, bringing together leaders from Qatar's public and private sectors and innovation ecosystem to discuss building globally competitive companies from the region. The one-day event explored investment in promising startups, lessons from their growth, and ways to turn technology into practical impact. It also featured final presentations by participants in the Azal Innovation Program. The summit included sessions on turning crises into opportunities, the growth of Snoonu, the ability of Gulf companies to compete internationally. The Azal programme, launched by Doha Design District under Msheireb Properties, showcased five finalists presenting smart city and sustainability solutions designed for Msheireb Downtown Doha. They were selected from 102 participants representing 40 nationalities, including 67 startups.

CEO of Msheireb Properties Engineer Ali al-Kuwari said the summit brings together entrepreneurs and investors shaping the region's technology sector, adding that the best Azal solutions would move from presentation to real-world implementation across the city.

Msheireb Properties' Innovation Director Ali Khalifa al-Hitmi said Azal would continue as an annual programme supporting practical solutions to urban, environmental, economic and social challenges. The programme is supported by Siemens and Qatar Science and Technology Park, which provided technical evaluation, mentoring and training for the finalists.

The two winners, in the smart city innovation and sustainable smart city solutions categories, are scheduled to be announced today during the Best in Business Awards, Doha 2026. (**QNA**)

Qatar reaffirms commitment to co-existence, openness on International Day for Tolerance

The United Nations marks the International Day for Tolerance on November 16 each year to promote openness, understanding and peace.

This year's observance comes amid mounting humanitarian crises, growing polarisation and increased online incitement.

The occasion highlights the need for countries and institutions to promote dialogue and understanding, combat hate speech and discrimination, and safeguard social cohesion and international peace.

Qatar stands out as a leading regional and international example, having made tolerance, openness and acceptance of others part of its social culture, turning diversity into a source of strength rather than division.

The country has also pursued a foreign policy based on dialogue and mediation, building bridges between conflicting parties and promoting peaceful solutions.

Speaking to Qatar News Agency (QNA), Nayef al-Nabet, a non-resident fellow at the Middle East Council on Global Affairs, said Qatar's experience combines preserving national identity and Arab and



Islamic values with openness to other cultures and peoples.

He said Qatar views cultural diversity not as a threat to stability but as an opportunity to build strength through institutions that protect rights, promote coexistence and combat discrimination. This approach is reflected in Qatar National Vision 2030, which highlights tolerance, dialogue and cultural openness as elements of social development.

Al-Nabet said Qatar's international mediation efforts reflect its belief in dialogue as a means of resolving conflicts and preventing political differences from becoming lasting divisions. Peaceful dispute settlement is a key principle of its foreign policy, demonstrated through mediation in numerous international crises.

He added that Qatar's approach is based on engaging different parties and identifying common ground despite conflicting interests, reflecting the values of tolerance within a society comprising diverse cultural and religious backgrounds. Its experience shows that differences need not lead to hostility and that dialogue can help counter hatred and prevent disputes from escalating into conflict.

Al-Nabet also highlighted the role of educational and research institutions in promoting tolerance and dialogue, citing Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development, national and international universities, and initiatives such as QatarDebate.

He said their work in fostering critical thinking and respect for differing views, alongside the presence of students and researchers from diverse backgrounds, creates opportunities for direct engagement and helps overcome stereotypes.

He concluded that Qatar's experience extends tolerance beyond a moral value, making it an integral part of social development, education and diplomacy, and a foundation for coexistence in the face of hatred, discrimination and conflict. (**QNA**)

QATAR

Aspetar is Official Medical Supporter for FIFA U-17 World Cup Qatar

Aspetar, Orthopaedic and Sports Medicine Hospital, has announced that it will once again support the delivery of medical coverage at the FIFA U-17 World Cup Qatar 2026. Running from November 19 to December 13, 2026, the tournament marks Aspetar's second consecutive edition as Official Medical Partner, following its role in Qatar's inaugural 48-team hosting of the competition in 2025, according to Aspetar's press release.

The hospital's continued involvement reflects its accumulated experience in sports medicine and the readiness of its medical teams to support the tournament's health and operational requirements. During the 2025 edition, Aspetar supervised medical coverage for players, officials and fans, operating clinics across the competition venues and working alongside emergency medical teams.

This year's plan will see physicians deployed at the tournament venues, alongside dedicated medical clinics for players, VIPs, spectators and venue workforce. Referees will also receive medical services at their accommodation. In parallel with its on-site coverage, Aspetar has strengthened its in-hospital readiness across several specialtiies and services, including outpatient clinics, medical consultations, sports medicine, radiology, athlete relations, guest services and nursing supervision.

The hospital's medical coverage will form part of a wider emergency and ambulance system delivered with local healthcare partners, including Hamad Medical Corporation and the Qatar Red Crescent Society. It will co-ordinate the deployment of physicians, physiotherapists, nurses and medical services coordinators to ensure rapid response at competition venues. (**QNA**)

QNA director-general meets Kuwait's ambassador



HE the Director-General of Qatar News Agency (QNA) Ahmed bin Saeed al-Rumaihi met yesterday with the smbassador of the State of Kuwait to Qatar Ahmad bin Abdulrahman al-Shuraim. The meeting discussed ways to enhance joint co-operation between the two countries in the field of media. (**QNA**)

CRA, MSDF host 'Inclusive by Design' session at PP-26



The high-level dialogue titled "Inclusive by Design: Building Digital Futures That Leave No One Behind" has highlighted digital accessibility as a fundamental pillar of building an inclusive digital future that benefits everyone.

Took place yesterday, the event was hosted by the Communications Regulatory Authority (CRA), in collaboration with the Ministry of Social Development and Family (MSDF) and with the participation of the Ministry of Science and ICT of the Republic of Korea.

The high-level dialogue was held on the sidelines of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) Plenipotentiary Conference 2026 (PP-26).

The session emphasised the importance of integrating the needs of persons with disabilities from the earliest stages of policymaking and the design of digital technologies and services, to facilitate accessibility and strengthen their participation in society and the digital economy.

It brought together representatives from governments, regulatory authorities, international organisations, the private sector, academic institutions, and organisations representing persons with disabilities, alongside young participants.

The session opened with remarks by Director of Policy, Advisory Support and Capacity Development at Mada Assistive Technology Center (Mada Center) Amna Mohammed al-Mutawa and Senior Policy Adviser at the Korea Information Society Development Institute (KISDI) Mina Seonmin Jun.

The session featured a distinguished group of international experts, including Secretary-General-Elect of the African Telecommunications Union (ATU) Engineer Kezia Mwale; Policy Analyst at Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada (ISED) Ellen Taylor; International Policy Manager at the United Kingdom's Office of Communications (Ofcom) Teddy Woodhouse; and International Affairs Officer at the Telecommunications Regulatory Commission (TRC) of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan Hadeel Sarairah.

Discussions focused on the role of policies and regulatory frameworks in improving access to digital services and removing barriers faced by persons with disabilities, drawing on international experiences in integrating accessibility principles into digital transformation strategies.

Participants also explored the role of assistive technologies, artificial intelligence (AI), and emerging technologies in advancing digital inclusion, emphasising the importance of ensuring that these technologies are developed and deployed in ways that remove barriers rather than create new ones.

The session further highlighted the need for data collection and measurable indicators to assess progress in digital accessibility, alongside international knowledge exchange to support the development of more inclusive solutions.

In this context, Public Relations and Communication Manager at CRA, Engineer Hussain Abdulla Salatt, said: "Advancing digital accessibility for all is essential to building a more inclusive digital future, enabling all members of society, including persons with disabilities, to benefit from the opportunities of digital transformation."

"CRA recognises the importance of regulatory frameworks and technical standards that take into account the diverse needs of users, in line with the objectives of Qatar National Vision 2030," he added.

For her part, Director of the International Co-operation Department at MSDF Sheikha Aisha bint Mubarak al-Thani stated: "Digital accessibility is essential to enhancing the independence of persons with disabilities in their daily lives, including their ability to access public services and pursue educational and employment opportunities."

She continued, saying: "In this regard, the ministry is committed to strengthening partnerships at both the national and international levels to facilitate the exchange of expertise and support the development of digital services that are accessible and can be used independently."

"As part of preparations for the Global Disability Summit 2028, we look forward to building on the discussions held during this session to identify opportunities for cooperation in leveraging assistive technologies and artificial intelligence to remove digital barriers and expand opportunities for participation in society," added Sheikha Aisha.

The outcomes of the session are expected to contribute to the preparation of a research report on inclusive technology and artificial intelligence for the Global Disability Summit 2028, which will be hosted in Doha.

The report will draw on the international experiences and expertise shared during the dialogue to identify existing challenges, research priorities, and opportunities for collaboration aimed at advancing digital accessibility and empowering persons with disabilities. (**QNA**)

Doha to host 12th Sheikh Hamad Award ceremony on November 24



The Sheikh Hamad Award for Translation and International Understanding (SHATIU) will hold its 12th-edition award ceremony on Tuesday, November 24, in the presence of elite academics, researchers, translators, and representatives of cultural and scientific institutions from around the globe.

This year's competing languages for the single-book category feature English and Chinese among the globally prominent languages. Prizes for this category total $200,000, distributed among the top three winners in both translation directions (from and into Arabic).

In the achievement category, which honours distinguished professional career tracks and cumulative efforts in translation by individuals or institutions, five languages were chosen: Italian, Azerbaijani, Fula, alongside English and Chinese. A single prize of $100,000 will be awarded for each language.

In conjunction with the ceremony, the award is organising a scholarly symposium titled "Toward a World That Translates and Understands." Proceedings will kick off at 9:00 a.m. with two academic sessions discussing the role of translation in promoting cross-cultural understanding, advancing the transfer of knowledge between Arabic and global languages, keeping pace with intellectual and scientific shifts, and boosting the international profile of Arab intellectual output.

The first session, titled "Translation Between Arabic and Chinese in a Multipolar World", addresses the role of translation in fostering mutual understanding and cultural-intellectual convergence between China and the Arab world. It will be chaired by Dr Yu Mei, professor at Beijing Foreign Studies University, with participation from Dr Wang Yuyong (Faisal), Dr Li Xiyun (Latif), and Dr Shui Qingguo (Bassam). They will present papers on the Arabization of Chinese classics, translation governance from Arabic to Chinese, and the role of translation in reflecting social and intellectual transformations in China.

The second session, titled "Translation and Horizons of Worldview", will discuss the impact of linguistic hegemony in shaping global knowledge, the role of translation in protecting cultural diversity, and providing opportunities for less-represented cultures to participate in knowledge production and circulation. Chaired by Dr Sidina Sidatie, professor at the University of Nouakchott in Mauritania, the session features papers by Dr Ahmed Sami Abd ElFatah El Ayedi, Dr Ahmed Somai, and Dr Mohamed Said Ba. Topics include knowledge exchange between Arabic and Azerbaijani, translation and worldview through Umberto Eco's novel The Name of the Rose, and the role of translation in restoring the value of human fraternity.

Through its 12th edition, the award continues its efforts to support translators, celebrate their contributions, and promote translation as a bridge for civilizational and cultural communication and a tool to anchor understanding among peoples. (**QNA**)

PHCC conducts diabetes awareness activities

The Primary Health Care Corporation (PHCC) organised a series of awareness-raising events and activities to mark World Diabetes Day, as part of its ongoing efforts to promote health awareness and the prevention of chronic diseases.

The activities and events, carried out in collaboration with a number of government and non-government institutions and entities, aim to raise awareness about diabetes, explain methods for its prevention, highlight the importance of early detection, and promote healthy lifestyles that help reduce the risk of developing the disease and its complications.

The events targeted diverse segments of society and reached a large number of people through lectures as well as educational and awareness-raising activities, with the participation of a select group of medical and specialised professionals in the fields of family medicine, nutrition, health education, and physical fitness.

PHCC is committed to leveraging various social media platforms to disseminate health awareness and educational messages regarding diabetes. This initiative aims to broaden its reach to the public and provide reliable health information in an accessible, simplified format, all as part of strengthening its role in health awareness and education, and expanding its community partnerships with various institutions and entities across the country. (**QNA**)

SVN

SVN Real Estate, CR No. 143841, Doha, State of Qatar

INVITATION FOR COMPETITIVE BIDS

ACQUISITION OF CORPORATE HEADQUARTERS
LUSAIL BOULEVARD – DOHA, QATAR

SVN invites qualified companies, institutions, and investors to submit competitive purchase offers for **Building C12**, a completed freehold commercial property strategically located on Lusail Boulevard, near Lusail Towers, within Qatar's emerging financial and business district.

The property offers an opportunity for organizations seeking to establish a prestigious corporate headquarters with office accommodation, retail facilities, and dedicated parking.

