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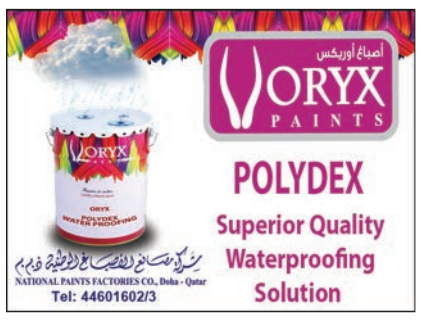

SPORT | Page 1

FIFA U-17 World Cup: Chile lead comeback charge as Brazil and Colombia also win






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German state to open economic office in Doha

GT Report
Berlin

The German state of North Rhine-Westphalia will establish a regional economic office in Doha under a strategic co-operation agreement signed with Qatar yesterday, marking a significant step towards strengthening bilateral trade, investment and industrial partnerships.

The agreement was signed on the sidelines of the Qatar-Germany Economic Dialogue in Bonn in the presence of HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani and North Rhine-Westphalia Minister-President Hendrik Wüst.

According to a X-post, the agreement was concluded between Qatar's Ministry of Commerce and Industry and North Rhine-Westphalia, represented by NRW.Global Business, the German state's trade and investment promotion agency.

The agreement was signed by Assistant Undersecretary for Industry and Business Development Affairs at the Ministry of Commerce and Industry Saleh Majed al-Khulaifi and NRW.Global Business CEO Felix Neugart.

Under the agreement, the new regional economic office in Doha will serve as a platform for developing long-term, mutually beneficial partnerships across sectors of strategic importance to both sides.

Its principal areas of focus will include economic and trade co-operation, investment promotion, industrial collaboration and innovation, digital transformation, artificial intelligence and the energy transition.

The initiative is expected to open new avenues for commercial engagement and strengthen institutional links between Qatar and North Rhine-Westphalia, one of Germany's leading industrial and economic centres.

The agreement underscores the growing momentum in Qatar-Germany economic relations and reflects the two sides' commitment to translating their longstanding partnership into concrete opportunities for investment, technological advancement and sustainable economic growth.



Amir hails enduring ties at presidential banquet

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani reaffirmed Qatar's commitment to strengthening its longstanding partnership with Germany, emphasising the two countries' shared belief in dialogue, international co-operation, respect for international law and the peaceful resolution of conflicts.

Speaking at an official dinner banquet hosted in his honour by German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier at the Spreebogen presidential building in Berlin Friday evening, His Highness the Amir said Qatar and Germany enjoyed deep-rooted relations founded on mutual respect, trust and constructive co-operation.

The Amir expressed Qatar's pride in its partnership with Germany and its aspiration to further develop bilateral ties, stressing that relations between the two countries extended beyond economic and commercial interests to encompass shared principles and values.

The Amir expressed appreciation for Germany's role on the European and international stages and looked forward to continued consultation and co-ordination between the two countries to promote security, stability and peace.

Highlighting the progress achieved in economic, investment and energy co-operation, the Amir voiced his aspiration to expand the partnership into technology, scientific research and advanced industries, reflecting the ambitions and capabilities of both countries and serving the interests of their peoples. To Page 6

تميم بن حمد
@TamimBinHamad

My visit to Germany offers an opportunity to deepen our strategic partnership and expand co-operation between our two countries. My discussions with President Frank-Walter Steinmeier and Chancellor Friedrich Merz, and my meetings with a number of German officials, addressed strengthening economic, investment, and industrial co-operation, and co-ordinating our efforts in support of peace and stability

Amir meets minister-president of North Rhine-Westphalia



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani met Minister-President of the German state of North Rhine-Westphalia Hendrik Wüst at Drachenburg Castle yesterday, reaffirming Qatar's commitment to expanding economic co-operation and forging new partnerships in industry and research.

At the outset, His Highness the Amir expressed his pleasure at the visit and thanked Wüst for the warm reception, commending the growing co-operation that has strengthened relations between Qatar and North Rhine-Westphalia.

The Amir emphasised Qatar's keenness to broaden economic co-operation by drawing on the German state's industrial and research expertise, with a view to establishing partnerships that serve mutual interests.

Wüst said the Amir's visit reflected the depth of mutual trust and the importance of strong partnerships between the two sides.

He praised Qatar's growing economic and political standing under the leadership of the Amir and highlighted the significance of Qatari investments to both the German economy and North Rhine-Westphalia.

Wüst also expressed his keenness to explore new avenues of co-operation and further strengthen economic ties. The meeting reviewed bilateral relations and ways to advance co-operation across various sectors, besides addressing several issues of mutual interest.

The meeting was attended by HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani; HE the Minister of Interior and Commander of the Internal Security Force (Lekhwiya) Sheikh Khalifa bin Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani; HE Chief of the Amiri Diwan Abdullah bin Mohammed al-Khulaifi; and members of the official delegation accompanying His Highness the Amir. To Page 6



Qatar, Germany open economic dialogue

HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani and North Rhine-Westphalia Minister-President Hendrik Wüst inaugurated the Qatar-Germany Economic Dialogue in Bonn yesterday, reaffirming their commitment to expanding trade, investment and industrial partnerships.

In his opening remarks, HE the Prime Minister said the state visit of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani to Germany had given fresh impetus to bilateral relations, reflecting the leaderships' determination to strengthen co-operation, sustain dialogue and establish practical partnerships in areas of mutual interest.

He recalled Wüst's visit to Doha in April 2025, accompanied by a delegation of business leaders, which had provided officials and companies from both sides with an opportunity to explore potential areas of co-operation and economic complementarities.

Qatar looked forward to building on those discussions and translating them into tangible partnerships between Qatari businesses and companies in North Rhine-Westphalia, he said.

HE Sheikh Mohammed highlighted the German state's industrial and commercial standing, describing it as an important partner for Qatar and expressing satisfaction at the opportunity to build on decades of strong bilateral relations for the benefit of both peoples. To Page 5

Qatar-Germany joint declaration deepens security, investment ties

QNA
Berlin

Qatar and Germany have signed security and defence accords and welcomed a €15bn Qatari investment drive, in a joint declaration issued as His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani wrapped up a two-day state visit.

His Highness the Amir, who visited at the invitation of German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier, also held talks with Chancellor Friedrich Merz. The two countries plan to convene the inaugural session of their Strategic Dialogue, established under a memorandum of understanding signed in Doha in May 2023, in early 2027, with security and defence a key element.

The accords comprise two security agreements, one between the two interior ministries and another between Germany's interior ministry and Qatar's Internal Security Forces (Lekhwiya), and a military co-operation agreement. A memorandum of understanding on peace, reconciliation and conflict resolution was also signed, with Germany hailing Qatar's mediation worldwide and calling it a strategic partner for peace.

The Qatar Investment Authority, already among Germany's largest sovereign wealth investors, plans to invest €15bn there over the next five years, focusing on helping German companies grow and compete globally, particularly in critical industries and defence.

Bilateral trade topped $2bn in 2025, and the German state of North Rhine-Westphalia will open an economic office in Doha. The two sides also stressed the strategic value of energy co-operation, from liquefied natural gas to renewables and ammonia, and backed a comprehensive EU-GCC free trade agreement.

Pledging to defend the rules-based international order, they condemned Iranian attacks on Qatar and other states in the region as a flagrant violation of sovereignty and international law, rejected any attempt to close the Strait of Hormuz, and said Iran must never acquire a nuclear weapon. ● Full text on Page 6 ● Related stories on Pages 3,6 & 10



QATAR

Shura Council takes part in parliamentary forum of MED in Italy



Qatar's Shura Council participated in the parliamentary forum of the Mediterranean Dialogues (MED), organised by the Italian Chamber of Deputies and Senate, in collaboration with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Co-operation of the Italian Republic and the Italian Institute for International Political Studies (ISPI).

The event was held in Naples under the theme "Addressing Shared Challenges through Dialogue and Co-operation".

Members Ahmed bin Ibrahim al-Malki and Abdullah bin Nasser bin Turki al-Subaie, represented the Council.

The forum highlighted the escalation playing out in the Gulf region throughout 2026 and its implications on the Gulf and the world alike, which affected energy supplies and flow of maritime commerce through the Straits of Hormuz and the Bab el-Mandeb triggering a spike in the costs of energy, food, transportation and so forth, in addition to hampering the paths of growth on the world stage.

The challenges facing the Arabian Gulf, the Mediterranean region and Europe prompt the inextricable interdependence of their respective security, particularly insofar as energy security, maritime corridors and international commerce are concerned, al-Subaie noted.

Having weighed in during the session, al-Subaie, who is also vice-president of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean underscored that the State of Qatar believes in the axiom that dialogue, mediation and diplomacy are wholly fundamental vehicles for conflict settlement, confidence-building and achieving enduring security and stability based on the nation's steadfast policy of respecting the sovereignty of states, abiding by international law, and strengthening cooperation and understanding among all parties.

The State of Qatar has turned these precepts into concrete diplomatic and humanitarian efforts through its unremitting endeavours in mediation, narrowing differences and helping address several regional and international crises, al-Subaie underlined.

He highlighted that this forum was convened in the wake of rapid political, security and economic challenges that precipitate the need for having a robust joint international action and prioritising the language of dialogue and diplomacy, particularly amid the tensions unfolding in the region whose consequences overshadow regional security as well as the security of energy, maritime navigation, supply chains and international commerce.

The delegates discussed backing dialogue and diplomatic efforts to de-escalate tensions, prevent armed conflicts, promote peace and stability in the region, ways to encourage national expertise exchange in addressing shared challenges and crystallising perspectives for public policies to meet the citizens' needs.

In terms of promoting parliamentary diplomacy, al-Subaie called that the Shura Council places particular emphasis on advancing its relationship with the European Union, whether on bilateral level or through the Gulf-European parliamentary co-operation thereby contributing to strengthening dialogue and understanding, sharing parliamentary expertise and experiences, as well as co-ordinating positions on issues of shared interest.

It is quite important to continue bolstering parliamentary co-operation among the Gulf nations, Europe and the Mediterranean basin countries culminating in sharing perspectives and expertise, helping support diplomatic efforts and enhancing security, stability and sustainable development, al-Subaie pointed out.

As for the Palestinian cause, al-Subaie hailed the efforts of European countries in support of the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, lauding the steps some of them had taken to the recognise the Palestinian statehood as vital moves toward the embodiment of the two-state solution and achieving just and comprehensive peace in accordance with international legitimacy resolutions.

He also praised the European-backed efforts in protecting the civilians, providing humanitarian aid to the Palestinian people and strengthening the diplomatic endeavours to end their anguish.

These efforts should continue and ultimately be translated into practical steps that help enable the Palestinian people to practice their legitimate rights to self-determination and establish their state on the Jun 4, 1967, borders with East Jerusalem as its capital, al-Subaie suggested.

Concluding his remarks, al-Subaie affirmed the State of Qatar's commitment to the approach of dialogue, mediation and international co-operation, along with the Shura Council's keenness to boost parliamentary diplomacy and advance partnerships with the European Parliament, as well as friendly parliaments in the belief that getting past the shared challenges requires collective willingness, constructive dialogue and co-operation based on mutual respect and shared interests. (**QNA**)

Mazzraty continues dairy expansion with new shipments of cows from US

By A Staff Reporter
Doha

Mazzraty has marked another milestone in the expansion of Qatar's local dairy sector with the arrival of a new group of Holstein cattle from the United States, bringing its Holstein herd to nearly 4,500.

Saad al-Mana, director of Business Development and board member of Mazzraty, said the company launched its cattle import programme in late 2024, undertaking one of the largest cattle airlifts in Qatar's history as part of its expansion plans.

"With the arrival of the latest shipment, we continue to invest in expanding the herd, upgrading facilities and building the capacity to produce more fresh milk in Qatar," he said.

Since its establishment in 2017, Mazzraty has focused on developing the infrastructure and operational capabilities needed to produce high-quality fresh food locally, al-Mana said, adding that the latest investment would strengthen its dairy operations and lay the foundation for sustainable growth.

He said the company aims to play a leading role in meeting growing demand for locally produced food while contributing to the development of Qatar's domestic food sector.

Al-Mana said he personally travelled to the US with a team of company experts and technical specialists to assess cattle and suppliers before selecting the animals for the latest shipment.