PROPERTY SPECIFICATIONS

Description	Details
Property	Building Name: C12
Location	Lusail Boulevard, Fox Hills
Ownership	Freehold
Land Area	2,440 sqm
Total Built-Up Area	13,626 sqm
Net Leasable Area	5,332.59 sqm
Office Accommodation	25 office units across 5 floors
Retail Accommodation	4 commercial units
Parking	Approximately 125 spaces
Configuration	3 Basements + Ground + Mezzanine + 5 Floors + Roof

COMPETITIVE BIDDING PROCESS

Interested parties are invited to submit their best purchase offers for the **entire building**. Detailed property information, independent valuation, existing tenancy details, and site inspections will be made available to qualified bidders upon request.

BID SUBMISSION DEADLINE: 25th NOVEMBER 2026

Offers should include the **proposed purchase price, payment terms, evidence of financial capability, and anticipated completion date**.

The seller reserves the right to accept or reject any bid or negotiate directly with selected bidders. Completion is subject to applicable approvals, existing property rights, mortgage release, and definitive agreements.

ENQUIRIES & BID SUBMISSION
SVN Real Estate
All inquiries, requests for tender documentation, and purchase offers must be directed to SVN.
Email: admin@svnqatar.com
Tel: 00974 6647 7575

SERIOUS ENQUIRIES FROM QUALIFIED PURCHASERS ONLY

Onsor announces partnership with Video Home



Onsor Technologies, an Oman based technology company specialising in innovative computing and intelligent technology solutions, has announced a strategic distribution partnership with Video Home & Electronic Centre, one of Qatar's established electronics and technology solutions providers.

The partnership marks a significant milestone in Onsor's regional expansion strategy, strengthening its footprint across the GCC and bringing its growing portfolio of advanced technology solutions closer to customers in Qatar.

Through this collaboration, Video Home & Electronic Centre will distribute Onsor's range of laptops, desktops, All-in-One PCs, Mini PCs and intelligent technology solutions, with a focus on enterprise, government, education and retail sectors.

Rooted in Arabic heritage, Onsor's product families carry names that reflect the region's identity: TURS (Shield), MOUJ (Wave), KiTAB (Book) and HESEN (Fortress). Inspired by our heritage and engineered for tomorrow, these products represent the growing ambition of homegrown GCC technology. From Oman to Qatar, the partnership brings regional innovation closer to the people and businesses of the Gulf.

The partnership will also support the introduction of Onsor's MADA IoT ecosystem and AI-enabled solutions, creating new opportunities for digital transformation and smart technology adoption across Qatar.

Maadh bin Ahmed al-Hinai, chief executive officer of Onsor Technologies, said, "Our entry into Qatar represents another important milestone in Onsor's journey to take Omani innovation to regional and global markets. Partnering with Video Home & Electronic Centre brings together our technology capabilities and their strong local market expertise, enabling us to reach more customers and deliver innovative, reliable and accessible technology solutions."

Sajed Jassim Mohammed Sulaiman, vice-chairman & managing director, Video Home & Electronic Centre – Jumbo Electronics, said: "This partnership reflects our commitment to bringing our customers innovative, high-quality technology, and it strengthens the bond between two GCC nations through business and innovation. As Qatar continues its digital transformation journey under Qatar National Vision 2030, we see Onsor's computing, AI and IoT solutions playing a valuable role for enterprises, government entities and educational institutions across the country."

C V Rappai, Director & CEO, Video Home & Electronic Centre – Jumbo Electronics, added, "For more than four decades, Video Home has built its reputation on strong distribution, dependable after-sales service and close relationships with customers across Qatar. Through our retail, B2B and enterprise channels, we will bring Onsor's portfolio to the market with full sales and technical support."

Qatar Philatelic Center to participate in World Stamp exhibition

The Qatar Philatelic and Numismatic Center, under the Ministry of Culture, will participate in the World Stamp Championship Exhibition in Taiwan, China, from November 20-25.

The centre will showcase four philatelic collections at the exhibition, held under the auspices of the Federation Internationale de Philatelie (FIP), all of which have received international medals.

The exhibits include a collection of Qatar's first definitive stamps, issued in 1961 and presented across 8 frames; a five-frame collection tracing the history of the stamps of the United Kingdom of Libya; a five-frame presentation documenting the journey of Al Jazeera through postcards; and a thematic collection tracing the history of Qatari stamps from the early period through the reign of Sheikh Ahmad bin Ali al-Thani.

The Center places particular emphasis on participating in international exhibitions organised by the FIP and the Federation of Inter-Asian Philately (FIAP), reflecting its membership in both organisations and its representation on the FIAP Executive Committee.

The Qatar Philatelic and Numismatic Center seeks to promote stamp and coin collecting and provide the necessary conditions and resources for its practice among members. (**QNA**)



Minister heads Qatar delegation to Worldwide Air Transport conference

The Minister of Transport HE Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdullah bin Mohammed al-Thani has headed the Qatari delegation to the Seventh Worldwide Air Transport Conference (ATConf/7), which opened at the headquarters of the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO), in Montreal, Canada, yesterday.

The Minister attended the opening ceremony in the presence of ICAO Council president Toshiyuki Onuma, ICAO Secretary-General Juan Carlos Salazar, several ministers, heads of delegations and international organisations, and officials and experts in air transportation.

ATConf/7 is held under the theme "Air Transport: Powering Global Connectivity, Economic Development and Resilience in a Dynamic World", providing a global forum for Member States and key stakeholders to engage in strategic dialogue on the future of international air transportation.

In this context, the conference will over five days seek, to advance economic regulatory frameworks to adapt to evolving market trends and technologies by leveraging data, enhance industry resilience by addressing workforce, supply chain, market access, emergency response gaps and consumer protection, mobilise blended financing to support civil aviation infrastructure, shape economic policy foundations for innovation and emerging technologies, strengthen institutional and human capacity, and enable sustainable and inclusive growth in air transport.

The conference is organised around four core agenda items: Overview of Developments in the Field of Air Transport, Fostering Aviation Growth and Air Connectivity, Strengthening Regulatory and Institutional Frameworks, and Emerging Technologies, New Business Models, and Associated Aspects. The Seventh Worldwide Air Transport Conference is scheduled to conclude with a ministerial declaration.

QU develops AI co-adviser to help students plan academic journeys

By Shaima Sheriff
Staff Reporter

Qatar University (QU) is developing an artificial intelligence co-adviser to help 30,000 students plan course schedules and stay on track for graduation, highlighting AI's expanding role in education at the university.

An artificial intelligence tool designed to help students choose courses and plan their academic journeys is among the projects being showcased as Qatar steps up efforts to integrate AI into education.

The AI co-adviser, being developed by Qatar University (QU), aims to guide students through their study schedules by identifying suitable courses to take each year and helping them meet graduation requirements on time.

Nayef Alyafei, QU Associate Vice-President for Technology and Information Security and an associate professor, said the project could reduce the administrative workload involved in academic advising while improving efficiency.



Nayef Alyafei

"Using AI is really crucial because it can help us really lower the day-to-day work," he said in an interview on the sidelines of the launch of the country's AI projects in the education sector.

Explaining the co-adviser, Alyafei said: "What it does is it tries to help students navigate their schedule and find the best courses to take every single year in order for them to graduate on time and know what are the right courses to take."

With around 30,000 students at QU, handling such guidance manually would require considerable effort, he said. The tool is intended to reduce the time needed for the function while enhancing productivity.

The project was highlighted at the launch of "Artificial Intelligence in Education: Expanding Potential, Enduring Impact", organised by the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Higher Education and QU.

Held at the Four Seasons Hotel Doha on November 17, the event forms part of national efforts to advance AI in education, develop national capabilities and talent, and support Qatar's digital transformation.

However, Alyafei said the benefits of AI must be considered alongside the risks associated with its use. He stressed the need for institutions to assess potential risks and put measures in place to mitigate them as technologies develop.

"For every single tool that we use, there are two sides, pros and cons. I think what we need to do, we need to assess all the risks associated and try to mitigate this as we go," he said.

He added that ethical use, clear policies and practical guidance were essential, with faculty members, students and staff needing to understand how to use AI appropriately.

"We are aware of all of those, but we try to work every single day to try to fill those gaps as we go," he said.

Alyafei also cautioned that the pace of AI development meant policies and institutional decisions could not remain static.

"AI keeps evolving in a really fast way," he said, adding that institutions needed to revisit decisions and policies and refine them as the technology progressed.

As universities incorporate AI into academic services, projects such as QU's co-adviser point to a future in which technology could support students and staff, while institutions remain responsible for how it is designed, managed and used.

WCM-Q hosts 9th edition of certificate in lifestyle medicine

The Global Institute for Population Health (GIPH) at Weill Cornell Medicine-Qatar (WCM-Q) recently hosted the ninth edition of its Certificate in Lifestyle Medicine (CLM) programme.

The course reached full capacity with 55 healthcare professionals participating from Qatar, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Kuwait, Lebanon, Ireland, and the United States.

The CLM is a 60-hour certificate programme that equips healthcare practitioners with the education and competencies to aid in the evaluation, prevention, and management of lifestyle-related chronic health conditions. The programme emphasises evidence-based practices focused on lifestyle-related interventions, including regular physical activity, healthy nutrition, restorative sleep, avoiding risky substances, stress management and positive connections.



Dr Sohaila Cheema.

Additionally, the course enables healthcare practitioners to improve patients' overall quality of life by engaging them in meaningful discussions about the potential of lifestyle medicine.

Dr Sohaila Cheema, associate professor of clinical population health sciences and assistant dean for GIPH, said: "Research demonstrates that medical care accounts for only about 20 percent of overall population health outcomes, while the remaining 80% is attributable to non-medical factors such as lifestyle choices and social determinants of health. Lifestyle medicine equips healthcare professionals with evidence-based strategies to address these factors. This highlights the significant role lifestyle medicine can play in improving both individual and population health outcomes."

The course was delivered through didactic lectures, small group interactive discussions, review of clinical cases, and distance learning.

The programme was presented by WCM-Q's Dr Cheema; Dr Ravinder Mamtani, professor of population health sciences and vice dean for population health and lifestyle medicine; Dr Amit Abraham, assistant professor of clinical population health sciences and assistant director of GIPH; and Sarah Burshan, psychologist/learning support specialist and wellness counsellor. They were joined by other international experts from the US, Ireland and Australia.

Wildlife protection, natural reserves sector records 58,716 actions and results in Q3, 2026

The Ministry of Environment and Climate Change has announced that a total of 58,716 actions and results were recorded across the activities of the Wildlife Protection and Natural Reserves Sector during the third quarter (Q3) of 2026.

The achievements covered field inspections, regulation of wildlife trade, protection of vegetation cover, rehabilitation and captive breeding programmes, and the issuance of falcon transit documents.

According to the Ministry, the reported activities included registering the import of 23,677 live wild animals through the country's entry points and issuing 2,288 falcon transit documents. The Ministry also conducted 4,549 inspection tours, 615 field visits and 235 assessments of development projects, alongside implementing various wildlife protection and vegetation development programmes.

The Ministry said its vegetation development efforts included planting 1,300 native wild trees, supplying 3,050 native wild seedlings and propagating 650 wild and marine trees and plants. It also removed 2,925 Prosopis trees. Represented by the Wildlife Development Department, the Ministry conducted 407 field visits to rawdas and planting sites, assessed 235 development projects to determine their impact on vegetation cover, issued three permits to commence work in natural vegetation areas and carried out two surveying operations in rawdas outside natural reserves.

In the field of natural resources, the Department conducted 310 inspection tours, recording seven violations at quarries and crushing plants. It also carried out 195 field visits to sites monitored by the Natural Resources Section and completed 135 transactions and licensing procedures. Its activities further included 13 field visits to marine and coastal areas and five assessments of marine development projects and their impact on wildlife. In addition, 3,875 turtle hatchlings were released, while the programme to control the population of common myna birds resulted in the capture of 8,103 birds during the reporting period.

Regarding the regulation of wildlife trade, the Ministry registered the import of 1,582 items of wildlife products, derivatives and taxidermied specimens, in addition to issuing 2,288 falcon transit documents. Under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), the Department issued 877 certificates for the import of wild birds and animals, 10 certificates for their export and 269 re-export certificates.

It also registered the details of 52 certificates covered by the Convention. Furthermore, 248 permits were issued for importing wildlife species not listed under CITES, along with 12 permits for their export, while 12 transactions relating to the registration of falcon breeding details were completed.

In the area of awareness and training, the Department organised 29 events during the third quarter, including nine in July and 10 each in August and September.

As part of its land protection activities, the Ministry, represented by the Land Protection Department, conducted 1,350 inspection tours, averaging 450 tours per month, and recorded 3,217 violations. These included 792 violations in July, 1,449 in August and 976 in September. The Department also organised six workshops, comprising three in July, one in August and two in September, in addition to holding three awareness events in September.

Meanwhile, the Marine Protection Department conducted 999 inspection tours, including 325 in July, 335 in August and 339 in September. A total of 96 violations were recorded during these tours, distributed as 16 in July, 48 in August and 32 in September.

Alaraby 2 unveils its redesigned website

Alaraby 2 has announced the launch of its newly redesigned official website, marking another step in its efforts to strengthen its digital presence and provide audiences with an accessible platform to explore the channel's programmes and cultural and entertainment content, while staying up to date with its latest news and productions.

The new website features a modern design and an intuitive user-friendly interface, making it easier for visitors to navigate and find information about the channel's programmes, including broadcast schedules and programme descriptions. It also showcases some of the channel's most notable productions and includes a dedicated section, "Jadidona", highlighting



the channel's latest projects, as well as its partnerships and collaborations with various cultural and media organisations.

Commenting on the launch, Alaraby 2 executive director, Elias Khoury highlighted the importance of this development as part of the channel's ongoing digital evolution, saying: "The launch of our redesigned website builds on the visual identity renewal we introduced recently and marks another step towards strengthening our digital presence and making it easier to connect with our Arab audiences everywhere."

He added: "These updates aim to make the website a comprehensive destination for information about the channel's programmes, with an interface that combines elegant design with ease of use."

The redesigned website is fully optimised for different devices, including mobile phones and tablets, ensuring a seamless browsing experience and allowing audiences to access programme information and content wherever and whenever they choose.

وزارة البلدية
Ministry of Municipality
State of Qatar • دولة قطر

Invitation

Invitation for Prequalification
For National integrated solid waste management programme
Integrated material recovery and bulky waste sorting project
TC/B/76 - 5768 /2026

The Ministry of Municipality in the State of Qatar invites qualified and competent contractors

to participate in the prequalification process for the procurement of Design, Build, Finance, Operate, Maintain, and Transfer (DBFOMT) of the Integrated Materials .Recovery Facility (MRF) and Bulky Waste Sorting Facility (BWSF)
The delivery of the Project is based on
Design-Build-Finance-Operate-Maintain-Transfer (DBFOMT) basis, over a duration of 30 years (D&B: 2 years and 6 months and O&M: 27 years and 6 months)

PRE-QUALIFICATION DOCUMENT

Pre-qualification documents (PQD) can be obtained free of charge via the Unified State Procurement website : https://monaqasat.mof.gov.qa
and the Ministry of Municipality's website
www.mme.gov.qa/webcenter/portal/MM/pages_home/servicedetails?serviceId=2033
Applicants are advised to visit these websites periodically to check for any .updates, circulars, and/or addenda, should there be any

For External Companies only

External companies wishing to participate are required to submit a formal request via the email address below to obtain the prequalification documents:
tca@mme.gov.qa

Closing Date: 20 - 12 - 2026 Time: 12:00 PM

FOR INQUIRIES : tca@mme.gov.qa

albaladiya mm.gov.qa 184

QATAR

UDST organises Zero Waste Campus event



QNA
Doha



University of Doha for Science and Technology (UDST), in collaboration with SLB and Dolphin Energy and British Embassy in Doha, hosted Zero Waste Campus 2026, bringing together students, industry experts and sustainability stakeholders to explore innovative approaches to waste management, resource recovery and environmental responsibility.

Organised through UDST's College of Engineering and Technology, the event provided a platform for students to showcase their projects alongside industry professionals, researchers and sustainability practitioners. Through technical sessions, interactive workshops and an exhibition featuring initiatives from high schools, UDST and industry partners, the event encouraged knowledge exchange and collaboration to advance sustainable practices.

Dr Salem Al-Naemi, President of UDST, said: "At UDST, we believe that meaningful progress towards sustainability requires more than awareness; it requires innovation, collaboration and tangible action. Zero Waste Campus 2026 reflected our commitment to empowering students to become active contributors to solving real-world environmental challenges. Through our collaboration with SLB and Dolphin Energy, we strengthened the connection between academia and industry, creating opportunities for our students to transform their ideas into practical solutions that can make a lasting difference. This initiative represented an important step in advancing our sustainability ambitions and contributing to Qatar National Vision 2030."

The programme featured a series of expert-led discussions addressing key aspects of waste management and sustainability. These included a keynote session on Qatar's approach to waste management, alongside technical presentations covering aluminium recycling, plastic recycling and the recovery of heavy metals from wastewater.

Industry representatives from organisations including Ministry of Municipality, Aldiqah Metal Recycling Factory, Doha Plastic Company, SLB and Enavra Industries also shared their expertise through technical presentations and panel discussions. One of the featured initiatives was "From Aquatic Biomass to Sustainable Animal Feed: Unlocking Azolla's Potential in Qatar," presented by UDST student Mohamed al-Heidous.

The project explored the potential of cultivating Azolla, a fast-growing aquatic fern, as a locally produced supplementary source of animal feed. Through a pilot cultivation pond established on campus, the project examined the plant's ability to grow under Qatar's environmental conditions, with the aim of exploring locally available alternatives that could help reduce reliance on imported animal feed.

Another featured initiative, "Food Waste to Compost: Waste Free Campus," developed by students Dana al-Muhanadi and Naeema Chowdhury, explored the use of the Bokashi fermentation process to transform food waste into nutrient-rich organic fertiliser.

The project aimed to reduce food waste and associated carbon emissions while supporting local agricultural practices. Meanwhile, "Plastic to 3D Printing Filament: Towards a Plastic-Free Campus," developed by students Layan Alqaiseyah and Jed Abraham Macalindong, focused on converting discarded plastic bottles into reusable filament for 3D printing.

The initiative incorporated EcoVendU, a smart reverse vending machine that identified and processed plastic bottles while rewarding students with points through their university IDs, encouraging greater participation in campus recycling. Following an engaging round of final pitches, six winners were announced, comprising three UDST students and three students from local high schools.

The winning UDST students were Sama Alawi, Zaid al-Hawari, Yahya Awadallah, Abdulrehman Abdulhafiz for A Hybrid Coastal Renewable Energy Platform for Qatar, Muhammad Abdullah, Issam Abulhuda, Ahmad Hums, Abdulrahman Kassab, Khalid Mohamed for Floating Solar Spheres, and Layba Hafeez, Fatima Abdullah, Shaima Abdelnaser, Abdulrehman Grewal, Minatalla Warrag, for Solar Powered Horticulture Robot.

The winning high school students were Sarah Hadjidj, Lara Tantawy, Asly Zweir, Shiza Noushik for Belgravia High School, Noor Alyafi and Rama Sanoufi for Al-Manar International School and Juraj Kovacic, Nafez Hindi, Yusuf Beshr for Sherborne School. Their projects stood out for their creativity, feasibility, and measurable environmental impact. These teams will receive targeted funding and strategic support to pilot their solutions on campus, bringing the university one step closer to achieving its zero-waste vision.

The Zero Waste Workshop not only showcased the innovation and passion of UDST students but also reaffirmed the power of collaboration between academia and industry in addressing pressing environmental challenges. As UDST continues to implement the winning projects and leverage a culture of sustainability, the university reinforces its role as a national leader in applied research, environmental stewardship, and student empowerment.

Police Academy hosts public lecture for Security Leadership and Staff Course



The Police Academy, represented by its Graduate Studies College, held a public lecture as part of its Security Leadership and Staff Programme, hosting Sir Richard Moore, the former head of the UK's Secret Intelligence Service (MI١). The lecture addressed strategic leadership and security institution management, including strategic decision-making, crisis management and complex challenges, as well as the importance of information sharing and co-ordination among security agencies to anticipate threats and address shared risks. Discussions also focused on rapid changes in the international security landscape, their implications for future security operations and the requirements for developing institutional leadership. (**QNA**)

Ministry launches third edition of 'Intilaqa' programme to empower young people



The Ministry of Sports and Youth, in collaboration with the Qatar Career Development Centre, the United Nations Children's Fund (Unicef) and Education Above All Foundation, has launched the third edition of the "Intilaqa" programme, which runs until Dec 1 and aims to prepare Qatari youth for the labour market while developing their professional and personal skills.

The programme's workshops, held at Multaqa in Education City, cover a range of training topics, including career development, résumé writing, job interview skills, personal branding, effective communication and time management. They also introduce participants to the latest information technology developments, promote professional integrity and transparency, and explore the links between academic disciplines and future employment opportunities.

Director of the Youth Affairs Department at the Ministry of Sports and Youth, Fawaz al-Misifri, said the programme reflected the ministry's commitment to preparing young Qataris for future demands. He emphasised that investing in their capabilities was a strategic priority, given their central role in advancing the country's development.

Executive Director of the Qatar Career Development Centre, Saad Abdullah al-Kharji, said the programme draws on the centre's career guidance expertise to help participants align their qualifications and interests with available employment opportunities and make informed decisions about their professional paths.

Adolescent and Youth Development Programmes Manager at Unicef's Gulf Area Office, Dr Abdullah Diwan, said the organisation was contributing its expertise and international methodologies, particularly through its UPSHIFT programme. These efforts focus on developing critical thinking, problem-solving, entrepreneurship, innovation and effective communication skills, while raising young people's awareness of changes in the labour market driven by artificial intelligence and the digital economy. He added that the partnership reflected a shared vision aligned with Qatar National Vision 2030 and the Third National Development Strategy.

Head of Employment Programmes at Silatech, Sheikha Noura Faisal al-Thani, said Education Above All Foundation's participation was part of its efforts to support initiatives that give young people opportunities for professional development and help them acquire the skills and knowledge needed to build their careers. She also hailed the co-operation among the participating organisations. (**QNA**)

Doha forum on Arab youth, peace and security produces 30 recommendations

QNA
Doha

The Arab Youth Forum for Peace and Security 2026, organised by Qatar's Ministry of Sports and Youth in collaboration with the League of Arab States, wrapped up in Doha yesterday after running from Nov 15 to 17, with several UN agencies, programmes and funds taking part.

During the closing ceremony, the Doha Forum Outcomes were announced, comprising 30 recommendations drafted by youth delegations from 17 Arab nations to vastly expand young people's engagement in peacebuilding and strengthen security.

The declaration was presented on behalf of the participating youth delegations by Maha al-Buqami of Saudi Arabia, Dhaher Nasser al-Nasser of Qatar, Farah Adel of Egypt, Rayan Madin of Tunisia, and Rawan al-Muaqaba of Jordan.

The recommendations suggest that meaningful youth participation is quite important to building peace and strengthening security. They also underscore that young people should have as much say in shaping policies and programmes as they do in implementing them.

The Ministry of Sports and Youth announced its commitment to referring the outcomes to the Qatari Youth Council for Future-Making and publishing a brief report within a year outlining what had been implemented, to be shared with the League of Arab States and its partners.

The announced commitments also included the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan launching its National Youth Strategy in 2027 and making the Amman Framework available as a voluntary tool for interested countries.

The League of Arab States also welcomed the outcomes, affirming that it would work to develop the strategy's executive plan and organise joint regional training for young people and officials.

For its part, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (Unesco) announced that it would continue supporting the relevant institutions and ministries across the region and co-ordinating among them.

The recommendations were the outgrowth of discussions held across four plenary sessions and 12 parallel workshops, alongside working groups. The outcomes were grounded in the Arab Strategy for Youth, Peace and Security for 2023-2028, adopted under Bahrain Summit Resolution No. 887 on May 16, 2024, and its executive plan, incorporated into the declaration of the Arab Summit for Economic and Social Development in Baghdad on May 17, 2025, as well as the 2015 Amman Declaration, UN Security Council Resolution 2250 and related resolutions.

The recommendations were structured around five pillars: participation, partnerships, protection, prevention and the culture of peace, and disengagement and reintegration.

Participants focused on participation and partnerships to accelerate the strategy's implementation, affirming the principle of Nothing about youth without youth. They called for engaging young people in crafting policies and programmes, executing them, collecting data on them and evaluating them.

They recognised young people as partners in decision-making, stressing that protection on the ground, in digital spaces and in conflict zones is the sine qua non of participation, insofar as it provides the essential conditions for young people to take part. They also underscored the importance of building trust and shared ownership, ensuring gender equality in representation, opportunities and decision-making positions, and gauging success by the impact of programmes on young people and institutions.

Under the participation pillar, delegates recommended forming national teams to implement the strategy, with young people from both the government and non-governmental sectors taking part. They likewise called for transparent selection criteria that prioritise diversity, gender and disability, alongside action plans with clearly defined timelines and budgets.

They also called for establishing youth advisory councils within government institutions, allocating seats for young people on policy-drafting committees, forming a joint ministerial committee to co-ordinate implementation, and establishing national platforms offering plenty of opportunities for young people.

The recommendations also included ensuring safe and fair participation for young people with disabilities, displaced youth, and young people in remote areas and camps.

Participants called for activating youth platforms, councils and parliaments, organising a regular Arab forum, appointing focal points to integrate the agenda into plans and budgets, establishing direct and sustained institutional dialogue with young people, and developing an Arab reference framework for youth policies that takes national contexts into account.

Under the partnerships pillar, participants called for establishing a joint Arab fund to provide multi-year financing for youth initiatives, allocating part of its resources to initiatives by young people in conflict-battered areas and offering direct grants through transparent mechanisms.

They also called for developing career transition programmes in light of artificial intelligence and job automation, updating curricula and skills, providing paid practical training, supporting business incubators and developing infrastructure in remote areas.