"We pay close attention to every detail when selecting the best breeds and suppliers. We assessed the suppliers and cattle on site and selected the Holsteins for this shipment with great care," he said.

He stressed that expanding local dairy production was a long-term investment in Qatar's food security, particularly amid geopolitical developments and disruptions that have highlighted the importance of securing essential supplies locally.

"The ability to supply consumers with fresh dairy products starts with a reliable local supply of raw milk. That is why we invest in high-yielding cattle from carefully selected breeds to keep our processing plants supplied. Geopolitical changes across the region over recent years have reinforced the value of Qatar's focus on expanding local production and securing essential inputs within the country," al-Mana explained.

Investing in high-yielding cattle from carefully selected breeds helps ensure a steady supply of milk to processing facilities and strengthens the country's capacity to meet a larger share of its dairy requirements through local production, al-Mana said.

The company also places emphasis on adapting its herd to Qatar's climate, with cattle shipments planned to arrive at the beginning of winter to allow the animals to acclimatise before the onset of hotter months.

Farm facilities are equipped with ventilation fans, cooling units and water-misting systems to minimise heat stress, while a modern automated milking parlour and digital herd management software help monitor cattle performance, nutrition and health.

Technical and veterinary teams oversee animal welfare, nutritional requirements and genetic improvement programmes in line with international standards and guidelines.

Mazzraty's expansion is also linked to its broader sustainability strategy, which includes using solar energy at selected farm facilities and converting animal waste into organic fertiliser to support a more circular agricultural model.

The company is further contributing to the development of Qatar's agricultural sector through educational and community programmes, including school visits, research collaboration with local universities and partnerships promoting knowledge exchange in agriculture and sustainability.

The latest expansion represents another significant step in Mazzraty's long-term investment in strengthening Qatar's dairy production capacity and supporting the country's ambitions for a resilient and sustainable domestic food supply.



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EU-GULF PROGRAM | PUBLIC TALK

Qatar-EU Relations:
A Strategic Partnership

H.E. Antonino Maggiore
Ambassador of the European Union to the State of Qatar



25 November 2026 | 5:30 PM | Georgetown University in Qatar

INTRODUCED BY
Dr. Clyde Wilcox
Professor of Government and Acting Dean, Georgetown University in Qatar

MODERATED BY
Dr. Cristian Tudor
Distinguished Practitioner-in-Residence and Director of the EU-Gulf Program, Georgetown University in Qatar

H.E. Antonino Maggiore is the Ambassador of the European Union to the State of Qatar, bringing over 25 years of diplomatic experience and extensive expertise in European and international affairs.

Registration Code



German media highlights significance of Amir's visit and its role in strengthening strategic ties



Overall, the German media coverage of the visit highlighted the broad scope of the partnership – ranging from diplomatic co-ordination, mediation efforts, and support for regional security, to defence and technological co-operation and long-term investments

German media outlets have highlighted the political, diplomatic, and economic dimensions of the state visit by His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani to the Federal Republic of Germany, underscoring the importance attached by Berlin to deepening its strategic partnership with Doha, strengthening co-ordination on regional and international developments, and expanding co-operation in security, defence, investment, technology, and energy.

German newspapers and news platforms addressed the visit within the context of the growing relationship between the two countries and the State of Qatar's diplomatic role in mediation and conflict resolution, particularly in light of the security challenges facing the Middle East and their impact on international stability, energy security, and global supply chains.

The German business daily *Handelsblatt* highlighted the move by Berlin and Doha toward developing a comprehensive strategic partnership. It noted that, following his discussions with His Highness the Amir, the Chancellor Friedrich Merz affirmed that Germany attaches great importance to its relations with Qatar and seeks to broaden co-operation across various sectors.

The newspaper focused on the chancellor's vision of an extensive partnership encompassing political, economic, and security ties, as well as culture and sports, at a time when long-term international partnerships are increasingly vital for addressing global challenges.

Handelsblatt also highlighted the Amir's affirmation that the discussions had opened new horizons for co-operation that serves the interests of both nations and their peoples and is rooted in close relations developed over many years.

The political and security discussions also drew the attention of *Berliner Zeitung*, which covered the meeting between His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani and the President of the Federal Republic of Germany Dr Frank-Walter Steinmeier, which reflected a shared commitment to strengthening bilateral relations, upholding international law, and resolving conflicts through peaceful means.

The newspaper noted the discussion of developments in the Middle East, noting President Steinmeier's expression of Germany's solidarity with Qatar in the face of the attacks it had endured. The talks also addressed efforts to end conflicts, restore regional stability, and ensure the security of navigation in the Strait of Hormuz.

Berliner Zeitung took particular interest in discussions concerning the potential development of a new regional framework for security and co-operation in the Middle East, based on dialogue and confidence-building. It noted that the German president suggested drawing on the experience of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe, which helped ease tensions between East and West during the Cold War.

The newspaper also highlighted Qatar's vision, which advocates dialogue as the foundation for discussing the future of regional security and stability.

The German public radio Deutschlandfunk highlighted Qatar's mediation efforts regarding the Iranian crisis, noting the significance of diplomatic moves aimed at resuming negotiations and reaching political solutions.

The radio linked these efforts to the challenges facing the Middle East, specifically the attacks on energy facilities and the impact of these security developments on gas markets and security of supply.

This focus on Qatar's diplomatic role aligns with *Die Welt*'s reporting on statements by the Chancellor Friedrich Merz, who praised Qatar's mediation efforts and underscored the importance of Qatar's role in achieving a diplomatic resolution to the Iranian crisis, which would help ensure the security and stability of countries in the region.

The newspaper also noted the chancellor's emphasis that ending the conflict is a necessity that extends beyond the region, as it is tied to international security and economic stability. He further stressed the importance of arrangements that guarantee the resumption of safe and stable navigation through the Strait of Hormuz.

Die Welt also highlighted the shared interest of Qatar and Germany in supporting Syria's reconstruction. The newspaper conveyed the chancellor's assertion that this issue remains a key priority for both nations as they expand their diplomatic and developmental co-operation in the region.

Handelsblatt and n-tv news website also focused on the expansion of security and defence co-operation between the two countries. They highlighted understandings reached during the visit on enhanced communication between security agencies, the exchange of information and expertise, and stronger co-operation against cyber threats.

The coverage underscored both sides' desire to strengthen collaboration in defence industries and to expand diplomatic co-ordination and joint efforts on regional and international issues.

Handelsblatt also noted the signing of several agreements, reflecting the broad scope of bilateral relations and the diverse sectors in which both nations seek to foster co-operation.

On the economic front, the announcement of additional Qatari investments in Germany over the coming years received significant attention in reports by *Handelsblatt*, *Der Tagesspiegel*, n-tv, and the German economic news agency dpa-AFX.

These outlets highlighted the the chancellor's welcome of the investment announcement, as well as his emphasis that it strengthens co-operation in future-oriented sectors, most notably artificial intelligence, semiconductors, and aviation.

The coverage also highlighted that the Amir affirmed that Qatari investments in Germany are long-term and reflect confidence in the strength of the German economy, its industrial capabilities, and the expertise of German companies.

Der Tagesspiegel focused on the economic significance of the investment announcement, highlighting a trend toward strengthening the partnership between the two nations in the industrial and technological sectors. Meanwhile, the news outlet n-tv covered Berlin's interest in expanding Qatari economic engagement, alongside enhanced co-operation in security and defence.

dpa-AFX highlighted remarks by the Chancellor Friedrich Merz regarding an increase in Qatari investments, linking this to a broader partnership between the two countries that encompasses technology, security, and defence. It also noted Qatar's existing stakes in several major German corporations.

The agency further framed the new investments as a means to bolster economic ties, emphasising the importance of a long-term partnership and the development of co-operation in advanced industries and strategic sectors.

The discussion of economic relations extended beyond the new investment announcement; in a separate analytical piece, the *Berliner Zeitung* examined the prospects for Qatari investment in Germany. It reviewed the trajectory of investment co-operation between the two nations since 2018, underscoring the importance of following through on announced projects and identifying the specific sectors targeted by these new investments.

In another report, Focus Online addressed the visit within the context of the extensive investment relationship between Qatar and Germany, noting Qatar's holdings in major German firms. It also touched upon topics related to internal German political discourse concerning relations with countries in the region.

These reports reflect the multifaceted interest of German media outlets in the outcomes of the official talks, the analysis of opportunities for economic and investment co-operation, and discussions regarding the broader political dimensions of the bilateral relationship.

Media coverage also extended to the visit's programme, which-in addition to official talks in Berlin-includes economic events today (Saturday) in the state of North Rhine-Westphalia, where meetings will continue between officials and representatives from economic institutions and the business communities of both nations.

These events underscore the importance of expanding economic co-operation at both the federal and state levels in Germany, while fostering direct engagement between companies and entities involved in investment, trade, and technology.

Overall, the German media coverage of the visit highlighted the broad scope of the partnership between Qatar and Germany-ranging from diplomatic co-ordination, mediation efforts, and support for regional security, to defence and technological co-operation and long-term investments-as both countries seek to strengthen their ties and develop new avenues for collaboration that serve their mutual interests. (**QNA**)

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KOREAN MEDICAL CENTER WELCOMES

DR. SAIF AL AZZAWI

Senior Consultant, Plastic,
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Dr. Saif Al Azzawi joins Korean Medical Center as a Senior Consultant in Plastic, Reconstructive and Aesthetic Surgery. An award-winning surgeon internationally trained in the United Kingdom and Australia, he has a dedicated subspecialty focus on cosmetic surgery of the face, breast and body. He holds a UK Certificate of Completion of Training (CCT) in Plastic Surgery and previously served as a Consultant Plastic Surgeon in the United Kingdom.

Dr. Al Azzawi combines advanced aesthetic training, meticulous surgical technique and an artistic approach to deliver natural, balanced and long-lasting cosmetic results. His practice encompasses the full spectrum of facial rejuvenation, aesthetic breast surgery and body contouring, tailored to the individual anatomy, lifestyle and expectations of each patient.

He has trained and worked in some of the world's leading plastic surgery centres, including London's major NHS teaching hospitals and the Melbourne Institute of Plastic Surgery, and completed advanced fellowships in body contouring and liposculpture in Australia. This international experience has shaped a modern, safety-driven approach that integrates the latest technologies and evidence-based techniques in aesthetic surgery.

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QATAR

Ministry keen to promote early childhood education

By Ayman Adly
Staff Reporter

The ministry has been preparing a curriculum for the pre-kindergarten stage and expanding the kindergarten stage, with Kindergarten 1 now admitting 3-year-olds in 12 govt schools

The Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MoEHE) has highlighted its various efforts, initiatives and programmes to enhance the skills of children and guarantee them a better future, spotlighting the efforts that accompany children on their journey of learning and growth.

On World Children's Day, the ministry stressed that its strategy in implementing better education practices for children is mainly based on early learning, inclusion, safety and discovery. At the start of the 2026-2027 academic year, the ministry welcomed 419,373 students across 649 public and private schools and kindergartens. Government institutions account for about 148,000 of them, in 282 schools and 69 kindergartens, supported by 17,679 teachers. Six new government schools opened this year, adding 3,600 seats.

As part of enhancing childhood education, the ministry has been preparing a curriculum for the pre-kindergarten stage and expanding the kindergarten stage, with Kindergarten 1 now admitting three-year-olds in 12 government schools. Three new nurseries opened in 2025/2026, and the private sector counts 156 active nurseries, with seven more being licensed, as early childhood education sits has become an integral part of the ministry's 2024-2030 strategy.

Further, more than 4,000 students with disabilities or in inclusion programmes are enrolled in 99 of the country's 229 government schools. The country runs seven Al Hidaya specialised schools and two kindergartens, while Al-Jiwan Kindergarten for Early Intervention opened in September 2025 in partnership with Hamad Medical Corporation.

This year, fifth and sixth graders from the Audio Education Complex began joining mainstream classrooms at Umm Al Qura and Zekreet schools, with a wider rollout planned for 2027/2028. The shift is backed by Law No. 22 of 2025 on Persons with Disabilities, which guarantees reasonable accommodation and access to education.