They further proposed establishing an Arab innovation incubator and activating a youth network for digital peace. They called for launching programmes to build young people's capacities in leadership, dialogue, negotiation and policy formulation, while providing opportunities to exchange expertise and participate in decision-making meetings.

In addition, delegates recommended operationalising youth networks to contribute to humanitarian responses and co-ordinate volunteering during crises, providing technical support for initiatives, making non-sensitive government data available in co-ordination with the Arab Observatory, and training young people to analyse the data and measure impact.

These efforts could significantly strengthen young people's role in humanitarian response and help ensure that their contributions are as effective as possible.

ANNOUNCEMENT

I, MOHAMMAD SUMON ABDUL GANI
holder of
BANGLADESH Passport No. A23712401
QID No. 28805011209
hereby change my name
from
MOHAMMAD SUMON ABDUL GANI
to
MD SUMON ABDUL GANI

Any objection, please contact
THE PERMANENT COMMITTEE FOR NATIONALITY AFFAIRS
within 15 days from the publication of this notice.

ANNOUNCEMENT

I, RAIHAN UDDIN
holder of
BANGLADESH Passport No. EJ0560724
QID No. 28205020598
hereby change my name
from
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to
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QFBA hosts graduation of 362 students

QFBA, in collaboration with Northumbria University, celebrates graduation of students from eighth cohort of bachelor's and master's programmes

By Ayman Adly
Staff Reporter

Qatar Finance and Business Academy (QFBA), in collaboration with Northumbria University, celebrated the graduation of its eighth cohort of bachelor's and master's students on Tuesday night, marking another significant milestone in its efforts to develop highly skilled professionals and strengthen Qatar's financial and business sectors.

The graduation ceremony, held under the patronage and in the presence of HE Lolwah bint Rashid AlKhater, Minister of Education and Higher Education, was attended by several dignitaries and senior officials from across Qatar, highlighting the importance of the Academy's educational programmes and its contribution to developing national and international talent.

The eighth cohort comprised 362 graduates across six academic programmes at bachelor's and master's levels with almost 74% of them Qatari students and others from different nationalities in addition to a considerable number of international students. With this latest group, the total number of graduates from QFBA's partnership with Northumbria University since its launch in 2018 has reached 1,206.

Dr Khalifa al-Salahi al-Yafai, chief executive officer of Qatar Finance and Business Academy, congratulated the graduates and described the graduation of the new cohort as an important milestone in the Academy's journey and its academic partnership with Northumbria University. He stressed that the achievement reflects QFBA's ongoing commitment to developing highly qualified professionals equipped with the knowledge, skills and capabilities needed to navigate the rapid transformations taking place across the business and financial sectors.

He noted that investment in human capital remains at the heart of Qatar's national development journey, representing the most sustainable pathway towards building a diversified and competitive economy driven by knowledge and innovation. He also highlighted the pivotal role of higher education in nurturing talent capable of responding to evolving labour market requirements and making meaningful contributions to the objectives of Qatar National Vision 2030.

Further, Dr al-Yafai noted that the collaboration with Northumbria University represents a successful model of cooperation in knowledge transfer, capacity building and the exchange of expertise as part of the international academic partnership. He added that the partnership supports the development of academic programmes that meet international standards while remaining responsive to the needs of Qatar's economy and labour market. He further highlighted the growing international reach of the academy's educational programmes, noting that 50 international students graduated this year, bringing the total number of international graduates to 65. He said this achievement reflects increasing confidence in QFBA's academic offerings and its ability to provide a diverse educational environment that combines internationally recognised academic standards with the needs of Qatar and the wider region.

The graduates completed six academic programmes covering key areas of finance, banking, entrepreneurship, business analytics and digital marketing. These included the BSc (Hons) Finance & Investment Management, BA (Hons) International Banking & Finance, MSc in Entrepreneurship and Innovation Management, MSc Business Analytics, MSc in Finance and MSc Digital Marketing. Through these specialised programmes, QFBA and Northumbria University continue to equip graduates with the knowledge and professional skills required to meet the evolving demands of the financial and business sectors.

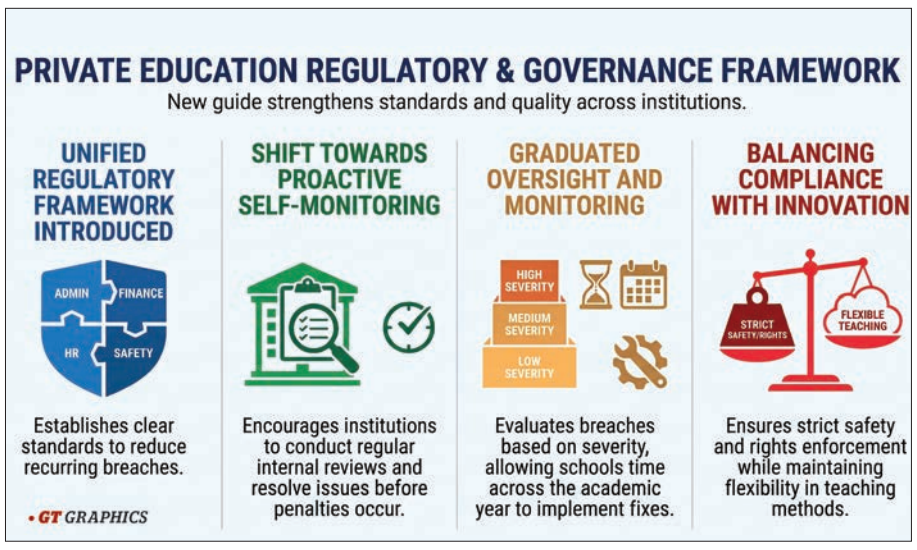
Qatar Finance and Business Academy established its partnership with Northumbria University in Qatar in 2018, bringing the British university's academic expertise and international educational standards to the country. With almost 35,000 students representing 140 countries, Northumbria University is among the largest and most established public universities in the United Kingdom.

MoEHE issues first private school rulebook to streamline system

From Page 1

He pointed to the My White Flag Award, which recognised 240 of Qatar's 354 private schools for having no recorded violations, as evidence of the sector's commitment. He also stressed balancing oversight with innovation. Strict compliance should remain essential for student safety, individual rights, financial transparency and national identity, while schools keep flexibility in teaching methods and student engagement. The guide takes a graduated approach, weighing the nature, severity and impact of each breach. Institutions are given time to address shortcomings, and improvements will be followed up over at least one academic year.

The initiative supports Qatar National Vision 2030 and wider efforts to improve private education. The Ministry expects it to strengthen cooperation between regulators, school owners, administrators, teachers and parents, making the stability and quality of private education a shared responsibility. (**QNA**)



Qatar calls on all parties to show restraint in crisis

From Page 1

Qatar expressed its strongest condemnation of Israeli forces' targeting of civilians and civilian facilities in the Gaza Strip, noting that Israeli forces have continued to violate the ceasefire agreement there on a daily basis. He added that those seeking political gains benefit from continued Israeli escalation in Gaza and the West Bank.

He said Qatar will continue its efforts to ease the suffering of the Palestinian people and reach an effective ceasefire through its mediation, calling for intensive efforts to pressure Israel to halt such aggression and allow humanitarian aid to be delivered. Qatar also rejects all Israeli aggression escalating the situation in South Lebanon and the Palestinian territories.


Dr Majed bin Mohamed al-Ansari

Thani bin Abdullah Foundation honours couples-to-be in 'Efaf'

By Tawfik Lamari
Staff Reporter

The Thani bin Abdullah Foundation for Humanitarian Services has honoured young men and women preparing for marriage who took part in the eighth edition of the national 'Efaf' project. The foundation also recognised the sponsors, supporters and partners behind its success, acknowledging their vital role in supporting young people and preparing them to build stable, cohesive families.

Foundation CEO Dr Ayed bin Dabasan al-Qahtani said the project is more than an initiative to facilitate marriage; it embodies a message of love and social solidarity. It reflects a society that sees the happiness of its youth as a shared responsibility, he said, noting that every new household is a building block of national stability.

Al-Qahtani thanked the partners who contributed to the project's success, foremost among them the Ministry of Social Development and Family, whose leadership he praised for its support. He also thanked the Ministry of Endowments and Islamic Affairs (Awqaf) and the Family Consulting Centre 'Wifaq', the project's strategic partner.

He also commended Qatar University for hosting the participants and helping prepare them through specialised courses and programmes. The university, he said, played a significant role in raising awareness among the youth and deepening their understanding of married life, helping them take on the responsibilities ahead and build families founded on mutual understanding and a sense of duty.

He extended his gratitude to all supporters, partners, trainers and volunteers, as well as members of the foundation and the Qatar Volunteer Centre, praising their efforts in organising the event, welcoming participants and providing support, and thanking everyone who gave their time, effort and generosity.

All those involved, he said, are partners in creating a meaningful impact, bringing joy to young people and embodying the highest ideals of social solidarity. The project's success, he added, reflects the importance of joining the efforts of institutions and entities to serve society and strengthen family stability.

Qatar brings AI to the classrooms, campuses

From Page 1

She stressed that technology would complement, rather than replace, teachers, enriching learning inside and beyond classrooms and expanding opportunities for students to develop their skills.

Targeting students from grades four to 12 across six subjects, the Smart Assistant introduces two interactive learning approaches.

The first uses guided conversations and questions to explain concepts, directing students to relevant textbook material. The second reinforces understanding through exercises and personalised feedback, helping learners identify and correct mistakes.

Teachers will gain access to lesson-planning tools, assignment preparation facilities and dashboards tracking student performance against learning objectives.

Crucially, students will be able to continue learning independently after school hours, extending educational support into homes and strengthening opportunities for self-directed study.

At Qatar University, the Academic Adviser Assistant promises to simplify access to information on courses, graduation requirements, academic regulations and university procedures.

Integrated with the university's student information system, the platform will handle student inquiries, facilitate appointments and provide advisers with summaries and indicators to identify students requiring additional attention.

Qatar University President Dr Omar Mohammed al-Ansari described AI integration as a strategic priority for improving educational outcomes and preparing graduates for evolving professional demands.

He said the initiative would create a more responsive and efficient academic environment while allowing advisers to devote greater attention to students requiring individual guidance.

Both platforms will draw on approved educational content, respect Qatar's national and cultural context and retain human oversight over assessment and academic decisions.

The launch coincided with Qatar's hosting of the International Telecommunication Union's 2026 Plenipotentiary Conference, offering an international platform to demonstrate how the country is moving AI beyond technological promise into the everyday business of education.



A group photo of officials and participants.

Qatar Charity empowers women with sewing machines in Pakistan

Qatar Charity (QC) has distributed 154 sewing machines to skilled beneficiaries in Pakistan's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Sindh provinces, helping women and young people start income-generating activities, improve their families' living conditions and become more self-reliant.

The initiative provided 94 machines in Peshawar, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and 60 in Sanghar, Sindh, benefiting more than 1,078 people overall. By providing essential equipment, the support aims to help people with sewing skills, particularly women, put their expertise to work and establish small businesses to help meet their families' needs.

In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, 28 of the 94 machines were provided to beneficiaries certified by the Technical Education and Vocational Training Authority (TEVTA). Delivered in co-operation with the authority, the assistance connects vocational training with practical opportunities to earn a living.

Women receiving the support thanked donors and Qatar Charity for providing sewing machines, tables and sewing supplies. They also outlined their plans to use the equipment to earn an income from home and help support their families.

"I had the sewing skills, but I did not have a good-quality machine," said Shazia, one of the beneficiaries. "This support has given me the opportunity to start working from home and contribute to my family's income. I hope to earn a regular living and cover some household expenses myself."

Afsana Gul, a beneficiary in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, said receiving a sewing machine had enabled her to start her own business. She thanked Qatar Charity and TEVTA for helping skilled young people, especially women, use their abilities to earn an income.

Ayesha, who lives in a village in Sanghar, said she plans to take tailoring orders from her local community. The equipment, she explained, had given her the confidence and resources to start a home-based business and help support her family. Another beneficiary, Zareena, hopes to sew clothes for women and children in her area, gradually increasing her income and easing the financial burden on her family.



WORLD

Britain to impose sanctions on Israeli settlement firms

Reuters
London


A view from the E1 corridor, an area in the occupied West Bank near the Israeli settlement of Maale Adumim. (**AFP**)

Britain said yesterday it would impose sanctions on eight Israeli construction companies involved in building settlements in the occupied West Bank, as part of its effort to protect the idea of a two-state solution.

The firms targeted for asset freezes and director disqualifications include Har Hevron Development Company Ltd, Hemdat Shomron Ltd and SAG (Velvel) Construction and Development Ltd, which develop homes in the West Bank.

The government announced the sanctions package shortly before the final deadlines for the E1 tender — a settlement project that would bisect the Israeli-occupied West Bank and cut it off from East Jerusalem, fragmenting the land Palestinians hope will form the heart of a state.

"Protecting the two-state solution is the North Star of this Government's approach," British foreign secretary Ed Miliband said in a statement. "That is why my message on E1 is clear: do not bid, do not build, and do not profit from the destruction of the two-state solution."

In response, Israel Ganz, head of the Yesha Council, which represents municipal councils of Jewish settlements in the West Bank, said in a statement that Britain had declared an "economic war" on Israel and called on the Israeli government to act immediately to secure the lifting of the sanctions.

There was no immediate comment from the Israeli government, which has been led by caretaker Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu since the October 27 election, when Netanyahu's coalition lost its parliamentary majority and no clear winner emerged.

The Palestinian Authority welcomed the sanctions and called for other countries to take similar action.

The sanctions are the latest in a series of measures by Britain targeting the settlement policy and underscore Israel's growing diplomatic isolation among some traditional allies.

Britain's relationship with Israel has deteriorated significantly over the past three years because of disagreements over the way that Israel has conducted its war against Hamas and the Israeli government's plans to expand settlements in the occupied West Bank.

Israel in September threatened to close the British Consulate building in East Jerusalem in response to London's decision to impose trade sanctions on Israeli settlements in the West Bank.

British and Israeli diplomats last month reached a last-minute agreement to avoid the closure of the consulate.

Britain joined several other countries in 2025 in recognising a Palestinian state as a means of advancing the two-state solution, and in September announced plans to block imports from Israeli settlements in the West Bank.

Last year, Britain also imposed sanctions on two far-right Israeli cabinet ministers, Itamar Ben-Gvir and Bezalel Smotrich, accusing them of repeatedly inciting violence against Palestinians in the West Bank.

While those measures were co-ordinated with international partners, Britain acted alone yesterday in sanctioning the Israeli companies, saying the move would disrupt their access to finance and support for further construction in the West Bank.

As part of the measures announced yesterday, the government also imposed sanctions on Tzav 9, an Israeli activist group which it said had regularly blocked humanitarian aid trucks to the Gaza Strip.

Trump's China data centre curb advances despite lobbying

Reuters
Washington



The US Federal Communications Commission seal decorates a wall inside their headquarters in Washington, DC. (**Reuters/File Photo**)

The Trump administration plans to press ahead with efforts to block imports of Chinese data centre equipment despite pushback from Amazon, Google, Meta and other US technology companies, people briefed on the matter said.

Reuters reported in August that the Federal Communications Commission was seeking to ban US imports of new models of Chinese optical transceivers, which allow data to travel over fiber-optic cables at the speed of light within data centres, over national security concerns.

But the measure has faced more opposition than was previously known, with Amazon, Google, Meta, CoreWeave and Cisco joining Microsoft in a meeting with White House officials earlier this year previously reported by Reuters.

US firms could need up to a decade to comply with any such mandate, the executives told the officials, according to two people familiar with the matter.

The lobbying had raised doubts over whether the measure would go ahead. But it is moving forward, three additional people familiar with the matter said, emphasising that it could still get shelved if sentiment within the administration changes.

Shares of US optical transceiver makers rose after the news. The momentum is thanks in part to revelations about Nvidia CEO Jensen Huang's affair with an alleged Chinese spy, which have fuelled renewed calls in Washington for a tougher stance against Chinese technology threats.

A White House official declined to comment on the lobbying or the measure's progress but said recent FCC actions barring Chinese technology and other foreign equipment have resulted in billions in investments into US manufacturing, and thousands of new American jobs.

The Chinese Embassy in Washington said Beijing "firmly opposes the US overstretching the concept of national security" and urges the Trump administration to "stop smearing Chinese companies and threatening them with sanctions." "China will continue to do what is necessary to firmly defend the legitimate and lawful rights and interests of Chinese companies," it added.

China hawks in Washington are concerned Chinese transceivers could be used by Beijing to steal data, install malware or disrupt service at US data centres.

China boasts two-thirds of the global market for optical transceivers. Chinese firms like Eoptolink and Zhongji Innolight, which was added to the Pentagon's list of Chinese military-backed companies, dominate global supply.

Israeli forces kill 6, including a child

Israeli forces killed six people across the Gaza Strip yesterday, including a six-year-old boy, the civil defence agency and hospitals in the war-ravaged Palestinian territory told AFP.
Mahmoud Bassal, spokesman for Gaza's civil defence agency, told AFP that a total of six people were killed and several injured "as a result of Israeli fire" yesterday. Israel's military told AFP it was looking into the reports, adding that it struck sites in Gaza yesterday, and was "not aware" of any six-year-old killed by its fire. Bassal said that two people including a 21-year-old and a six-year-old boy were killed by Israeli fire in Deir el-Balah. Nasser Hospital, in Gaza's south, confirmed the two deaths and identified the child as Iyas al-Namnam. Bassal said that two people were killed in an Israeli drone bombing near northern Gaza's Jabalia camp. Al-Shifa hospita confirmed the two deaths. (**AFP**)

US official says tech woes not tied to cyberattacks

Reuters
Washington

A recent series of US technology outages is not tied to cyberattacks but rather to aging computer systems that are in need of upgrades, the country's top homeland security official said yesterday.

Disruptions at United Airlines, the Federal Aviation Administration, Microsoft and JPMorgan Chase have raised alarm. "Some of the technology that they're pushing out there, they're pushing new technology on top of really old computer systems, and it just seems to overwhelm the system," Markwayne Mullin told CNBC. "But it has nothing to do with cyberattacks."

Mullin said maybe companies needed to start telling customers before conducting a scheduled upgrade and warn them of possible disruptions for a short period of time. "I can tell you 98% certainty this isn't a cyberattack," he added.

A long-delayed test of the emergency alert system was scheduled yesterday, where in radio and television broadcasters nationwide were expected to be interrupted normal programming to relay a one-minute test message.

The FAA issued a nearly five-hour ground stop on Friday that led to airlines cancelling more than 18,000 flights over three days in the longest outage since the September 11, 2001, attacks. The outage was blamed on the installation of a single router in Arkansas.

United said a computer problem forced a halt to many departing flights, while JPMorgan Chase, the largest US lender, on Monday experienced problems processing transactions due to a software bug but said there was no evidence it was cyber-related.

Microsoft on Saturday said services had fully recovered across Teams, Outlook and its other products, ending a global outage that crippled online communications for businesses and governments for over 24 hours. Microsoft said server issues were behind the incident and it was not aware of any malicious activity.

After Manila summit, Trump eyes Putin, Kim meetings

AFP
Manila


President Donald Trump speaks during an official dinner at the 49th Asean Summit. (**AFP**)

US President Donald Trump said yesterday he was eyeing one-on-one meetings with Russia's Vladimir Putin and North Korea's Kim Jong Un, as he embarked on an Asian tour in search of diplomatic wins after a bruising election defeat at home.

The comments came barely an hour after he arrived for a key summit in the Philippines, where about 2,000 demonstrators carrying banners reading "Trump out now" and "Reject Pax Silica" — a reference to a US supply chain initiative — were facing off with police.

Speaking to reporters ahead of a sideline meeting with the leaders of the so-called Quad countries, Trump said he would happily meet with Putin if the opportunity arose at his next stop — the Asia-Pacific Economic Co-operation (Apec) summit in China's Shenzhen.

"If it's available, I would do that," Trump told reporters as he stood for photos with fellow Quad leaders Narendra Modi of India, Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi and Australia's Anthony Albanese. He added that North Korea's Kim "would like" to meet in China, hours after Beijing said it had no information about an encounter between the two.

Trump's Quad meeting at the 11-member Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) summit was the security alliance's first since his January 2025 return to power. While the Quad — broadly aimed at counterbalancing China's regional influence — has quietly progressed in deepening co-ordination, the short time allotted for yesterday's meeting meant it was unlikely to extend beyond pleasantries, Ryan Hass of the Brookings Institution told AFP.

The timing, however, was significant, he said, given the historic meeting Trump will attend with China's President Xi Jinping and Putin in just two days. "It's a way of inoculating Trump against criticism of caving to authoritarians when he meets with Xi and Putin in Shenzhen," Hass said.

While Asean leaders have spent three days grappling with a raft of regional issues, the spectre of Trump's ongoing tariff blitz has loomed large. Chinese Premier Li Qiang on Monday slammed what he called a "countercurrent of unilateralism and protectionism" while touting Beijing's own expanding trade with the bloc.

Brazil and Canada are already weaning themselves off dependence on the US market.

Yesterday, a combative Trump showed no let-up in his trade war with Beijing, saying the US would catch China in rare earths production "within 10 months".

"We are making rare earths at a level that we've never made before. We're going to catch them within 10 months, they say," he said.

Hours before Trump touched down in Manila, Washington announced new rules on the transfer of advanced AI chips, a move that could potentially rankle Asean members. Companies shipping high-end chips to Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand and Indonesia will now require a special licence, as the countries were said to represent a "higher-than-normal risk of diversion".

US attacks Iran's Qeshm island in Strait of Hormuz

AFP
Tehran

The US yesterday carried out several attacks on Iran's southern Island of Qeshm, located in the Strait of Hormuz, a local Iranian official said.

"The American attack on locations on Qeshm island caused no damage to residential, commercial, or infrastructural areas," said Ahmad Nafisi, deputy provincial governor of the southern province of Hormozgan, quoted by the official IRNA news agency.

"The situation on Qeshm island is under control, and all relief, service, and executive agencies are on full alert," he added.

"The sounds of five to six explosions were heard on Qeshm on Tuesday evening," IRNA said.

Earlier in the day Iran's Revolutionary Guards said they had launched a drone attack targeting a radar system in Bahrain operated by the US. "Combat drones belonging to the Revolutionary Guards carried out a precision operation this morning, targeting a radar system operated by US forces at the Sheikh Isa Air Base in Bahrain," the Guards' Sepah news website said.

It added that the attack was in response to the "repeated violations of Iranian airspace by US military drones".

Since the outbreak of the Middle East war in late February, Tehran has attempted to restrict traffic through the strategic waterway, insisting vessels use only routes authorised by the Islamic republic.

It has regularly targeted ships that transit without its authorisation. The US has in response imposed a blockade on Iranian ports and helped tankers travel the strait, which normally carries about one-fifth of global oil supplies.

In recent weeks, Tehran has made multiple announcements saying ships have caught fire in the strait, often claiming they struck mines. Yesterday, the Iranian armed forces said three oil tankers struck naval mines while attempting to transit Hormuz.

The US military recently said it had cleared all mines from the main routes through the waterway.

Iran's proxy in Iraq rakes in hundreds of millions through oil smuggling

Reuters
Baghdad

Iran's most powerful militia ally in Iraq has been raking in hundreds of millions of dollars from oil stolen from the state, Iraqi officials say, prompting the prime minister to ready his security forces to confront the heavily armed group.

Prime Minister Ali al-Zaidi has launched his toughest challenge yet to the group Kataib Hezbollah by cracking down on an oil smuggling network it has run for years, senior security, army, police and oil officials told Reuters.

They said the smuggling, carried out with accomplices among some security and oil officials, has robbed the government of hundreds of millions of dollars dating back to 2021.

Kataib Hezbollah, branded a terrorist organisation by the US, is one of dozens of heavily armed pro-Iranian groups that have semi-official status in Iraq. It denies the smuggling and calls the crackdown part of a campaign to seize its weapons.

"We are therefore being subjected to the greatest campaign of blackmail aimed at forcing us to relinquish the weapons of dignity that have upheld sovereignty and protected the rights of Iraqis at multiple stages," the group said in a statement.

Iran has had deep influence in Iraq since the US toppled Saddam Hussein in 2003.

The Iranian-backed armed groups have resisted repeated calls by both al-Zaidi and his ally US President Donald Trump to disarm, and have struck US troops and targets in Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates in solidarity with Tehran since the US and Israel launched their war against Iran in February.

Jasim al-Bahadli, an Iraqi security analyst specialising in studying armed groups aligned with Iran, said the government anti-smuggling campaign has become a political confrontation with the militia.

"Al-Zaidi is effectively challenging a group with deep security, political and economic influence, and that carries significant risks for both sides," he said.

"More broadly, it appears to be an attempt to contain the influence of Iran-backed armed groups by targeting economic networks that underpin their power, particularly after Kataib Hezbollah resisted government efforts to bring armed factions more firmly under state control."

In 2021, a drone attack targeted Mustafa al-Kadhimi, then prime minister, in what his office said was an assassination attempt after security forces clashed with supporters of pro-Iranian militias.

So far, nine senior security and oil officials have been dismissed following a high-level government investigation into oil smuggling, focused on Jurf al-Sakhar in Babil province, a Kataib Hezbollah stronghold about 50km south of Baghdad. Al-Zaidi has ordered all suspects to be referred to the courts, and dismissed the Babil police chief, the province's intelligence and security commanders and the director of the state-run Oil Pipelines Company (OPC).

Now he has ordered senior military and security commanders to deploy additional forces around Jurf al-Sakhar and prepare for the entry of government troops into the town, potentially bringing the government into a direct confrontation with fighters.