In addition, "My School, My Community" project, the "Rafaq" programme and the preventive project "Hisn 2" have promoted school as both a space for learning, and for safety, where children should feel safe, comfortable at ease while learning and acquiring various skill.

Meanwhile, the ministry has been keen to developing the talents and special skills of students at various levels through digital learning programmes, developmental activities and student competitions. The Overall academic achievement in 2026 ranged from 80-96% depending on the subject, while enrolment in science and technology tracks rose from 8% in 2020-2021 to 10.4% in 2025-2026. around 57.41% of Grade 11 students are now in the scientific track, and two new STEM schools opened this year, in Al Sakhama for boys and Rawdat Al Hamama for girls.



UDST celebrates academic excellence at annual awards

University of Doha for Science and Technology (UDST) celebrated the outstanding academic achievements and contributions of its students at its annual Academic Awards Ceremony, recognising their dedication, perseverance, and excellence across various academic disciplines.

This year, the university presented 68 awards to 67 students across ten categories: Academic Excellence Award, Distinguished National Student Academic Award, Academic Merit Award, Applied Research Award, Graduate Thesis Impact Award, Innovation Award, Academic Distinction Award, Foundation Program Award, Industrial Trades Dean Award, and Achievement Award.

Reflecting on the occasion, President of UDST, Dr Salem Al-Naemi, said: "At the University of Doha for Science and Technology, we believe that academic excellence is measured not only by what students achieve, but also by how they translate knowledge into meaningful impact. The achievements we celebrate today reflect the dedication, intellectual curiosity, and determination of our students, as well as the commitment of our academic community to nurturing talent and advancing innovation. As we continue to strengthen our role as a leading institution in applied education, we remain focused on preparing graduates who are equipped to address emerging challenges, contribute to the priorities of our nation, and shape the future of their respective fields. These awards are a recognition of what our students have accomplished and an affirmation of what they are capable of achieving." **(QNA)**

مؤسسة قطر
Qatar Foundation

INVITATION TO TENDER

Tender Reference	Description	Tender Fee (QAR)	Tender Bond Value (QAR)	Bid Closing Date
CO-RFQ-576	Supply, Installation and Commissioning of VRV units at QF Facilities	500.00	N/A	16 Dec. 2026 2:00 PM
CO-RFQ-577	Supply, Installation and Commissioning of HVAC units at various QF Facilities	1,000.00	100,000.00	30 Dec. 2026 2:00 PM
CO-RFQ-578	Supply, Installation and Commissioning of Magnetic Flowmeters	500.00	N/A	24 Dec. 2026 2:00 PM

Qatar Foundation (QF) Procurement Directorate is inviting companies to participate in the above listed public tenders. To receive the tender documents, please follow the below steps:

1) **Supplier Registration** It is mandatory to be registered as a supplier with QF in order to participate in the above tender(s). Only QF registered suppliers will be allowed to pay the tender fees online. Therefore, please visit QF website at https://www.qf.org.qa/supplier-registration to complete the Supplier Registration process.

Tender Fee: Interested bidders can Sign in by visiting this link https://suppliers.qf.org.qa/abstract and pay the respective non-refundable and non-transferrable tender fee online.
All Tender Fees are to be paid using credit cards only.

Tender Fee Payment Dates: Payment of Tender Fee online will be from **22nd November 2026 to 01st December 2026.**

2) All bidders, who are registered and have paid the required tender fees online to QF, will then be granted access to download the Tender Document.

3) Technical and commercial bids need to be submitted and attached online in QF Supplier Portal as per instructions provided in the "Supplier Portal" work instruction.

- The commercial bid must be valid for **180 days** from Bid Closing Date.
- The commercial bid must be accompanied by a bank guarantee (tender bond) issued by a local bank in Qatar and should be valid for **180 days** from the bid closing date (where applicable as per the Tender documents).
- The successful tenderer will be required to submit a performance bond as prescribed in each of the above tender documents.
- Qatar Foundation special qualifications, terms and conditions shall apply as stipulated in the tender document.

Note: All work instructions for Supplier registration and Supplier portal can be found in below link: https://www.qf.org.qa/supplier-registration

almeera hosts Red Bull Pit Stop Challenge

almeera is bringing the excitement of motorsport closer to shoppers through an exclusive collaboration with Red Bull, transforming the entrance of its Hyatt Plaza branch into an interactive racing experience with the Red Bull Pit Stop Challenge.
Running until November 24, the activation invites visitors to step into the role of a racing pit crew, put their speed and teamwork to the test, and compete for an exclusive motorsport experience, including race admission tickets and a tour of the Red Bull Racing Garage.
Bringing an unexpected element of excitement to the everyday shopping journey, the challenge offers customers and motorsport enthusiasts an opportunity to experience the adrenaline, precision and teamwork of professional racing, right at their local almeera store.
Inspired by one of the most exciting moments in Formula 1, the Red Bull Pit Stop Challenge puts participants against the clock as they compete in teams of two to complete a racing wheel change in the fastest possible time.
Under the supervision of the challenge team, participants are given two practice at-tempts before their official timed challenge, testing their coordination, precision and ability to perform under pressure. The fastest eligible team will win an exclusive motorsport experience on November 29 including



race admission tickets for both members and a tour of the Red Bull Racing Garage, offering a rare opportunity to experience the world of professional racing up close.
The winning team will be announced on November 25 through almeera's official communication channels, following verification of the competition results.
The Red Bull Pit Stop Challenge continues at almeera's Hyatt Plaza branch until November 24, from 3pm-9pm daily.
Participation is free and open to individuals aged 18 and above, with no purchase required. Participants can register in teams of two, subject to the official competition terms and conditions.

Qatar Charity urges support for 70 winter relief convoys across seven countries

As part of its ongoing "Winter Heroes" campaign, Qatar Charity (QC) has announced plans to dispatch 70 humanitarian convoys carrying food and winter essentials to seven countries. The organisation called on individuals and businesses to support the convoys, helping reach as many displaced people, refugees, and families facing winter hardships as possible.

The convoys will carry food, winter kits with blankets and warm clothing, and fuel vouchers to help families cope with the cold. Each convoy is expected to benefit 1,500 people at a cost of QR123,000.

The convoys will deliver assistance to Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Lebanon, Somalia, Sudan, Kenya, and Djibouti. These countries host refugees, internally displaced people, and other vulnerable communities facing protracted crises, disasters, and seasonal hardships.

Donations to the "Winter Heroes" convoys can be made through Qatar Charity's website and mobile app. Donors can also request a visit from a donation collector through the app, call 4429 0000, or contribute at Qatar Charity's branches and collection points in shopping malls. Donors may cover the full cost of a convoy or contribute toward it, with donations starting at QR50.

Over the years, Qatar Charity has regularly dispatched humanitarian convoys as part of its seasonal winter campaigns, providing food, shelter supplies, winter essentials, and other urgent assistance to displaced people, refugees, and families most in need.

In 2021, Qatar Charity organised relief convoys under its winter campaign to support internally displaced people in Syria, with aid delivered across the Turkish-Syrian border, as well as Syrian refugees in Jordan and Lebanon. The convoy involved 200 trucks and reached 120,000 people with assistance to meet their basic and urgent needs.

In 2023, the "Qatar Relief Convoys" continued under the "Warm Hearts" campaign, reaching Beqaa, Akkar, and Arsal in Lebanon. During a delegation's visit, assistance was distributed to Syrian refugees and vulnerable Lebanese families. The aid included 1,200 food baskets, 1,900 winter kits, 300 packages of heating supplies,



and 225 tent tarpaulins.

Qatar Charity has also delivered relief to crisis-affected areas through humanitarian land and air bridges. In October 2026, it launched a humanitarian bridge from Qatar to Sudan comprising 50 trucks carrying essential medicines and medical supplies. The initiative was organised in partnership with Qatar Fund for Development, Hamad Medical Corporation and Aspetar.

The organisation has also contributed to Qatar's wider humanitarian response, including relief delivered to the Gaza Strip through Egypt and Jordan between 2023 and 2026.

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

QAPCO
شركة قطر للبتروكيماويات
QATAR PETROCHEMICAL COMPANY

QAPCO Invites qualified bidders to participate in the following tender:

Sel No.	Tender Reference and Description	(i) Deadline for Submission of Information & Interest for Bidding	(ii) Tender fee (non-refundable)	(iii) Tender Publication on ARIBA	(iv) Tender Bond	Bid Closing Date
1	RFQ: P05-01-216 Three years Contract for the Provision of Design & Drafting of As-Built Drawing Documents in QAPCO Complex on call off basis	25 Nov. 2026	QAR 750.00 Payment by: 25th Nov. 2026	26 Nov 2026	QAR 100,000.00	15th Dec. 2026. 12:00 Noon

i. Interested bidders to communicate their willingness to bid and contact details to QAPCO Procurement (procurement@qapco.com.qa) indicating company name, address, telephone, official E-mail..etc. latest by the deadline for Submission of Information & Interest for Bidding indicated above. Reference Number and Description of the tender must be mentioned in the email.

ii. Non-refundable tender fee as indicated above is payable to QAPCO through **QNB account # 0013-001688-060** only at any QNB branch latest by the date mentioned above (Tender Number, Subject and bidder name are to be stated in the payment receipt)

iii. Tender link will be sent via email notification from ARIBA system to the confirmed bidders. Tender Document will be accessible only after attaching the evidence of the tender fee payment in ARIBA by the bidder followed by Qapco approval.
QAPCO shall reply with the access to "ARIBA eSourcing RFP event" along with necessary instructions and guidelines for the bid submission.
ARIBA Registration: Bidders who are not registered in QAPCO are requested to complete the registration process during the tendering period (Details on ARIBA registration can be accessed via QAPCO website www.qapco.com)

iv. **Tender Bond (Bank Guarantee)**:
Original tender bond must be delivered to the following address, at the latest by Bid closing date & time:
Qatar Petrochemical Company (QAPCO) Q.P.J.S.C.
QAPCO HEADQUARTERS. P.O. Box 756,
Building; 12, Zone No. 92, Street No. 556, Muaither Leafawiyat Steet
Mesaieed, Qatar
Tel: 4033 8109
Attention: Procurement Department

Bidder to attach copy of tender bond to the offer in ARIBA. Offer without Tender Bond will not be considered.

Tender Clarifications: Please send your queries with tender reference and description to email procurement@qapco.com.qa

For more information about QAPCO please visit our website: www.qapco.com



محمد بن عبدالرحمن
@MBA_AlThani_

Pleased to launch the Qatar-Germany Economic Dialogue with H.E. Hendrik Wüst, Minister-President of North Rhine-Westphalia, reflecting the strength of our economic, trade and investment ties and opening new avenues for closer cooperation and the advancement of our shared aspirations

Amir meets minister-president of North Rhine-Westphalia

From Page 1

The German side was represented by Deputy Minister-President and Minister for Economic Affairs, Industry, Climate Protection and Energy Mona Neubaur; Minister for Federal, European and International Affairs and Media Nathanael Liminski; and several senior officials.

Following the meeting, the Amir attended a luncheon hosted by Wüst in honour of His Highness and the accompanying delegation. (**QNA**)

Amir hails enduring ties at presidential banquet

From Page 1

Welcoming His Highness the Amir, the German president said the visit, against the backdrop of the prevailing international situation, reflected the strength of bilateral relations and their continued development across various sectors.

Steinmeier also paid tribute to HH the Late Father Amir Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani, praising his pivotal role in Qatar's modernisation and prosperity.

The German president reaffirmed the two countries' determination to broaden their partnership across the economy, energy, politics, diplomacy, security, defence, culture, science, technology and innovation.

He revealed that his discussions with the Amir had addressed ways to establish a new security framework in the Middle East that would transcend the current escalation, adding that both sides had agreed to maintain close consultations on the issue.

The banquet was attended by HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani and members of the official delegation accompanying the Amir.

Also present were German Chancellor Friedrich Merz, Bundestag President Julia Klöckner, ministers, senior officials and other guests. (**QNA**)

German state to open economic office in Doha

From Page 1

HE the Prime Minister noted that North Rhine-Westphalia, one of Germany's leading industrial regions, possessed a strong manufacturing base and extensive expertise in technology, innovation and scientific research.

These strengths aligned closely with Qatar's priorities of economic diversification and enhanced competitiveness under Qatar National Vision 2030, he said.

Sheikh Mohammed stressed that Qatar's modern infrastructure and investment-friendly business environment offered companies from North Rhine-Westphalia attractive opportunities to establish a long-term presence, forge partnerships with Qatari counterparts and contribute to the country's development.

Drawing on the German state's industrial expertise in sectors aligned with Qatar's national priorities could generate substantial mutual benefits, he added.

Highlighting the steady expansion of economic relations, the PM said bilateral trade between Qatar and Germany had reached approximately $2.2bn in 2025, an increase of 11.8% over 2024.

He noted that German companies were expanding their presence in Qatar, while Qatari investments in Germany reflected confidence in the strength, durability and future prospects of the partnership.

Sheikh Mohammed reiterated Qatar's readiness to welcome partnerships that capitalise on North Rhine-Westphalia's industrial capabilities in sectors supporting the country's investment and development objectives.

He emphasised that the private sector would play a central role in translating emerging opportunities into concrete projects capable of generating sustainable economic value in both markets.

Expressing optimism about the dialogue's outcomes, the Prime Minister said he hoped the discussions would pave the way for sustained engagement between companies and institutions, leading to enduring partnerships beyond the event.

Such co-operation, he added, would further deepen economic ties between Qatar and North Rhine-Westphalia and deliver tangible benefits to both countries and their peoples. (QNA)

First of the Firsts comes to a close in Doha

QNA
Doha

The Ministry of Endowments (Awqaf) and Islamic Affairs has concluded the third First of the Firsts competition, the international branch of the founder Sheikh Jassim bin Mohammed bin Thani Noble Qur'an Competition, at a ceremony at the Sheraton Grand Doha Resort and Convention Hotel, drawing a tremendous turnout from across regions of Qatar and other countries.

HE Minister of Endowments and Islamic Affairs Ghanem bin Shaheen bin Ghanem al-Ghanem crowned Egyptian contestant Abdelfattah Abdelhamid Abdel Fattah Abu Zahra the competition's winner, awarding him the QR1mn first-place prize. He prevailed over a contingent of first-place winners from international Qur'an competitions, who competed for the distinction of First Among the First.

The ceremony brought together Undersecretary of the Ministry of Endowments and Islamic Affairs, Dr Sheikh Khalid bin Mohammed bin Ghanem al-Thani, and Undersecretary of the Ministry of Social Development and Family, Khalifa bin Issa al-Kubaisi, alongside representatives of several institutions, entities and diplomatic missions accredited to Qatar.

A variety of scholars and dignitaries from outside Qatar also attended, including Grand Mufti of Slovenia Sheikh Nevzet Poric; Chairman of the Organising Committee of the Moscow International Holy Qur'an Competition Sheikh Dr. Roshan Abbasov; Grand Mufti of Croatia Sheikh Aziz Hasanovic; Mufti of Burundi Sheikh Nayabagabo Salum; and Chairman of the Tanzania International Qur'an Award Sheikh Osman Kabur, alongside other scholars and representatives of international Qur'anic institutions.

In his address, chairman of the organising committee of the competition, Jassim Abdullah al-Ali, said the gathering brought together an elite group of people devoted to the Qur'an, who came from around the world to compete in memorising the Holy Qur'an and mastering its recitation.



Launched in Qatar more than a quarter-century ago, the competition has since continued to fulfill its mission of caring for the Holy Qur'an, supporting its memorisers and fostering a spirit of honorable competition among contestants, al-Ali said.

He noted that the competition's categories have diversified over the years, encompassing different age groups and proficiency levels, including Arabic speakers and others. This reflects a vision that regards caring for people devoted to the Qur'an as an investment in building individuals and advancing society, while cherishing the memorisation and teaching of the Holy Qur'an and the inculcation of its values as fundamental to shaping character and reinforcing religious and moral values.

Al-Ali explained that First of the Firsts stands apart as a distinctive Qur'anic category, both in concept and in the nature of its contests. Its participants aren't seeking their first recognition; they've already stood on award podiums and secured first-place finishes in Qur'an competitions.

They come to Doha to take part in a new competitive experience that tests top-echelon levels of memorisation, mastery, performance and knowledge of the meanings of the Holy Qur'an, he said.

Al-Ali stressed that the contest brings together a pantheon of first-place winners in a single competition to select First Among the First. This distinctive format sets it apart from other international Qur'an competitions, giving it a phenomenal standing and raising the bar for precision, accuracy and mastery.

Al-Ali also outlined the international category's exponential growth in participation. The competition attracted contestants from 21 countries in its first edition, a figure that rose to 29 in the second before reaching 35 countries in the third.

Al-Ali added that 98 contestants had applied for the third edition, with 42 advancing to the in-person contests in Qatar after completing preliminary qualifying rounds remotely via video conferencing.

The finalists ranked among the competition's top-echelon participants, having previously secured outstanding results and first-place finishes in Qur'an competitions, he noted.

Al-Ali further explained that remote preliminary qualifying rounds represented a substantive development in the third edition, vastly expanding its geographical reach and opening the door to a greater number of first-place winners from additional countries. The approach largely broadened participation before the finalists were selected for the in-person contests in Doha, setting the international category apart through its expanded reach and accessibility.

The competition was a testament to the steadfast care, Qatar under its leadership, extended to the Holy Qur'an and those devoted to it, al-Ali said, suggesting that this commitment went well beyond organising competitions. It encompassed support for Qur'anic education, nurturing talent, empowering Qur'anic institutions and building productive partnerships with relevant institutions and entities around the globe.

These endeavours, he noted, reflected the country's broader commitment to cherishing the Holy Qur'an and bolstering its presence at the forefront of international Qur'anic initiatives.

For his part, Chairman of the Supreme Judging Committee, Sheikh Dr Ahmed Issa al-Maasarawi, said the strength of memorisation was reflected in a contestant's ability to recall Qur'anic passages instantly and with a high degree of precision. A proficient memoriser, he explained, could immediately identify the passage being asked about, including verses with similar wording throughout the Holy Qur'an.

He noted that the third edition had demonstrated incredibly advanced levels of proficiency in this regard, bringing together a pantheon of memorisers from around the world. He also underscored the importance of proper Qur'anic instruction under the guidance of accomplished sheikhs, which was essential to attaining the highest levels of mastery, precision and accuracy.

As part of the ceremony, the Minister of Endowments and Islamic Affairs unveiled the upgraded visual identity of the First of the Firsts category, reflecting the contest's continued advancement and its expanding presence on the global stage. The new identity set the category apart with a distinctive visual character molded by its nature, mission and standing as a gathering of top-echelon winners from international Qur'an competitions.

In addition, the minister honoured the chairman and members of the Supreme Judging Committee in recognition of their scholarly and Qur'anic contributions and their efforts to assess contestants in accordance with approved rules and standards. Their extensive expertise had contributed tremendously to bolstering the standard of competition while safeguarding the meticulous evaluation of contestants and the accuracy of results.

The ceremony also recognised media enterprises and outlets that had covered the competition throughout its various stages. They included Qatar Media Corp, Qatar News Agency (QNA), Qatar TV, Qatar Radio, Holy Qur'an Radio and Al Rayyan TV, as well as *Al Raya, Al Sharq, Al Arab, Al Watan, The Peninsula, Gulf Times, Qatar Tribune* among others.

The recognition acknowledged their journalistic, news and digital coverage, which helped bring the competition, its various stages and participating contestants to the attention of audiences.

The recognition also underscored the substantive role played by media organisations in bringing the First of the Firsts contests to audiences at home and abroad. Working in tandem, television, radio, print and digital coverage had tremendously augmented the competition's public presence and bolstered its Qur'anic mission.

Doha teen takes youth voice global through SDGs Unlocked

By Shaima Sheriff
Staff Reporter

A Doha teenager who launched a global webinar series at the age of 16 is calling for young people to move beyond token representation and become equal partners in shaping decisions on sustainability, climate and development.

Noura al-Zoubi, founder and host of SDGs Unlocked, has created a youth-led platform that has reached participants in 60 countries and brought more than 50 speakers from the United Nations, governments, universities and the legal profession into discussions with young people.

Speaking to *Gulf Times*, the 17-year-old said the initiative was inspired by her experience of seeing how young people could contribute when given meaningful opportunities to engage with decision-makers.

"Honestly, it started in the room," she said, recalling her participation in the UN Local Conference of Youth in Qatar in September 2025, held at Georgetown University in Qatar, where she represented her school and spoke about youth and climate.

Months later, as a youth ambassador, she helped organise the first ASSELLMU Youth Forum during an environmental law conference at Sorbonne University Abu Dhabi. The forum brought young people together with senior representatives from organisations including the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

"That forum changed something for me," al-Zoubi said. "I saw what happens when young people are given the floor: the questions get braver, the room listens differently, and the experts start learning from us too."



Nour al-Zoubi

The experience prompted her to consider why such exchanges could not happen more regularly and across different countries. She began approaching experts she admired, inviting them to engage directly with young people rather than simply address them.

Prof Damilola Olawuyi of Hamad Bin Khalifa University's College of Law became the initiative's academic adviser, while Elizabeth Mrema, UN Assistant Secretary-General and Deputy Executive Director of UNEP, agreed to deliver the keynote address for its first episode.

Its first episode focused on hunger, inviting viewers to set an extra place at their table for someone who might otherwise eat alone and share a photograph of the plate while protecting the guest's privacy. The initiative attracted participants from 56 countries.

"The Sustainable Development Goals can feel enormous and far away, but they become real when you turn them into something anyone can do this week," al-Zoubi said.

Al-Zoubi said she was particularly proud that the initiative originated in Doha, linking its work to Qatar National Vision 2030 and its emphasis on human, social, economic and environmental development.

"It matters to me that it started here, in Doha," she said. "SDGs Unlocked is my way of answering it: a series made in Qatar, for young people everywhere."

The initiative is now expanding beyond online discussions. On November 14, al-Zoubi led SDGs Unlocked Live: Seat, Voice, Follow-Through at Education Above All's EMPOWER 2026 conference in Doha, alongside Youth Ambassadors Rayhane Ahmaine and Leen al-Qahtani.

As Season One concluded yesterday, al-Zoubi is preparing for further international engagements. She is due to speak at the 15th United Nations Forum on Business and Human Rights in Geneva tomorrow, addressing youth leadership, responsible supply chains and human rights due diligence.

On December 2, she is also scheduled to attend a Grand Chamber hearing at the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg at the invitation of Judge Vasilka Sancin.

However, she said youth participation should go beyond invitations to conferences, speeches and symbolic representation.

Young people, she said, would live with the consequences of decisions on climate, water, employment and peace for longer than many of those making them, yet their involvement often remained limited to consultation.

"But we're usually invited to give a speech, take a photo, and leave. That's consultation, not participation," she said.

In Qatar, al-Zoubi is developing proposals to make youth engagement in environmental governance more permanent, including a standing Youth Environmental Advisory Council, environmental civic education and a national network of youth environmental ambassadors.

She is also working on a policy paper outlining ways to strengthen youth participation in environmental decision-making in Qatar.

Katara concludes 2026 Children's Festival celebrations

The Cultural Village Foundation Katara concluded its 2026 Katara Children's Festival held in celebration of World Children's Day yesterday, .

The festival, which ran from November 19 to 21, witnessed a festive atmosphere filled with joy and excitement, attracting children and families who enjoyed a diverse programme of artistic, cultural and recreational activities. The event transformed Katara into a vibrant space of colour, imagination and creativity, offering children opportunities to express their talents and explore new experiences that combined fun and learning.

Throughout its three days, the festival served as an interactive family gathering, bringing together arts, storytelling, theatrical performances and technological experiences in activities that reflected the spirit and spontaneity of childhood. Events were spread across drawing and colouring corners, creative workshops, competitions and live performances, drawing enthusiastic participation from children and encouragement from parents, adding a distinctive social and cultural dimension to the festival.

Art workshops attracted children of various age groups through drawing, colouring and handicraft activities, allowing them to create their own artistic pieces and take them home as keepsakes of their participation. One workshop offered children the opportunity to paint and colour on metal sheets, which were subsequently processed into flexible stickers. Heritage was also incorporated into the programme through the "Colours from Our Heritage" workshop, where children designed bracelets using heritage-inspired colours and coloured traditional-themed paintings, helping strengthen their connection to cultural heritage through simplified artistic activities.