The groups have built up arsenals that include assault rifles, machineguns, anti-tank guided missiles, mortars, rockets, armed drones and, according to Iraqi security reports and assessments, some short-range ballistic and cruise missile capabilities supplied by Iran or derived from Iranian systems.

Two security sources who took part in an inspection mission on Saturday to Jurf al-Sakhar said investigators had found evidence that smugglers had punctured a crude oil pipeline and siphoned crude into makeshift storage pits dug in the ground.

The 26-inch pipeline carries at least 200,000 barrels per day of crude, according to an Iraqi Oil Ministry document reviewed by Reuters.

The sources said investigators found concealed pumping equipment inside several hangars used to avoid aerial surveillance while loading tanker trucks with siphoned crude. Investigators also found a small oil refinery concealed in the area, the sources said.

Two Iraqi oil officials with direct knowledge of the investigation said it was too early to quantify losses without knowing how long the tapping points had been operational, but estimated the value of crude potentially siphoned since 2021 could amount to hundreds of millions of dollars.

The crackdown is set against a backdrop of mounting US pressure on Iraq over the role of pro-Iranian groups in the country's oil sector.

In May, Washington sanctioned Iraq's deputy oil minister, alleging he had facilitated the diversion of Iraqi oil for the benefit of Iran and its proxy militias. Sanctions were also imposed on militia leaders and networks Washington said were exploiting Iraq's oil wealth to finance Tehran-aligned groups.


MPs from Serbia's Student List attend the inaugural session of the National Assembly in Belgrade. (**AFP**)

Serbia's students enter parliament after election

AFP
Belgrade

Representatives of Serbia's student-backed movement were sworn in yesterday, in the first parliamentary sitting since last month's historic election victory ended 14 years of rule by Aleksandar Vucic's right-wing party.

The landslide result followed nearly two years of protests sparked by the 2024 collapse of a railway station canopy in Novi Sad that killed 16 people.

The disaster, widely blamed on corruption, triggered Serbia's largest protests since the fall of strongman Slobodan Milosevic in 2000 and paved the way for victory on an anti-graft platform. The inaugural parliamentary session, which saw the movement's 140 candidates officially take their seats, formally recognises the movement's majority and is the first step towards forming a government.

Earlier hundreds of supporters gathered outside parliament to welcome the new lawmakers, chanting protest slogans and applauding. Some held banners wishing the freshly elected MPs luck, while the arrival of Vucic's Serbian Progressive Party (SNS) candidates drew jeers and boos.

One SNS member had yogurt poured on her head by a woman in the crowd as she walked up the steps of the parliament's entrance. The Students' List secured 140 seats in the 250-member parliament, enough to govern alone, while Vucic's coalition won 103. Minority parties took the remaining seven seats.

Most of student-backed candidates are political newcomers from academic or arts backgrounds. "We are preparing very seriously for everything ahead, studying the laws, parliamentary procedures and MPs' duties," prominent Student List candidate Mirjana Nikolic told AFP earlier this month.

The students' victory sparked days of raucous celebration in cities across the country, and the highly anticipated session's broadcast is expected to draw viewers nationwide.

Once parliament is constituted, the new majority will have 90 days to name a prime minister, present their programme and form a government.

The student movement has pledged wide-ranging reforms, including improving healthcare, boosting education and doubling the defence budget.

It will also have to balance the country's historically close ties with Russia with its long-stated goal of joining the European Union, and manage relations with Kosovo — its former province whose 2008 declaration of independence Belgrade does not recognise. The election of a parliamentary speaker will also bring a new acting president, a role the speaker has held since Vucic cut short his second presidential term in September to run for prime minister.

Amid COP31 fight, KSA defends stance on UN reports

AFP
Antalya

Saudi Arabia yesterday defended its position over the publication timeline of crucial reports by the UN's climate science panel as a dispute over the issue heats up at the COP31 summit.

Several countries are pushing for a reference to the timing standoff to be included in a broad political statement being negotiated at the UN's climate talks in Antalya, Turkiye.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) publishes a series of reports every five to seven years that provide the definitive scientific assessment of global warming and inform global policy responses to the crisis.

Dozens of European, African and Pacific nations want the next IPCC reports published ahead of a crucial stocktake of global carbon-cutting efforts at the 2028 climate summit.

But oil-rich Saudi Arabia, Russia and India are among a group of countries accused of pushing for the IPCC's "seventh assessment report" to be delayed until 2029.

"Saudi Arabia is not seeking to delay climate science," the kingdom's delegation at COP31 said in a statement.

"Its position is to safeguard the scientific integrity, independence and inclusivity of IPCC assessments through appropriate publication timelines and established governance procedures," it said.

The Saudi delegation said the kingdom "advocates publication timelines that allow sufficient scientific review, transparency and meaningful participation, particularly from developing countries".

The statement did not explicitly say when Saudi Arabia would like to see the reports published.

Ukraine missile strike severs Crimean bridge

AFP
Kyiv

A section of the bridge linking Russia to the annexed Crimean peninsula appeared to be lying in rubble in the water yesterday after Ukraine hit the road-and-rail link with missiles in a brazen overnight attack.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky hailed the strike as "unprecedented" and a justified retaliation for Russia's barrages of its infrastructure in the almost-five years since Moscow invaded.

Traffic was completely halted, with local Russian-installed officials on the peninsula urging locals not to panic and saying the delivery of food and essentials would not be affected.

Moscow also launched attacks on key Ukrainian bridges, firing ballistic missiles at two major river crossings in Kyiv.

The wave of attacks comes ahead of a historic meeting of the Chinese, US and Russian leaders, and could disrupt Russian President Vladimir Putin's attempts to cast the meeting as a new Yalta: an image of unassailable world leaders dividing up spheres of influence.

Zelensky had warned of a major Russian attack in the days leading up to Thursday's meeting in China's Shenzhen, when Putin meets Presidents Xi Jinping and Donald Trump.

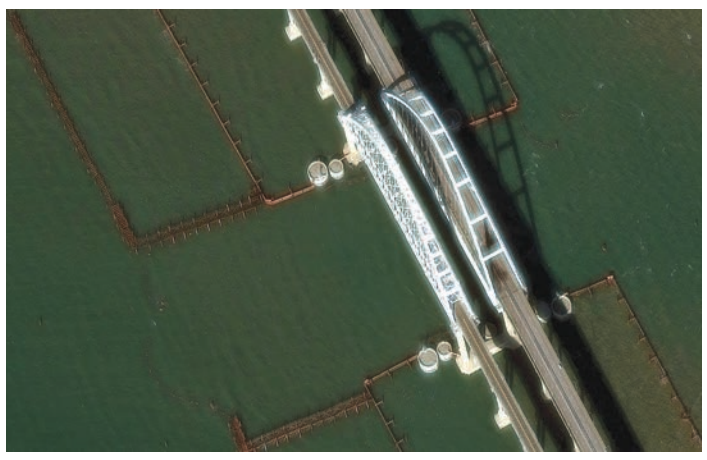
"We have repeatedly offered Russia steps towards de-escalation — and every proposal has been met with loud rejection," Zelensky said on social media, posting footage of a Ukrainian missile approaching the bridge in the dark of night.

"We are also reminding Russia that war will always return to where it began," he said.

Russia annexed Crimea in 2014, one of the opening moves in what became a deadly war between Kyiv and Russian-backed separatists in the east of the country.

Ukraine's SBU security service said one of the bridges metal arches "and the road span beneath it have been completely destroyed."

"The central arch and spans have collapsed, and the rail section has suffered critical damage," Kyiv's defence ministry added.


A satellite image shows a close-up view of the bridge over the Kerch Strait linking Russia and Crimea, that was hit by drones. (**Reuters**)

Images published by the SBU showed piles of concrete rubble laying on the base — the bridge broken in two parts with a clean gap, several dozen meters wide, in the middle.

The Kremlin said the bridge — a symbol of Putin's rule and Russia's annexation of Crimea — would be "restored and will be even better than before."

An emergency government commission was to convene yesterday to assess the damage and the repair work.

Russia's defence ministry said it downed 1,441 Ukrainian drones in a major overnight barrage — the second-highest one-day figure this year.

Two people were killed in Crimea in the attack, the Russian-installed governor said.

The strike on the bridge comes as Russia's attacks on Ukrainian infrastructure intensified with the onset of winter. AFP reporters in Kyiv heard waves of attacks as Russia fired missiles and drones at the city overnight.

Both the Northern and Southern bridges in the capital — key bridges across the Dnipro river that form part of the city ringroad — were hit. Traffic was suspended, causing gridlock yesterday morning.

Russia's army confirmed it had hit both bridges in a "massive attack" on Ukraine's infrastructure.

Mayor Vitali Klitschko posted a video from the Northern Bridge showing debris strewn across the road.

The strikes on Kyiv also disrupted heating and water in parts of the capital, he said.

The wave of strikes comes as the US renews its push for an end to the war.

But diplomatic efforts have so far failed to reach a breakthrough, with fighting grinding into another winter.

Moscow wants a sweeping deal to rewrite "Europe's security architecture" as part of any agreement to halt the fighting.

Russia has previously demanded curbs on Nato's presence in central and eastern Europe and restrictions on the deployment of foreign troops and hardware to Ukraine.

Kyiv and Europe are resisting any attempts to overhaul the continent's post-Cold War defence, calling for a ceasefire in the Ukraine war before any discussion of terms.

Zelensky has raised alarm that the Shenzen meeting could be a Yalta-like "redistribution of spheres of influence" for the 21st century. The 1945 Yalta summit — held in Crimea, then part of the Soviet Union — saw US president Franklin D Roosevelt, Britain's Winston Churchill and Soviet leader Joseph Stalin carve up new post-WWII territorial boundaries.

Nato allies to discuss with Pentagon US troop levels

Reuters
Brussels

Nato allies will discuss Washington's review of US troop levels in Europe with Pentagon policy chief Elbridge Colby yesterday, German Defence Minister Boris Pistorius said, with more clarity on the scope of any drawdown expected within weeks.

US Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth unveiled the six-month review in June and threatened to withhold some US dues to Nato if "free riding" allies fell short of defence spending commitments.

He did not explicitly say the review could lead to cuts in the 80,000 US troops deployed to Europe, but stressed the goal of prompting the continent to do more while enabling the US military to meet global commitments.


Nato Secretary General, Mark Rutte, German Defence Minister, Boris Pistorius, accompanied by Ukraine's Defence Minister, Yevhenii Khmara at Nato headquarters in Brussels. (**Reuters**)

"We expect changes in troop levels, but we don't know anything concrete yet," Pistorius said ahead of a meeting with his EU counterparts in Brussels.

"But again, a shift in the balance of conventional forces would have occurred under any other US president, due to increased engagement in the Indo-Pacific."

Germany hosts about 35,000 US troops, the largest American military presence in Europe. The result of the review is expected to be presented before Christmas.

Sources have speculated Washington might move a brigade or some 5,000 troops from Germany either to Asia or closer to Nato's eastern flank in Poland.

Pistorius said the current talks aimed for co-ordination with Washington to prevent dangerous gaps in Nato's European defences caused by any US drawdown.

Later Colby will join a meeting of the so-called Ramstein Group of Ukraine's military supporters at Nato headquarters to discuss how to supply more arms to Kyiv .

Gas carrier struck in Black Sea

A ship carrying liquefied petroleum gas was struck in the Black Sea yesterday, Bulgarian authorities and the vessel's management company said, the latest in a spate of incidents thought to be fallout from the Ukraine war.

Nineteen crew members were rescued from the Gas Husky, the Bulgarian defence ministry said in a statement. "The vessel was struck early this morning while sailing in the Black Sea, within Bulgaria's exclusive economic zone," the ship's Greek management company Stealth Maritime said, without specifying what it had been struck by.

At least 14 merchant ships have been hit by drones in the Black Sea off Romania and Bulgaria since October, leaving more than 30 sailors dead or missing.

Romania and Bulgaria have both pointed the finger at Russia over the attacks, though Bulgaria has underlined that there is no proof of who was behind them.

According to the Bulgarian transport ministry, the Gas Husky disappeared from radar shortly after midnight and its distress beacon was triggered at 8:02am about 50 nautical miles east of Byala. The gas carrier, sailing under the Liberian flag, was transporting 3,400 tonnes of LPG from Egypt to Romania, with 19 Filipino sailors on board, the ministry said. The incident comes just one day after another cargo ship, the Betul 8, capsized off Bulgaria in what was described as a drone strike.

The Bulgarian transport ministry said 12 sailors were rescued from the Betul 8, which was carrying bulk wheat from Romania to Egypt. (**AFP**)

'Death is near': Inside the hoax bomb threats that rattled Europe's schools, airports

Reuters
Belfast

When an email arrived at St John the Baptist Primary School in Belfast on October 19 saying that a bomb had been planted in the building, principal Chris Donnelly was sceptical.

Donnelly said the message was deleted within minutes and he could not recall its exact contents, but remembered that it was vaguely worded and had been sent to numerous other schools.