Theatrical performances formed an important part of the programme, with the show "War of Colours" presenting an entertaining theatrical experience exploring the harmony, differences and significance of colours, highlighting the values of diversity and cooperation. Meanwhile, "The Story of Colours" took children on a short storytelling journey presented in an engaging and simplified theatrical style.





Interactive competitions added an atmosphere of excitement and friendly rivalry, featuring a variety of questions about the world of colours. Children enthusiastically participated in answering the questions, cheered on by the audience, while prizes were presented to the winners.

Children also took part in the "Colourful Board" activity, writing short phrases on coloured sticky notes and placing them on a large board. By the end of the festival, the board had transformed into a collective space showcasing the children's words, ideas and messages.

Gulf Studies Forum discusses Gulf security and language policies in Arab Gulf states



The 13th Gulf Studies Forum opened in Doha yesterday.

Organised by the Arab Center for Research and Policy Studies, the forum runs until tomorrow, bringing together researchers and academics specialising in the region.

This year's forum will focus on two main themes: "Gulf Security and the US–Israeli War on Iran" and "Language Policies in the Arab Gulf Countries: Contexts, Trends, and Content". The forum will feature 17 sessions examining security and political transformations in the region, as well as language policies in the Arab Gulf states.

The first theme comprises eight sessions examining changes in the Gulf security environment following the US–Israeli war on Iran and the challenges associated with the restructuring of the Gulf security architecture. The sessions will explore Gulf security dynamics, security partnerships, changes in the nature of security threats and patterns of adaptation, as well as alternative visions for the future of Gulf security.

The first theme will also address energy security and maritime routes, alongside the repercussions of the war for Gulf states' relations with Yemen and Iraq.

The second theme comprises seven discussion sessions addressing language policies in the Arab Gulf states in the context of linguistic diversity, the place of language in higher education policies, and the role of lexicographical initiatives in reflecting language policy orientations. The sessions will also examine the relationship between language and social status in Gulf societies, as well as linguistic transformations in everyday settings, including the family, media, and the marketplace, from a sociological perspective. This theme will also feature a lecture titled "Achieving Linguistic Sovereignty in the Arab Gulf States in Times of Turmoil" and a plenary session dedicated to presenting the "State of Qatar Arabic Language Index" project.

QATAR

Qatar, Germany strengthen strategic ties in security, energy, trade and technology

Joint Declaration of the State of Qatar and the Federal Republic of Germany on the occasion of visit of Amir's visit to Germany

QNA
Berlin





At the invitation of the President of the Federal Republic of Germany Frank-Walter Steinmeier, His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani visited Germany from 20 to 21 November 2026. During this state visit, His Highness also held talks with Federal Chancellor of Germany Friedrich Merz.

In the course of the state visit, both sides emphasised their close ties and the strategic value of their partnership. The State of Qatar and the Federal Republic of Germany stand firmly united in their shared conviction to defend the international rules-based order against increasing challenges and global risks. Both sides reaffirmed their commitment to peace, security, and economic prosperity, as well as to the development and utilisation of future technologies.

Political and Security Cooperation

The State of Qatar and the Federal Republic of Germany are united by a shared interest in peace and regional stability in the Near and Middle East, Eastern Europe, and globally. Both sides agree that diplomacy and dialogue are the only means for sustainable conflict resolution and to achieve these goals. Mediation is a key instrument for creating mutual understanding and for balancing out conflicting interests.

Germany welcomes Qatar's exceptional commitment to mediation in numerous crises worldwide and regards Qatar as a strategic partner for peace. The Heads of State and Government of both nations welcome the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation in the field of Peace and Reconciliation and Conflict Resolution.

Both sides reaffirm their commitment to operationalizing the Strategic Dialogue, established by the Memorandum of Understanding signed in Doha on 17 May 2023, and look forward to convening its inaugural session in early 2027.

Concerning security and defence as a key element of this Strategic Dialogue, both countries welcome the signing of two agreements on security cooperation on the occasion of this state visit -- one between the Ministries of the Interior and one between the German Federal Ministry of the Interior and the Qatari Internal Security Forces (Lekhwiya). They also commend the signing of a military cooperation agreement between the two countries.

Strong condemnation of Iranian attacks targeting Qatar and other countries in the region

Security relations between the Ministry of Interior of the State of Qatar and the Federal Ministry of the Interior of of Germany have witnessed significant progress, reflected in the exchange of high-level visits, most notably the visit of HE Sheikh Khalifa bin Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani, Minister of Interior, Commander of Internal Security Force (Lekhwiya), to Berlin in September 2026, and the visit of Alexander Dobrindt, Federal Minister of the Interior of Germany, to Doha in December 2025. This cooperation has also expanded across areas of mutual interest through joint training programs, the exchange of expertise, and capacity-building initiatives. Both sides remain committed to further strengthening their security partnership, particularly through cooperation with the German Federal Police and Federal Criminal Police, and exploring additional areas of cooperation to serve the mutual interest of both countries.

Economy and Investment, Energy and Climate Action

Qatar and Germany emphasise the intensive economic relations between both countries and reaffirm their shared intention to expand bilateral trade and investment relations. Both sides welcomed continued growth in bilateral trade, which reached more than $2bn in 2025, as well as the signing of a Joint Declaration of Intent on Cooperation in the Fields of Economy, Trade and Investments.

During the meeting of the Trade and Investment Working Group in preparation of the first Strategic Dialogue between Qatar and Germany, held virtually on 5 November 2026, under the co-chairmanship of HE Dr Ahmed bin Mohammed al-Sayed, Minister of State for Foreign Trade, and Stefan Rouenhoff, Parliamentary State Secretary at the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy of Germany, the two sides agreed on the importance of holding the seventh session of the Qatari-German Joint Committee for Economic and Trade Cooperation during the first quarter of 2027, with the final date to be agreed upon through official channels.

Qatar Investment Authority (QIA) announces plans for €15bn in investments in Germany over the next five years

The two sides welcome the signing of the Strategic Cooperation Agreement between the Ministry of Commerce and Industry of Qatar and the State of North Rhine-Westphalia, represented by NRW. Global Business GmbH, pursuant to which a regional economic office representing the State of North Rhine-Westphalia will be opened in Doha. The office will focus primarily on developing long-term, mutually beneficial cooperation in areas of shared strategic interest, including economic and trade cooperation, investment promotion, industrial cooperation and innovation, digital transformation and artificial intelligence, and the energy transition, in addition to various other areas that meet the aspirations of both sides.

The two governments intend to significantly strengthen bilateral investment relations and encourage increased Qatari investment in Germany, particularly in strategic industries, energy infrastructure, Green Tech, advanced manufacturing, digital technologies, research and development, and innovative small and medium-sized enterprises. The Heads of State and Government of the two countries welcome the announcement by the Qatar Investment Authority of €15bn in investments in Germany over the next five years, subject to independent investment decisions of the investors concerned. The new investments focus on supporting the growth of German companies and enhancing their competitiveness in global markets, particularly in critical industries and defence.

The Qatar Investment Authority maintains a broad and diversified investment portfolio in Germany, spanning the automotive, industrial, energy, technology, infrastructure, financial services, transportation, logistics, and healthcare sectors and is one of the largest sovereign wealth fund investors in Germany. The investment builds on the longstanding investment relationship between Qatar and Germany, reflecting the long-term confidence in the German economy of the Qatar Investment Authority and its commitment to expanding strategic investment partnerships between the two countries.

Intensified cooperation in priority areas, including closer collaboration between their respective defence and security industries, defines a shared goal. The visit of German companies from the security and defence sector in August 2026 to Qatar shall serve as a starting point for further and closer business relations in that particular field.

Cooperation and economic exchange regarding artificial intelligence (AI), quantum technology, and digital administration comprise further priorities to be tackled by a common approach.

The Heads of State and Government reaffirm their deep appreciation for the bilateral partnership in the energy sector, which is strengthened by trade exchanges and joint cooperation, thereby supporting the diversification of their energy sources and enhancing the resilience of their respective systems in addressing challenges. In light of the regional and global developments affecting the energy sector, the State of Qatar and the Federal Republic of Germany affirm the strategic importance of their cooperation across various areas of energy and related industries, including liquefied natural gas, renewable energy, ammonia, fertilizers and petrochemicals, in support of secure, diversified and affordable energy supplies for the economies of both countries.

The two governments reaffirm their support for strengthening EU-Qatar trade relations. A comprehensive and ambitious EU-GCC Free Trade Agreement remains the shared strategic objective of both sides. In addition to this, the two governments support advancing ambitious and forward-looking initiatives to reducing trade barriers and assuring a level playing field between Qatar and the EU under the EU Commission's dual track approach.

Qatar and Germany agree to deepen their cooperation in the field of labour market policy. Important areas of the cooperation will be promoting decent work and internationally recognized human and labor rights including in the field of occupational safety and health. This cooperation shall be pursued through a tripartite workplan with the International Labor Organization.

Shared position against Iran acquiring nuclear weapons

The Heads of State and Government of the two countries reaffirm their commitment to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Paris Agreement, and their keenness to strengthen international cooperation on climate action pledges in a manner that contributes to supporting a just, equitable and balanced global transition that takes into account the requirements of sustainable development. The two countries also reaffirm their determination to fulfil their national emission reduction commitments through a range of measures, including expanding the deployment of renewable energy sources, applying carbon capture and storage (CCS) technologies, and reducing methane emissions.

Global Challenges, Rules-based Order and Multilateral Cooperation

The Heads of State and Government of Qatar and Germany are unequivocally committed to the rules-based order and the Charter of the United Nations (UN). In a period of global upheaval, a renewed and refocused UN is key to stabilising the international order. Both sides are determined to support the new UN leadership in reinvigorating the spirit of cooperation between Member States and in enabling multilateral solutions to pressing issues of our time. Structural reforms on all levels and in all areas of work must continue to make the UN more efficient and effective, accountable and impactful.

In view of international trade, trade routes must remain open, free, and accessible without any fees or other payments, and diplomacy must always remain the first and foremost response to conflict in order to regain the peace. The two sides strongly condemn the Iranian attacks targeting the State of Qatar and countries of the region. They affirm that these attacks constitute a flagrant violation of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Qatar and other states, a clear breach of international law and the Charter of the United Nations, and a threat to the security and stability of the region.

Regional security in the Gulf

The two sides also condemn the Iranian attacks and threats targeting commercial vessels and categorically reject any actions that would close the Strait, impede freedom of navigation therein or threaten the safety of vessels transiting through it. The two sides stress the need to comply with Security Council resolution 2817 (2026), respect navigational rights and freedoms in accordance with international law, and refrain from any actions or threats that could undermine the security and stability of the region.

Reaffirmation of freedom of navigation and security of maritime trade routes, particularly through the Strait of Hormuz

Free, open, and unobstructed maritime trade routes, without any fees or other payments, are of central importance to Germany and Qatar. Consequently, both countries are fully committed to the compliance with and implementation of the provisions of the International Maritime Organization (IMO) and the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).

Furthermore, the two sides call upon Iran to fulfil its international obligations under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of nuclear weapons (NPT) and its Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), and to cooperate fully with the Agency to ensure the peaceful nature of its nuclear program. They agree that Iran shall never develop or acquire a nuclear weapon. The two sides also underscore the need to put an end to threats arising from the use of ballistic missiles in a manner that preserves the security and stability of the region. They express their rejection of all forms of threats emanating from Iran and affirm the need to end its support for, financing of and provision of arms to its affiliated armed groups in the region.

The two sides condemn in the strongest terms the unacceptable continued strikes carried out by the Houthis in Yemen and against Saudi Arabia and express their full solidarity with the Government of Yemen and Saudi Arabia. The two sides call on the Houthis to immediately cease all military actions, all threats and attacks against civilian shipping, and to return to the political process in good faith. Both sides call on Iran to end its arming of and support for the Houthis. They reaffirm their strong commitment to the unity, sovereignty, independence, and territorial integrity of Yemen. Both sides reiterate their support for UN Special Envoy Hans Grundberg in his efforts towards a negotiated, inclusive, Yemeni-led, and Yemeni-owned political settlement.