"It did not read as something that was a serious threat," he told Reuters. Still, he kept pupils indoors and organised a room-by-room search. Northern Ireland police later said about 300 schools had received the same message and that it was being treated as a hoax.

Donnelly said he did not take chances. "Even though it looks like a hoax, your initial response has to be extremely serious," he said.

The incident at St John was one of more than 8,000 bomb hoaxes sent to institutions and businesses across Europe over the past month, according to a Reuters tally of disclosures by European officials, media reports and data gathered by cybersecurity firms such as Proofpoint and Mimecast.

While the hoaxes have been widely reported, the scale of the campaign and details of how it was carried out are reported here for the first time.

Most targets were schools in the United Kingdom, Ireland and Italy. But media organisations, airlines, airports, charities and private individuals were also caught up in the campaign. The hoaxes have forced dozens of flight diversions and cancellations, interrupted television broadcasts and sent thousands of school pupils home.

The October 19 threats also hit schools in Scotland, where Mimecast said at least 33 schools were targeted. Proofpoint said that another wave of threats issued that day was sent to around 25 Bulgarian institutions, mainly healthcare groups along with a handful of anti-corruption and whistleblowing organisations.

Eight of the threatening messages reviewed by Reuters — written in English, Bulgarian or Italian — show similarities. The ones sent to schools in Northern Ireland, Scotland and the Bulgarian institutions on October 19 carried the subject line "Death is near."


Chris Donnelly, principal of St John the Baptist Primary School, poses in Belfast, Northern Ireland. (**Reuters**)

The messages were sent from at least four email accounts that Proofpoint and Mimecast said had been hijacked. In Taiwan, an account belonging to a former graduate student appeared to have been compromised to send some of the messages, according to the student's alma mater, Da-Yeh University.

The October 19 emails did not attract much attention beyond Britain and the hoaxers appear to have kept a low profile in the two weeks that followed.

Then they came roaring back.

On November 2, a Wizz Air flight from London to Sofia was diverted to Budapest after the airline received a bomb threat. The next day seven more flights and a cruise ship off the coast of Greece were targeted. On November 5, another batch of threats disrupted flights across Europe. More than 50 flights at some 15 airlines received hoax bomb threats between November 2 and 6, according to flight tracking specialists AirNav Radar.

Unlike the initial round of emails, which referred to "Shariah law," the November emails were sent in the name of an obscure Russian anti-feminist group called "Male State", whose founder said he had nothing to do with them.

Like the October messages, they were mass distributed and carried generic warnings about bombs and bloodshed. "Today your sky will be red," one said.

On November 6, newsrooms were targeted, including France's TF1, Bulgaria's Nova and Irish state broadcaster RTE — some of whose programmes briefly went off air while staff evacuated its headquarters. Overall, cybersecurity firm Proofpoint said at least 12 media organisations were targeted around that time.

An even bigger wave came on November 11.

About 6,300 Italian schools received bomb threats purportedly from "Misoginistan" — an apparent reference to "Male State" — prompting evacuations nationwide. Police said around 1,000 schools in Scotland and 300 in Northern Ireland were also targeted on that day. Irish media reported that about 300 schools there received threats as well.

Many of the UK schools that received November 11 threats had received the earlier round of threats, including St John in Belfast.

Donnelly, the principal, said that things were calmer the second time around. "We made the call, after checking the grounds, to let the children go out to play at break and lunchtime," he said.

Reuters could not independently establish that every hoax email came from the same group. But several officials and experts suspect most, if not all, were connected.

Alongside similarities in the wording and distribution methods, Mimecast noted that the November campaign targeted almost all the same schools in Scotland as the October wave, suggesting use of the same hit list.

OPINION

All eyes on Asean summit amid most complex backdrops for the regional bloc

Major powers have joined a summit of Southeast Asian nations hosted by the Philippines against one of the most complex backdrops for the regional bloc, from the Iran war that has battered economies to the growing US-China rivalry. Closer to home, the 11 members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations are grappling with a crisis in civil war-torn Myanmar, conflict between Thailand and Cambodia, and tension over competing claims in the South China Sea.

Asean was founded on August 8, 1967, when Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand signed the Bangkok Declaration, setting goals for economic and other types of cooperation and regional peace and stability. Unlike the European Union, Asean has no body that can impose decisions on members.

After the initial five nations, Brunei joined in 1984, Vietnam in 1995, Laos and Myanmar in 1997 and Cambodia in 1999. East Timor became the 11th member in October 2025. Its combined population of 693.2mn in 2025 accounts for 8.4% of the world's population. The bloc's combined output of $4.3tn would rank it as the fifth-largest economy in the world if considered as a single unit, while Asean data shows goods trade stood at $4.4tn. The Asean Economic Community aims to establish a single market and production base, but non-tariff barriers and uneven progress still limit integration.

Collective action is complicated by vast political, economic and social differences among members, who have varying security ties with China and the United States. Five have exclusive economic zones in the crowded waterway of the South China Sea and several members claim sovereignty over disputed islands and features there, as does Beijing.

Asean helped build a regional order based on regular dialogue among countries with a history of conflict. Its forums bring China, the United States, Russia, Japan and India to the same table. It has built a network of free-trade pacts as well as the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership linking Southeast Asia with China, Japan, South Korea, Australia and New Zealand. Economic crises have tested it.

The 1997-1998 Asian financial crisis exposed its vulnerability to cross-border shocks and helped spur co-operation with China, Japan and South Korea, including the 2000 Chiang Mai Initiative, now a $240bn regional financial safety net. In 2026, it added a facility to provide rapid liquidity during sudden shocks such as natural disasters and pandemics.

Political and security crises have proved harder to resolve; strife-torn Myanmar, tension between Thailand and Cambodia, and South China Sea disputes test Asean's consensus-based approach.

"Asean centrality" is the principle that Southeast Asian nations should act together to stay at the centre of institutions shaping the region, rather than letting outside powers set the agenda. By hosting forums involving major powers, Asean allows smaller members to project a stronger collective voice. But its principles of consensus and non-interference can slow decisions and dilute responses, while Asean lacks enforcement powers to make governments change course. Its chairmanship rotates annually among members and its secretariat is based in Jakarta.

Asean also agreed to continue excluding the leaders of war-torn member Myanmar from its summits, but left the door open for a return if "sustained and concrete progress" on a peace plan agreed with Asean after a coup five years ago can be demonstrated.

The meetings later widened to include the United Nations and regional powers China, India, Australia, Japan and South Korea. — Reuters

Big cheer for young talent



New York Governor Kathy Hochul and New York City Mayor Zohran Mamdani take part in a ceremonial groundbreaking for the Variety Boys & Girls Club of Queens in New York City yesterday. Established in 1955, the Variety Boys & Girls Club of Queens (VBGCQ) is a nonprofit organisation that inspires children to discover their passions and cultivate their futures through a diverse array of youth development programs. (**AFP**)



Trump, Tehran gamble on time as Iran war stalemate deepens

By Samia Nakhoul and John Irish
Reuters

After nearly nine months of war, the United States and Iran are each acting as if they have time on their side, a calculation that has locked them in a stalemate that is almost impossible for either to break.

It is a risky gamble, with two former US Middle East negotiators, European officials and Gulf sources saying fighting could resume before a diplomatic exit becomes possible. US President Donald Trump has chosen to squeeze Iran rather than hit it hard again or concede. Persuaded that renewed bombing would not change the outcome and could trigger Iranian reprisals against Gulf energy infrastructure, he has held off. Trump is counting instead on a naval blockade of Iran and economic pain forcing Tehran to give ground and agree to concessions on its nuclear programme.

Iranian leaders have drawn the opposite conclusion. Emboldened by election setbacks for Trump's Republican Party and for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, they have raised the cost of a peace deal for the US, demanding that Washington make the first move towards a resolution. Tehran says it is open to diplomacy, and was meeting mediators on Tuesday, but accuses Washington of pursuing coercion and says it will not yield to US pressure. "There's a dual reality. Trump doesn't have good options, and the Iranians don't have good options," said Dennis Ross, a former US Middle East negotiator. "They're each defining what it takes to end it (the war) in a way that is contradictory to the other side, and the other side can't accept it."

A senior European official said Washington's demands were too costly for Iran to accept, while Tehran's demands were too politically costly for Washington.



US President Donald Trump speaks at a campaign rally. (**Reuters**)

BURIED URANIUM

A second senior European official, briefed by his country's intelligence agency, said the US military campaign had "achieved the opposite of what was intended". It had strengthened Iran, rallied power around its most hardline figures and "worsened the nuclear problem rather than solving it," said the official, who spoke on condition of anonymity because of the sensitivity of the matter.

The first European official, and a separate Western official, said intelligence reports indicated that a "significant portion" of Iran's stockpile of highly enriched uranium was probably buried deep inside Pickaxe Mountain, a heavily fortified underground facility near Iran's Natanz nuclear complex.

"There is every incentive for Iran to pursue a clandestine nuclear programme designed to ensure deterrence against future US military intervention," the first European official said.

Iran, which says its nuclear programme is for civilian purposes only and denies seeking a nuclear bomb, has said it will not let nuclear inspectors back in while the war continues.

Aaron David Miller, a former US Middle East negotiator, describes Washington's choices as escalation, negotiation, capitulation or strangulation. For now, he says, Washington has chosen the last option, while retaining the possibility of military action before Democrats take control of Congress in January.

A THIRD OPTION

A US official said "the economic pressure campaign is devastating Iran to such an extent that the president does not have any need to conduct major combat operations," and that the president had "all options at his disposal" to prevent Tehran from acquiring a nuclear weapon.

Secretary of State Marco Rubio told G7 ministers in Paris last week that Washington was not trapped between renewed war and a weak deal, according to four diplomats present.

Rubio said there was a third option: sustained economic pressure to show the Iranians "that they do not control the game" until they make concessions that could allow what he depicted as a balanced agreement.

European officials believe Trump has for now settled on the third option, though one said the president could reverse course at a moment's notice. One of the senior European officials said Trump had not entirely abandoned military action, and that the current lull was widely seen as a grace period for diplomacy.

Gulf states had warned Trump that renewed bombing could trigger Iranian retaliation against their infrastructure, two Gulf sources told Reuters. Gulf Cooperation Council Secretary-General Jasem al-Budaiwi said last week member states had been hit by over 7,000 Iranian missiles and drones during the war.

"The United States strikes Iran, but Iran does not strike America directly - it strikes the Gulf instead," said Ebtesam al-Ketbi, president of the Emirates Policy Center think tank.

A Gulf source said: "Everybody urged Trump not to attack, and he didn't want to either."

Trump now has a small window to act -- and three aircraft carriers in the region.

"Will he seize the moment? It's difficult to read Trump," the Gulf source said.

Indirect US-Iran talks are stuck on sequencing, said all the sources who spoke to Reuters.

They said Tehran wants the blockade lifted, frozen assets released and its oil sales restored before substantive talks begin. It also wants an end to hostilities across all fronts, they said, and a recognised role in managing passage through the Strait of Hormuz, a vital conduit for global energy supplies.

In return, it would reopen Hormuz and give only a promise to discuss its nuclear programme later, they added, with Washington wanting reciprocal and simultaneous steps, including verifiable commitments on the nuclear programme from the outset.

WHO MOVES FIRST?

Qatar's prime minister briefed the G7 countries in Paris after holding talks with Trump. One of the European officials said he "did not come to tell us that he had found the solution," but described a mediation that remains alive but faces significant gaps.

The European officials said the nuclear issue must be part of the first stage of talks and that Iranian demands to settle the Strait of Hormuz blockade, have sanctions on it lifted and only afterwards allow back inspectors were unacceptable.

A deal is likely only if both sides make concessions -- not to each other but to third parties, chiefly the Gulf states, they said. That would enable Iran to accept terms as meeting regional rather than US demands.

Inside Iran, nobody is in a position to agree a deal, political analysts say. One European official said a hard core of Revolutionary Guards officers who believe they have won has no interest in negotiating, making Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi's task at negotiations practically impossible.

Alan Eyre, a former US diplomat who worked on nuclear negotiations with Iran, said hardliners had watched parliament speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf -- an unsuccessful presidential candidate -- pay a political price for his link to an earlier interim agreement. "Everyone is scared of being the softest hardliner," he said.

The US naval blockade may yet force a decision before diplomacy can, Eyre said. "Eventually, if the US doesn't lift the blockade, Iran is going to escalate because they can't last," he said.



Vessels in the Strait of Hormuz. (**Reuters**)

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Germany, Qatar look to deepen technology partnership: Ambassador

By Sara Eljack
Staff Reporter







Germany and Qatar are looking to strengthen their partnership in technology and innovation, German ambassador to Qatar Oliver Owcza said during the German Unity Day celebration at The St. Regis Doha yesterday.

The ambassador highlighted German technology's contribution to Qatar's energy and transport sectors and pointed to the upcoming official visit of His Highness Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani, Amir of Qatar, to Germany from November 19 to 21 as an important step in bilateral relations.