Support for peace and stability in Yemen, Syria and the wider Middle East

Middle East Peace Process

With regard to the Middle East Peace Process, the Heads of State and Government of both nations reaffirm their shared commitment to achieving a comprehensive, just, and lasting peace through negotiation based on a two-state solution. This solution must be in accordance with international law and relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions, leading to the realisation of a sovereign, independent, and viable Palestinian state, living in peace and security side-by-side with Israel based on the border of June 4, 1967.



The Heads of State and Government of the two countries reaffirm their support for advancing the full implementation of the Comprehensive Plan to End the Conflict in Gaza and its associated Roadmap, in line with United Nations Security Council resolution 2803 (2025), including the complete disarmament of Hamas and the withdrawal of Israeli forces from Gaza.

The two sides call for unimpeded humanitarian access, and for all parties to fulfill their obligations under international law and to create the conditions conducive to achieving peace and security for both the Palestinian and Israeli peoples and for the entire region.

Regarding the war in Ukraine the two sides reaffirmed their commitment to supporting Ukraine's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity. The Heads of State and Government commended Ukraine's continued willingness to agree to an immediate ceasefire. They reaffirmed their commitment to supporting Ukraine's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity. The Heads of State and Government called for a cessation of hostilities and underlined the importance of serious negotiations to achieve a comprehensive, just and lasting peace for Ukraine. Furthermore, the two sides stressed the importance of supporting Ukraine's recovery and reconstruction, particularly investments aimed at rebuilding Ukraine's energy infrastructure.

The State of Qatar and the Federal Republic of Germany agree that the economic and financial recovery of Syria is a key priority. Both sides share the vision of a stable Syria that can help stabilise the Middle East and facilitate the return of Syrian refugees. They see their various investments in infrastructure, housing, the energy and health sectors as well as civil defence as significant contributions to this aim and agree on coordinating their efforts closely.

Development Cooperation, Food Security, Access to Water

Through their efforts in responding to global crises and supporting development cooperation, the State of Qatar and the Federal Republic of Germany seek to achieve ambitious objectives aimed at improving the livelihoods of affected communities while preserving human dignity. The two countries intend, in the future, to strengthen coordination between their activities and ensure closer complementarity of their efforts, based on actual needs on the ground.

Both sides are deeply concerned as global food security is increasingly affected by climate shocks and numerous conflicts worldwide. The blockade in the Strait of Hormuz as well as Russia's war in Ukraine and the resulting destruction of export infrastructure and negative impacts for free navigation in the whole Black Sea region directly impact grain prices worldwide with severe consequences for those most affected by food insecurity. In this context, both sides welcomed the signing of a Joint Declaration of Intent regarding co-financing between the Qatar Fund for Development in the State of Qatar and the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development of the Federal Republic of Germany starting in 2026. The Heads of State and Government of both countries also welcome the joint investments in the reconstruction of the health sector in Syria, in cooperation with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) as first step in the implementation of the JDoI.

As leading nations in sustainable and technologically advanced agriculture, both sides intend to exploit the full scope of bilateral engagement in agricultural value chains and agricultural technologies to alleviate the strained global food supply situation.

Enhanced cooperation in LNG, renewable energy, fertilisers and petrochemicals.

Billions of people continue to lack safe drinking water and adequate, universal access to sanitation services, amid mounting pressures arising from climate change and armed conflicts. Accordingly, the two countries welcome the UN Water Conference, scheduled to take place from 8 to 10 December 2026, and jointly commit to continuing to strengthen global measures to protect water resources and accelerate progress towards the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 6.

Recognizing the importance to countries of conserving raw materials, recycling and waste treatment, and reducing the risks arising from environmental pollution, the two sides welcomed continued work in the fields of recycling, waste treatment and public cleanliness (circular economy).

Culture, Education, and Societal Exchange

Qatar and Germany welcome the youth exchange between the two countries and reaffirm their determination to work closely together in the fields of education and culture. The German School in Doha and the Arabic Cultural House "Der Divan" in Berlin stand testament to mutual cultural understanding. Furthermore, these institutions are key for creating language acquiring opportunities for German and Arabic.

Qatar and Germany affirm their keenness to continue strengthening cooperation in the fields of culture and heritage, building on the legacy of the Qatar-Germany Year of Culture 2017 and the sustainable cultural partnerships and ties it established. In this context, the two countries welcomed the opening of the Gerhard Richter Pavilion in Doha, designed by the internationally acclaimed German architect Annabelle Selldorf, as part of the "Qatar Quartet" program organized by Qatar Museums, as one of the outcomes of this cultural exchange and a manifestation of its lasting and evolving impact.

Iranian FM says allies China, Russia oppose change in nuclear doctrine

AFP
Tehran

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said China and Russia oppose a change in Tehran's nuclear doctrine, amid domestic calls for a shift, state media reported.

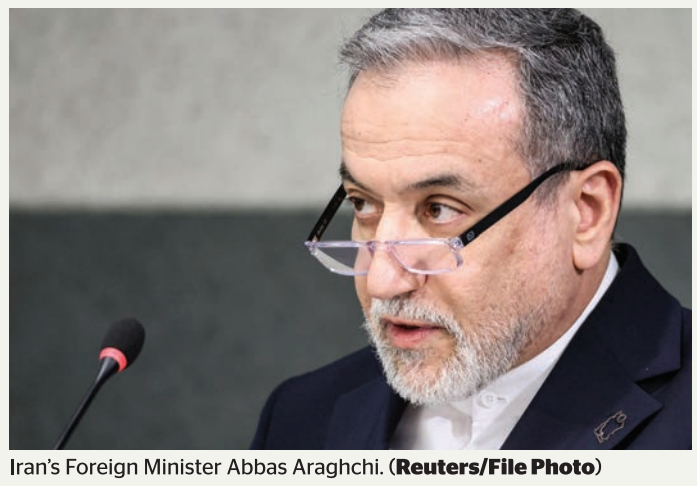
In an interview published yesterday, Araghchi told the state-run Iran Daily newspaper that the issue was "broad, serious" and had its own "supporters and opponents".

"Russia and China are also opposed" to a change in Iran's doctrine, he added. Both countries have strategic co-operation agreements with Iran.

"What matters is that, up to this point, our doctrine has not changed, and our official positions remain the same as before," Araghchi said.

Debate over changing Iran's nuclear doctrine has resurfaced in the country's political circles, particularly among hardliners, following wars with Israel and the United States that saw Iranian nuclear facilities come under heavy attack.

Some advocates of a shift argue that it would pave the way for Tehran to develop a nuclear weapon as a deterrent.


Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi. (**Reuters/File Photo**)

Iran has barred the International Atomic Energy Agency from inspecting its nuclear sites, citing security concerns and blaming the agency for failing to condemn US and Israeli attacks on its nuclear facilities.

Last week, the UN nuclear watchdog urged Iran to take "incremental steps" to allow inspectors to return to key facilities, saying such access was "critical".

Iranian officials continue to cite a fatwa, or religious decree, issued by former supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei that prohibited the development of weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear weapons.

"There are those who believe the country's nuclear doctrine should be maintained in its current form, and others who speak of the need to change it. Both sides have their own arguments and rationale," Araghchi said.

Khamenei, was killed in a US-Israeli strike on his compound in central Tehran on February 28, triggering a regional war as Iran responded with missile and drone attacks across the Middle East.

His successor and son, Mojtaba Khamenei, who has remained out of public view since his appointment in March, has not issued a decree that would overturn his father's ruling.


Members of the Iraqi security forces walk past a burnt vehicle following a fire near the Hartha power station, north of Basra. (**Reuters**)

Fire at power station in Iraq's Basra kills at least 4

Reuters
Basra, Iraq

At least 4 people were killed and 35 injured in a fire at a power station in southern Iraq yesterday, with the toll expected to rise, security officials said.

Civil defence teams brought the fire at the Hartha power station north of Basra under control after firefighters responded to the incident, Iraq's state news agency, INA, reported.

The fire spread to neighbouring houses and forced operations at the power station to stop, the security officials said.

The fire broke out at around 6 am, with most casualties reported among residents of the affected houses who suffered burns and smoke inhalation, Iraq's Security Media Cell said.

Iraq's Electricity Ministry said the incident involved a gas pipeline supplying the power station.

Prime Minister Ali al-Zaidi ordered an urgent investigation into the explosion at the station to determine its causes and establish responsibility, his office said.

The Hartha station has an installed generating capacity of 800 megawatts but had been operating at around 400 megawatts before the fire, the security officials said.

Pictures from the scene showed severely damaged sections of a gas pipeline, with the surrounding ground blackened and debris scattered across the site.

There was no immediate official information on what caused the incident or the full extent of the damage.

Iraq's electricity infrastructure has long struggled with decades of underinvestment, inadequate maintenance and an inability to meet peak demand, particularly during the extremely hot summer months. Fires and technical failures at substations and power facilities have previously disrupted electricity supplies and caused widespread outages.

Houthis launch strikes after coalition's 'special operation'

AFP
Riyadh

Yemen's Houthis launched strikes on the Saudi capital Riyadh yesterday, after vowing reprisals for a "special operation" by the Saudi-led coalition fighting them.

Saudi Arabia has been battling a surge in attacks since fighting reignited in neighbouring Yemen's civil war this summer, where Riyadh backs the internationally recognised government against the Houthis.

An AFP journalist reported hearing two explosions shortly after authorities issued an alert, later lifted, saying the city was "under a hostile aerial threat".

The coalition later said it had "intercepted and destroyed" three Houthi ballistic missiles headed for the capital.

The Iran-backed Houthis said on X that they were striking targets across Saudi Arabia, including in Riyadh.

The strikes came after the Houthis vowed revenge for the coalition's attack on the Red Sea port city of Hodeida and other targets on Friday.

The "special operation" hit smuggling and weapons-transporting operations in Hodeida, the coalition said.

It also involved attacks on Sanaa, Saada and Taiz governorates, marking an uptick in violence after months of hostilities.

The Houthis had vowed to hit the Saudi city of Jeddah and other Red Sea ports if Hodeida was attacked, while warning airlines that Saudi airspace was "unsafe".


A screen grab showing what Houthis say is the aftermath of a Saudi airstrike on Friday that targeted a power station in the Red Sea coastal city of Mocha in Taiz governorate. (**AFP**)

The group also threatened Riyadh's financial district and a power station in Al-Shuqaiq.

Coalition spokesman Turki al-Malki said its forces had "targeted operational capabilities at Hodeida port that were used in smuggling operations and the transport of weapons and ballistic missiles".

The coalition also hit "military targets" in Sanaa, including missile and drone facilities and a supply depot, he said on X.

The Houthis said coalition strikes had killed 41 people in the previous 24 hours. Yemen's Saudi-backed armed forces said dozens of airstrikes and drone attacks, as well as hundreds of artillery attacks, killed or wounded 193 Houthi fighters.

These figures were impossible to verify independently.

Two ballistic missiles were intercepted over the Jizan region near the Yemen border, the coalition spokesman said, with debris falling in Al-Shuqaiq.

The Houthi military spokesman said the group had targeted Al-Shuqaiq power station and Jizan port with "accurate and direct" strikes that caused "extensive damage".

Images of a damaged power station in Mocha after a coalition air raid were broadcast by the Houthis' Al-Masirah television.

The coalition strikes came after a Houthi attack struck a tower in Riyadh's financial district, the latest high-profile blow against the world's top oil exporter.

Witnesses told AFP that Riyadh's tallest skyscraper, housing Saudi Arabia's sovereign wealth fund, was damaged.

After the coalition warned civilians to evacuate Hodeida port, the Houthis responded by threatening to hit Jeddah and other ports on the Saudi Red Sea coast.

The Houthis' Humanitarian Operations Co-ordination Centre sent emails to shipping companies and other bodies using Jeddah port, warning them to evacuate.

The group warned "all airlines that Saudi airspace is unsafe, as it will be the theatre of our operations in the coming hours, except for the holy airspace over Mecca and Medina".

They also told people to avoid Riyadh's King Abdullah Financial District, whose offices were evacuated weeks ago, calling it a "military target".

The two sides have exchanged attacks since a four-year truce in Yemen's civil war collapsed in July.

Early on Friday, the Houthis accused the Saudis of striking a civilian boat, killing 19 people.

Yemen's Saudi-backed government forces withdrew from areas near the Red Sea's Bab al-Mandab strait this month, ceding territory to the Houthis, who launched a sweeping offensive in September.

The group has now advanced close to Aden, the interim capital of the internationally recognised government which fled the Houthis' takeover of Sanaa in 2014.

The coalition intervened against the Houthis in early 2015, in a conflict that left hundreds of thousands dead and created one of the world's worst humanitarian crises.

The United Nations expressed concern on Friday over the ongoing attacks.

Unifil affirms civilians' suffering in south Lebanon

QNA
Beirut

The UN Interim Force in Lebanon (Unifil) affirmed that civilians in southern Lebanon continued to bear the brunt of their country's conflict with the Israeli occupation amid persistent security tensions, despite a decline in the intensity of hostilities.

In a statement, the UN mission reported that it had documented the Israeli army firing 2,840 artillery shells, carrying out 870 airspace violations and launching 90 airstrikes on southern Lebanon during October, in violation of UN Security Council Resolution 1701.


Smoke rises following an Israeli airstrike on the southern Lebanese village of Kfar Tebnit yesterday as seen from the Marjayoun area in Lebanon's Nabatieh Governorate. (**AFP**)

Unifil noted that Israeli forces remained present in parts of southern Lebanon.

The UN agency also said that Israeli strikes has caused extensive damage to homes and civilian infrastructure. The war continues to affect local communities, hindering the return of displaced people to their homes.

It affirmed that, despite challenges on the ground, peacekeepers continued to carry out their duties efficiently and responsibly during the remaining weeks of the mission's mandate.

The UN Security Council had decided to terminate the mission's mandate by the end of this year when it renewed the mandate for the final time in August 2025 under Resolution 2790.

Two tankers attacked in Hormuz strait: UKMTO

AFP
Dubai, United Arab Emirates

Two tankers were attacked yesterday in the Strait of Hormuz, at the heart of the conflict between Iran and the US, British maritime agency UKMTO said.

"A tanker transiting outbound in the Strait of Hormuz has been hit on the stern by an unknown projectile. There are no reported casualties at this time," the agency said, adding that another tanker was struck in its engine room.

Also yesterday, Iran said it shot down a US drone over Qeshm Island in the strait, according to Iranian state TV.

American fighter jets struck an Iranian missile site on Qeshm last Tuesday, according to a US military official.

Before the Middle East war, triggered by US-Israeli strikes on Iran in February, one fifth of the world's oil and natural gas passed through the Strait of Hormuz.

Tehran has since locked down the strait and regularly targets ships that attempt to pass without its authorisation. Washington, in response, has imposed a blockade on Iranian ports, and its navy has been escorting tankers through the waterway.

Israeli strike kills three in vehicle distributing aid in Gaza

Reuters
Jerusalem

An Israeli strike killed three Palestinians in a vehicle carrying papers and food for the World Central Kitchen charity in Gaza City yesterday, Gaza's health ministry and witnesses said.

World Central Kitchen, an aid organisation that distributes food in the Gaza Strip, said, however, that the vehicle was not affiliated with it.

The Israeli military said several fighters had been targeted in the area without providing further details. It did not immediately respond to questions on why it had hit a vehicle that appeared to be distributing aid.

A Reuters witness said the vehicle appeared to be carrying packaged foodstuffs, and that papers inside carried World Central Kitchen's logo.

"It was just about to stop to distribute the food and drink to children when it was hit by a missile," said Abu Zein Al-Daya, who witnessed the strike.

Afterwards, meals of cooked rice were scattered around the vehicle, which was partially covered in the blood of the victims of the attack.

The Israeli military killed seven World Central Kitchen workers in a 2024 strike, including citizens of Australia, Britain and Poland.

At the time, the military said there had been "serious errors and breaches of procedure" but in 2026 it said it had found no basis on which to open criminal investigations into the incident.


Abeer, (C-R) the wife of Khaled Naeem, who was killed in an israeli strike on a vehicle earlier, mourns over his shrouded body in Gaza. (**AFP**)

Israel briefly launched a ground operation in Gaza earlier this week and killed six people in a strike on a hospital that it said was targeting a commander for the Palestinian group Hamas.

An October 2025 US-backed ceasefire halted major fighting in the shattered territory but has not stopped Israeli attacks on Gaza or secured Hamas' disarmament.

At least 1,600 Palestinians and five Israeli soldiers have been killed since then, according to respective Palestinian and Israeli tallies.

Israeli troops now control around two-thirds of Gaza, up from more than half at the time of the ceasefire, with Hamas controlling a sliver of territory along Gaza's coast.

Israel's more than two-year-long assault on Gaza has killed tens of thousands, caused a hunger crisis, internally displaced Gaza's entire population and led to assessments of genocide from scholars and a United Nations inquiry.

Iran to ration electricity amid energy crisis

Iran will impose rolling power cuts from today as damage to key infrastructure during the Middle East war deepens an already severe energy crunch, state media reported.
"Given the country's fuel supply conditions, the electricity sector will be forced to impose distribution restrictions from Sunday," Mohammad Allahdad, head of Iran's national electricity company, told state TV yesterday. The outages are expected to last around two hours every two days, or up to two hours a day, depending on the area. Earlier yesterday, President Masoud Pezeshkian said, "The attack on the country's gas infrastructure has aggravated the situation, and we should therefore expect difficulties this winter." (**AFP**)

WORLD

Trump orders contractors to notify White House before giving Congress details

Reuters
Washington

President Donald Trump on Friday ordered companies with federal contracts to alert the White House before sharing information with Congress and withhold material the administration deems confidential, expanding his efforts to limit congressional oversight before Democrats take control of Congress in January.

Trump's executive order, issued late on Friday, applies to federal contractors and their subcontractors. Companies that fail to comply could face cancellation of existing contracts or suspension from future federal business, it said.

The order is part of a broader effort by the Republican president to control what information reaches Congress and limit Democratic investigations into his administration, setting up a potentially significant battle over presidential power and lawmakers' authority to scrutinise the White House.

Democrats, who won control of both chambers of Congress in this month's midterm elections, have vowed to investigate Trump's administration, his family's business dealings and its relationships with private companies.

Friday's order follows a directive issued this week by White House Counsel Will Scharf requiring federal agencies to obtain White House approval before employees agree to testify before Congress. Scharf said certain Democratic investigations could amount to criminal conduct, a claim that has raised questions about the administration's attempts to limit congressional oversight.


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

The restrictions could face legal challenges, particularly if contractors are told to withhold information sought through congressional subpoenas. Executive privilege allows presidents to protect certain confidential communications, but courts can intervene in disputes over Congress' authority to obtain information.

Democrats are preparing to investigate potential conflicts of interest, federal contracts, immigration enforcement and the administration's handling of the Jeffrey Epstein investigation. Representative Robert Garcia of California, who is set to lead the House Oversight Committee, this week asked 12 of Trump's top allies, former aides and family members to preserve documents related to alleged Trump family corruption and government misconduct.

Garcia's letters, sent to Trump's relatives, White House Chief of Staff Stephen Miller, Vice President JD Vance, Attorney General Todd Blanche and former White House Chief of Staff Susie Wiles, among others, laid the groundwork for Democratic lawmakers' oversight investigations.

The offices of Garcia, House Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries, Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer and Senator Elizabeth Warren, the ranking Democrat on the Senate Banking Committee, did not respond to requests for comment on Friday night.

The White House defended Friday's order as necessary to protect sensitive government communications, including those involving national security. It said contractors responding independently to congressional requests could expose privileged information and force the administration into costly legal disputes.

Mexico captures drug kingpin on FBI's most wanted list

AFP
Mexico City

Mexico's military announced yesterday that it had captured the leader of a drug-trafficking group on the FBI's list of 10 most wanted fugitives.

Fausto Isidro Meza, alias "Chapo Isidro," and two other leaders of his drug gang were seized by special forces Friday night in in the northwestern state of Sinaloa, the Mexican National Defence Secretariat announced on X.

A firefight between troops and gang members in the town of Guasave sparked panic across the surrounding area, including at a professional baseball game, local media reported.

Unverified videos posted on social media showed people running inside the stadium amid shouts of "Get down, get down!" as bursts of gunfire rang out nearby.

Another video appeared to show a hovering military helicopter firing a machine gun.

Chapo Isidro, 44, is the alleged leader of the Beltran Leyva gang, which is allied with one of two rival factions in the powerful Sinaloa cartel, Mexico's military said.

He was captured alongside his alleged number two and another man identified as a financial operator.



Fausto Isidro Meza, alias "Chapo Isidro", following his arrest during a military operation in Guasave, Sinaloa state, Mexico. (**AFP**)

They were transported by a Mexican Air Force aircraft to Mexico City "to be placed at the disposal of the competent prosecutorial authorities," the military said.

After the operation, violence broke out and improvised roadblocks were set up in several areas of Sinaloa, as has occurred following the capture of other recent gang leaders.

The Mexican military said it had launched its anti-blockade plan and was responding with local authorities. An unverified video circulating on social media overnight a to show a detained Chapo Isidro urging his associates to stand down, warning that "children, women, innocent people" could be put in harm's way.

Chapo Isidro faces criminal charges in both Mexico and the US.

The FBI had placed him on its list of 10 most wanted fugitives, while the US State Department offered a $5mn reward for information leading to his arrest.

Giving his name as Fausto Isidro Meza-Flores, the FBI bulletin says his group is responsible for importing "large quantities of heroin, methamphetamine, cocaine, fentanyl, and marijuana into the US."

His capture comes just days after Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum met on the sidelines of a summit in Asia with US counterpart Donald Trump.

Trump, who has consistently pushed Mexico to do more to tackle drug gangs, said on Friday that they had discussed trade and security in their meeting.

"We're working with her on the cartels because the cartels are running Mexico. I told her that, and we can't let the cartels run Mexico. They're our neighbour," he told reporters at the White House.

The Mexican military said in its post that the operation was conducted "following co-ordination" with US intelligence in the "framework of bilateral co-operation."

Earlier this year, Sheinbaum faced political pressure over the revelation that US intelligence personnel were operating in the country without her government's approval, following the deaths of two reportedly CIA agents in a road accident.

Defence minister says no shift in US military ties

Reuters
Halifax, Nova Scotia

Canadian Defence Minister David McGuinty said he has not seen an alleged secret US memo setting out restrictions on cooperation between Canadian and US militaries and said the armed forces in the two countries continue to work closely together.

McGuinty told Reuters yesterday on the sidelines of a security conference in Halifax that he had not seen a memo reportedly sent by US Secretary of War Pete Hegseth and cited by the Washington Post, imposing new constraints on work between Canadian and US militaries.

The Post story included a statement from the chief Pentagon spokesperson saying Hegseth's directive would not affect intelligence sharing or collaboration through Nato or the North American Aerospace Defence Command, or NORAD, which protects the airspace of both countries.

"I still see no daylight between what we're doing, military to military, and otherwise," McGuinty said. He said that Canadian and American militaries continue to work "hand in glove" on issues including ships working in the Caribbean to stop the trafficking of cocaine, fentanyl and other illegal drugs, on integrated missile systems and when fighter jets are scrambled across North America.

The Pentagon did not respond to a request for comment.

Despite US President Donald Trump's repeated threats to annex Canada, McGuinty said he's said no change in how the two countries' militaries continue to work together.

"The 70-year relationship we have with the US under NORAD has been a frankly, extremely effective continental defence system and one that we want to continue to invest in and cooperate with," he said.

McGuinty said Canada needed to assume more responsibility for its own defence and security, including in its vast Arctic region and that the country was working to build its own competitor to Starlink, to protect its sovereignty in communications.

He acknowledged that some of the recent changes in Canadian defence were prompted by threats made by Trump and that the rupture in the global order described by Prime Minister Mark Carney required a significant escalation in the country's security investments.

Under Carney, Canada said it hit the Nato target of spending 2% of its GDP on defence for the first time last year and the government plans to increase that to 5% by 2035. "We've been in a comfortable position for decades, but things have now changed," McGuinty said.