"The economy is another pillar of our partnership, yet too often reduced to sales figures or trade balances. As a matter of fact, it's much more," he said.

Owcza cited German technology systems used in QatarEnergy's liquefied natural gas (LNG) production, baggage handling systems at Hamad International Airport and German contributions to conceptual designs for Qatar Rail and Doha Metro.

He said this year's celebration focused on German-Qatari technological leadership, highlighting innovations developed in Germany alongside technologies jointly developed in and for Qatar.

Three companies — DHL, NBK (Mercedes-Benz) and Siemens — participated in the celebration, showcasing technological innovations through interactive exhibition stands. The displays highlighted how technology can improve efficiency, simplify operations and support business processes.

The event also featured vehicles from Porsche, BMW, Audi, Volkswagen and Mercedes-Benz, alongside a Formula 1 racing car and a Lekhwiya vehicle. An interactive LED tunnel presented 14 major milestones in German innovation.

"Through these exhibits, we want to pay tribute to the silent engineers behind these achievements," Owcza said.

Turning to bilateral relations, the ambassador described the Amir's upcoming visit to Germany as a significant moment for the partnership.

"I am confident we will witness our partnership to be lifted to the next level," he said.

He also recalled German Chancellor Friedrich Merz's visit to Doha in February, when both sides emphasised their commitment to deepening co-operation across different sectors.

Owcza highlighted growing co-operation in security, citing visits by the two countries' interior ministers as examples of closer ties and mutual trust.

"Germany, before and throughout this crisis, stood and stands side by side and in solidarity with Qatar," he said.

He praised Qatar's response to regional challenges, particularly the efforts of its armed forces, civil defence personnel and diplomats.

The ambassador also highlighted the upcoming opening of the Gerhard Richter Pavilion at the Museum of Islamic Art Park in Doha as a new development in German-Qatari cultural co-operation.

The reception brought together government officials, diplomats and business representatives, including HE Mohammed bin Ali bin Mohammed al-Mannai, Minister of Communications and Information Technology.

Al Diwan in Berlin promotes Web Summit Qatar 2027

QNA
Berlin

The Arab Cultural House "Al Diwan" in Berlin, in co-operation with the embassy of the State of Qatar in the Federal Republic of Germany and the Web Summit team, hosted a promotional event for the fourth edition of Web Summit Qatar, scheduled to take place in Doha from January 31 to February 3, 2027.

The event was attended by ambassador of the State of Qatar to the Federal Republic of Germany Abdullah bin Ibrahim al-Hamar, along with Saud Ahmed al-Buainain, Director of the Studies and Strategic Planning Department at the Government Communications Office, as well as officials, experts and representatives from the technology, investment and entrepreneurship sectors, research institutions, and German and Qatari companies.

The event formed part of preparations for Doha to host the upcoming edition of the summit and was held as part of a series of international promotional activities announced by the Government Communications Office last September. The activities seek to showcase the opportunities offered by the summit, attract start-ups and investors, and strengthen connections between Qatar's innovation ecosystem and global technology hubs.

In his opening remarks, ambassador Abdullah bin Ibrahim al-Hamar underscored the importance of Qatar-Germany relations and the significant scope for expanding co-operation in technology, scientific research, investment, advanced industries and human capital development. He noted that the bilateral relationship rests on a longstanding foundation of trust, dialogue and mutual respect.

He said the world is undergoing profound and rapid transformation, with technology reshaping economies and redefining how societies develop, compete and collaborate. Artificial intelligence, digital transformation and emerging technologies, he noted, are opening new horizons for business and innovation.

He emphasised that technology alone does not shape the future; rather, it is shaped by the people who develop it, the ideas they exchange, the capital that supports them, and the partnerships that enable innovation to transcend borders.

Ambassador al-Hamar noted that Germany enjoys a distinctive global standing, underpinned by its industrial strength, engineering excellence, research institutions and advanced innovation ecosystem. Qatar, meanwhile, is pursuing an ambitious strategy to diversify its economy by investing in knowledge, digital infrastructure, entrepreneurship and future-oriented industries.

He stressed that the two countries' complementary strengths create significant opportunities for closer cooperation, noting that Qatar views Germany as more than an important economic partner and sees considerable scope for deepening co-operation in areas of mutual interest.

He added that Qatar offers German companies, entrepreneurs and investors more than access to a growing market, serving as a gateway to a dynamic regional economy and providing opportunities to build relationships with markets and partners across the Middle East and beyond.

In this context, ambassador al-Hamar underscored the importance of Web Summit Qatar 2027 as a platform that brings together ideas, talent, investors and policymakers, creating an environment where meetings and discussions can translate into tangible partnerships and genuine economic opportunities.

He explained that the upcoming edition of the summit will give the global technology community a broader opportunity to learn about Qatar's growing innovation ecosystem. He noted that the Berlin event is intended to initiate dialogue among relevant stakeholders, identify areas of shared interest and build relationships that extend beyond the event and the summit itself.

He urged participants to use the event to connect with potential partners, exchange perspectives and explore opportunities for joint work, stressing that the value of international partnerships is measured not by the number of meetings held, but by the projects and achievements that emerge from them.

For his part, Dr Lawrence al-Hannawi, Director of the Arab Cultural House "Al Diwan" in Germany told Qatar News Agency (QNA) that hosting the event reflects Al Diwan's vision of deepening ties between Qatar and Germany and opening new avenues for co-operation among institutions and across a range of sectors, particularly technology, innovation, entrepreneurship and investment.

He said the event offers a valuable opportunity to bring together two dynamic and complementary ecosystems — Berlin's innovation and business ecosystem and its counterpart in Doha — facilitating the exchange of expertise, identifying partnership and investment prospects, and strengthening connections among entrepreneurs, investors, research institutions and policymakers in both countries.

He added that the significance of such initiatives extends beyond showcasing economic and investment opportunities to fostering enduring relationships among institutions and individuals, and translating shared perspectives and interests into practical partnerships and cross-border projects.

Al-Hannawi noted that since its establishment, Al Diwan has sought to establish itself as a platform for dialogue and engagement between Arab and German communities through a diverse range of cultural, intellectual and artistic programmes spanning literature, translation, music, language and public discourse.

He explained that Al Diwan's mission extends beyond cultural exchange in its traditional sense, encompassing efforts to build bridges across sectors and disciplines, create spaces for dialogue and the exchange of ideas, and foster joint initiatives.

He also expressed his appreciation for the partnership with the Web Summit Qatar 2027 team and the Government Communications Office, noting that hosting the gathering in Berlin represents an important step toward strengthening ties between the technology and investment communities in Germany and Qatar, ahead of their participation in Web Summit Qatar 2027 in Doha.

He stressed that the true measure of such gatherings lies not merely in the success of the event itself, but in their ability to forge relationships and partnerships that endure and evolve beyond its conclusion, translating into tangible opportunities for cooperation between the two countries.



The programme featured two specialised panel discussions and a presentation showcasing an entrepreneurial experience.

The first panel explored how European technology companies can leverage Qatar's innovation and investment ecosystem to expand into Middle Eastern and emerging markets, with discussions focusing on the role of economic institutions and investors in supporting business growth and international expansion.

Participants included Dr Hamad Rashid al-Nuaimi, Chief Strategy Officer at the Investment Promotion Agency Qatar (Invest Qatar); Filip Dames, Founding Partner at Cherry Ventures; and Dr Tim Polzehl, Founder and CEO of Gretchen AI GmbH.

The second panel focused on the forces shaping the value and competitiveness of innovation ecosystems in 2027, including deep technology, scientific research and global growth. Discussions examined how scientific research and technological advances can be translated into commercially viable, scalable ventures, while strengthening links between academia, investors and industry and exploring the role of institutional investors and sovereign wealth funds in advancing frontier technologies.

The panel brought together Dr Thorsten Lambertus, Managing Director of the Institute for Deep Tech Innovation (DEEP) at ESMT Berlin; Dr Rana Lunin, an investor specialising in healthcare and life sciences; Professor Dr Iyad Rahwan, Director of the Center for Humans and Machines at the Max Planck Institute for Human Development in Berlin; and Jan Berewinkel, Head of Business Services Berlin Districts & Start-ups at Berlin Partner for Business and Technology.

According to Invest Qatar, Web Summit Qatar 2027 is expected to draw more than 30,000 participants, 1,500 startups and 800 investors, underscoring Qatar's efforts to strengthen its position as a global hub for technology, innovation and entrepreneurship while advancing economic diversification and digital transformation in line with the Qatar National Vision 2030.

ECO backs Qatar-Pak mediation to de-escalate regional tensions

QNA
Islamabad

The Council of Foreign Ministers of the Economic Co-operation Organisation (ECO) expressed support for the mediation efforts undertaken by Qatar and Pakistan to de-escalate tensions in the region. This came in the final communique issued at the 30th Meeting of the ECO Council of Ministers (COM), convened in Islamabad, Pakistan, with Ministers of Foreign Affairs and heads of delegation of the ECO member states.

The communique profoundly praised Qatar for its significant role as a trusted intermediary in international diplomacy, commending its mediation efforts, especially throughout the 81st session of the United Nations General Assembly.

The ECO Foreign Ministers stressed the importance of prioritising dialogue and diplomacy, abiding by international law and fostering mutual trust and stability, in addition to settling conflicts through peaceful means. They called for forging ahead with co-operation within ECO in support of enduring peace and stability in the region.

On the other hand, the communique expressed its concern over the compounding humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip in the aftermath of the floods that engulfed Deir Al-Balah and the adjacent areas on Nov 6, with the approach of winter.

It stressed that it is critically important to get essential life-saving humanitarian aid into the Palestinian enclave, including food, medicines, fuel, warming equipment, tents, shelters, as well as winter clothes. The communique demanded that the forced displacement and intentional food deprivation cease immediately, stressing that it is quite important to do so, and calling for full implementation of the Gaza ceasefire agreement signed in October 2025.

The final communique underlined that the member states are committed to continuing to work together and strengthening multilateral co-ordination and co-operation in pursuit of achieving ECO's objectives of deepening regional integration, supporting sustainable development and enhancing security, stability and prosperity in the region.

Over 40 organisations partner with HBKU's I'dad platform

By Joseph Varghese
Staff Reporter

More than 40 international and national organisations from various sectors and industries are partnering with Hamad Bin Khalifa University's (HBKU) newly launched career development platform, I'dad, disclosed an official of the university.

Speaking to *Gulf Times* on the sidelines of the launch event of the new platform, Rashid S Adiba, director of Community Outreach and Student Relations at HBKU, said the initiative aims to help students gain practical experience, develop professional skills and improve their employment prospects while pursuing their academic studies.

"The event has brought together more than 40 employers from the public and private sectors, including local and international organisations. The initiative is designed to strengthen links between students, alumni and employers while providing opportunities for professional growth and career development," explained Adiba.


Rashid S Adiba.
PICTURE: Thajudheen

The official noted that the platform would serve as a comprehensive career development resource, enabling students to connect with companies, gain industry exposure and strengthen their CVs through professional experiences and potential collaborations.

"We focus on quality studies that will also be accompanied by the quality of career development," Adiba stated, highlighting the university's commitment to preparing graduates for the demands of the job market.

He explained that the university has invited these organisations, with an emphasis on matching employers with the academic disciplines offered at HBKU, which cover 51 majors.

"Participating organisations represent a wide range of sectors, including banking, healthcare, engineering and sports, as well as government institutions and private companies. Some of the national entities among the participating organisations are: Amiri Diwan, Qatar Olympic Committee, the Anti-Doping Lab, Muaither Health Centre and the Ministry of Labour among others.

Adiba said the participation of organisations from different sectors would provide students with opportunities to explore career pathways relevant to their academic qualifications and professional interests.

According to the official, the launch also included an introductory session to familiarise students and alumni with the platform and explain how to register, create career profiles and make use of the available services. University representatives were on hand to assist participants with the registration process.

Addressing questions about employment opportunities after graduation, Adiba said HBKU maintains contact with its graduates and monitors their employment status as part of its commitment to supporting them beyond their academic journey. He added that the university shares relevant employment opportunities with graduates based on their qualifications, the requirements of recruiting organisations and existing collaborations.

Adiba also highlighted the importance of maintaining strong relationships with alumni, saying the university encourages graduates to remain engaged and share their professional experiences with current students.

"HBKU's student affairs activities extend beyond employment support to include educational development, sports, volunteering and entrepreneurship. The I'dad, initiative reflects the university's broader efforts to integrate academic excellence with practical career preparation, while strengthening partnerships with employers and other stakeholders," he underlined.

Through the platform, HBKU aims to create a stronger connection between its academic community and the employment market, ensuring students have access to opportunities that can support their professional development both during and after their studies.

QATAR

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JEWELS THAT TELL TIME

مجوهرات الفردان
Alfardan Jewellery

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Mall of Qatar: 44179930 The Pearl: 44881194 Place Vendome: 41424117