6.7 magnitude earthquake hits Peru

A 6.7-magnitude earthquake struck central Peru on Friday, Peru's Defense Ministry said, with preliminary reports indicating minor damage and no fatalities. The earthquake occurred at 7:09pm, 30 km northwest of the city of Junin, at a depth of 129 kilometers. The US Geological Survey (USGS) also measured the quake to have a magnitude of 6.7, but estimated its depth to be only 108 kilometers. Peru's Defense Minister, Rafael Belaunde, reported that after the earthquake "minor damage was reported to homes in different parts of Junin, as well as interruptions of electricity service and restrictions on highway transit." Belaunde added that there had been "no harm to people or impacts to their health." AFP journalists in Lima saw hundreds of people evacuating buildings in the Miraflores district during the quake.
The earthquake was also felt in the capital Lima, as well as Ancash, Ica, Ucayali, Cerro de Pasco, Huanuco and Callao.
Peru's National Emergency Operation Center (COEN) reported the quake was felt with moderate to strong intensity and that "monitoring continues in vulnerable areas." Hernando Tavera, the president of the Peruvian Geophysical Institute, told AFP: "We have no reports of damage at the moment, but there have been landslides and rockfalls on the hillsides." (**AFP**)

Storm destroys thousands of homes, kills 3 in Brazil

AFP
Brasília

A powerful storm with winds exceeding 100 kilometers per hour killed three people and destroyed around 5,000 homes Friday in southern Brazil, as authorities raced to rescue injured survivors and find more casualties in the wreckage.

Rain and high winds battered Tupancireta early Friday, tearing up buildings and about 100 trees in the municipality that is home to 20,000 people.

"It's something never seen before, a movie scene," Tupancireta Mayor Gustavo Herter told local media. "Our hospital was blocked by the trees around it, the access roads to the municipality were blocked with trees. The city is finished," he said. The hospital's roof was also destroyed and 11 patients had to be transferred.


A resident removes belongings from a storm-damaged house in Tupancireta, Rio Grande do Sul state, Brazil yesterday. (**AFP**)

The city was without electricity and water after the storm hit at around 3am and lasted less than an hour, Herter said.

Three people were found dead, according to the state government of Rio Grande do Sul, where Tupancireta is located.

Another 32 municipalities also reported damage.

President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva ordered emergency teams be sent to the region in response to the storm. "We know there was a party in the municipality where the roof of that structure ended up collapsing," Luciano Boeira, state co-ordinator of civil defense, told Radio Gaucha.

Brazilian meteorologists said winds reached 114 kilometers per hour during the storm.

Civil defense described the storm as a "supercell," which often precedes a tornado with strong upward air currents, and has not ruled out the finding that a tornado hit the city.

State officials have allocated about $330,000 in local currency to respond to the disaster.

At landmark trial, Canada defends itself against blame for climate harms

AFP
Montreal, Canada

At a key trial where Canada is being sued over its alleged failure to address climate change, government lawyers argued individual states cannot be held responsible for the consequences of a global problem.

Environmental lawyers dismiss the strategy as a tired legal tactic designed to ensure official impunity for climate-related devastation.

But Ottawa is banking on the strategy working in the closely watched case in which 15 young Canadians are suing Canada for allegedly violating their right to a safe and secure life.

After extensive expert testimony, government lawyers wrapped up their defence Friday, and the case is now on hiatus until February.

The first government witness was University of California, Berkeley environmental economist David Anthoff, who testified Canada's capacity to "impact global climate change by changing its own domestic emissions is relatively small."

The plaintiffs want the court to impose binding emissions targets on Canada, but Anthoff argued that would have limited impact.

"Most of the climate change that Canada will experience will be determined by the choices of other countries," he testified, noting the country is responsible for only about 1.4 % of global emissions.

Lead government lawyer BJ Wray told the trial in Vancouver during opening argument that "climate change is a global problem that can only be remedied with a global solution."

The young plaintiffs have testified about terrifying escapes from raging wildfires and summer days when they were unable to go outdoors because of dangerous air quality, arguing proactive government action could have helped.

But Wray argued the evidence makes clear these "harms are not inflicted by the government."


Smoke rises from the Matthew Creek wildfire west of Kimberly, British Columbia in July. (**Reuters**)

The Canadian Constitution, which enshrines the rights to life, liberty and security, "was never intended to solve an existential crisis" like climate change, Wray said.

Sebastien Duyck of the Center for International Environmental Law told AFP Canada was using "the same worn-out argument used by other major polluters."

It's "an argument that courts around the world have repeatedly rejected," Duyck said, citing, among other rulings, a groundbreaking 2025 International Court of Justice decision that found states are responsible for protecting the environment "for present and future generations."

"Canada's contribution (to global emissions) is far from negligible, especially when you factor in emissions from the fossil fuels it exports," he added.

Canada also called University of Reading climate law professor Benoit Mayer, who testified that international treaties setting out emissions targets were designed to establish obligations between states toward "collective action."

Such treaties, including the Paris climate accord, were "never framed as a matter of protecting human rights through reducing greenhouse gas emissions."

Maria Antonia Tigre, director of global climate change litigation at Columbia University's Sabin Center, said the arguments underpinning Canada's defence are "common" but flawed.

She argued there is extensive legal literature linking climate change to individual human rights.

The case is unfolding as Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney faces increased pressure over his environmental policies.

The prime minister says US President Donald Trump's trade war has forced Canada to reorient its economy away from dependence on the US.

Part of his strategy includes boosting oil production in the western province of Alberta, including through a proposed new pipeline to the Pacific coast.

That project, along with other moves such as scrapping the carbon tax on individual households, prompted the resignation of cabinet minister Steven Guilbeault, the architect of many of the climate protections pursued by Carney's predecessor, Justin Trudeau.

Addressing the COP31 climate meeting in Turkiye, Guilbeault took another shot at Carney.

"To be honest, Canada has almost abandoned the fight against climate change," he said.

Indonesian fire emissions third highest on record this year, EU's Copernicus says

This year's fires in Indonesia produced nearly 200mn metric tonnes of carbon emissions by November 15, the European Union's climate monitoring service said on Thursday, the third-highest annual volume on record.

The archipelago has suffered its worst wildfire season in years, driven by excessively dry super-El Niño weather conditions and warmer temperatures, as well as extensive land clearing

Total fire emissions fell short of the record of nearly 400mn tonnes in 2015 and were also slightly lower than in 2006, another strong El Niño year, according to the EU's Copernicus Atmosphere Monitoring Service (CAMS), which tracks fire emission records dating back to 2003

This year's fire emissions were the equivalent of more than a fifth of Indonesia's total carbon footprint in 2025, with the country's energy consumption and industry responsible for an estimated 960mn tonnes of CO2 last year, according to the Statistical Review of World Energy Emissions generated by Indonesia's fires were also around the same as the entire energy and industrial carbon footprint of Pakistan last year

The figure is significantly higher than the 2.9mn-hectare estimate for January to October provided last week by geomonitoring platform Nusantara Atlas, which uses a more conservative methodology



A firefighter of the Manggala Agni, Indonesia's fire control brigade, sprays water to a wildfire near a residential area in Ogan Ilir, South Sumatra, Indonesia. (**Reuters/File photo**)

Though El Niño-driven drought was a decisive factor in this year's fires, experts have also emphasised the role played by climate change in driving up temperatures

Poor land management and the excessive draining of peatland to make way for palm oil or pulpwood concessions have also made Indonesia more vulnerable to fire (**Reuters**)

EU, Indonesia sign trade deal after 10 years of negotiations

The European Union (EU) and Indonesia signed a comprehensive trade agreement and investment protection agreement yesterday after 10 years of negotiations, the European Commission said in a statement. The deal will likely come into effect in early 2027 as the European Parliament still needs to sign off and both the EU and Indonesia need to complete internal procedures. The deal is part of the bloc's efforts to diversify its trade and offset the impact of US President Donald Trump's tariffs. The trade deal was initially concluded in September 2025. Both sides will remove import duties on more than 90% of products, including Indonesia's duties on EU automotive exports, currently reaching up to 50%.

The deal is expected to cut EU exporters' duty bill by €650mn ($713mn). The EU currently exports around €1 bn per year of agri-food products to Indonesia Indonesia is set to remove duties on most EU agricultural exports and the agreement protects 221 EU geographical indications. (**Reuters**)

UK's Princess Catherine explores life after cancer in 'personal documentary'

AFP
London

Prince William's wife Catherine will explore life beyond a cancer diagnosis in a personal documentary, almost two years after she revealed she was in remission, her office said yesterday.

The British future queen, 44, also known as Kate, announced in March 2024 she had been diagnosed with an unspecified cancer and was undergoing chemotherapy.

Heal, described as a "deeply personal" documentary, will be broadcast by the BBC on November 29, the princess's Kensington Palace office said in a statement.

It will air internationally via NBCUniversal in the United States on November 30, Channel 9 in Australia on December 1 and CTV and Noovo in Canada on December 7, it added.

Catherine, whose formal title is Princess of Wales, has three children aged between eight and 13 with heir to the throne William.

She revealed she was in remission in January 2025.

The documentary "follows the princess on a personal journey through some of Britain's most spectacular landscapes" as she takes part in one of the UK's best-known endurance events, the Three Peaks Challenge, the statement said.



Britain's Kate, Princess of Wales, visits The Royal Marsden NHS Foundation Trust, in London. (**Reuters/File photo**)

Participants in the challenge, which Catherine completed in June, climb the highest mountains in Scotland, England and Wales within 24 hours.

"Set against the backdrop of the challenge itself, the princess reflects on her own experience alongside individuals navigating their own health journeys," the statement said.

"Together they explore the profound impact serious illness can have on the whole person and the people, places and experiences that can help us heal," it added.

Catherine's father-in-law, King Charles III, was also diagnosed with cancer, which was revealed by Buckingham Palace on February 5, 2024.

Charles, 78, has returned to public duties but is still being treated for an undisclosed cancer.

All funds generated by the documentary's distribution will go to Britain's Royal Marsden Cancer Charity.

Bangladesh boosts security in bid to stem political unrest

AFP
Dhaka

Bangladesh deployed hundreds of extra paramilitary troops yesterday to contain a wave of arson attacks, including the torching of homes belonging to supporters of ousted leader Sheikh Hasina.

Police stations have also been torched, banks attacked and homes of rival political supporters set ablaze in a spate of violence this month.

The unrest comes as 79-year-old Hasina vows to return from India in December, despite being sentenced to death in absentia for crimes against humanity over a deadly crackdown during the 2024 uprising that ousted her.

At least four people have been killed in political violence since November 14, including three party activists and a bus worker who died when his vehicle was torched, according to local media reports.

In the latest unrest, more than a dozen homes belonging to people linked to Hasina's Awami League (Al) party — whose activities are now banned — were set ablaze in the southwestern district of Narail on Friday, police said.

The attacks came days after two men from the ruling Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) were killed in the district.

"Angry supporters of the slain BNP activists vandalised several houses and torched others," local police officer Sheikh Tasnim Ali told AFP yesterday.

A resident of Narail, who asked not to be identified for fear of reprisals, said as many as 50 houses had been damaged in the district.

"We are terrified by the clashes," he told AFP. "We have asked our women and children to stay inside unless it is absolutely necessary."

Fire officers said they had tried to douse the blazes, but roadblocks prevented them from reaching one site.

"Logs had been placed on the road," a fire officer in Narail, Md Shawkat Ali Joddar, said.

State news agency BSS reported yesterday that 90 additional platoons of the paramilitary Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) had been deployed nationwide.

National police chief Md Ali Hossain Fakir said security had been restored in Gopalganj, Hasina's hometown and a longstanding stronghold of her party.

"I urge the peace-loving people of this area to stand against those involved in sabotage and disorder," BSS quoted him as saying.

Authorities have also reinforced security in industrial areas, where workers in Bangladesh's vital garment sector have staged a series of separate protests this month, demanding a living wage.



A shop owner reacts next to a partially damaged shops during a nationwide shutdown called by supporters of former Bangladeshi prime minister Sheikh Hasina, in Gopalganj, Bangladesh. (**Reuters**)

India's Congress warns of more protests against Meta

Reuters
New Delhi

The youth wing of India's main opposition Congress party yesterday warned of more protests against Meta's removal of some accounts and posts of its members, a day after clashing with police outside the US firm's India offices.

Meta declined to comment on Friday's unprecedented protests, which marked an escalation by the influential political group in the company's biggest market by users. Debate is growing in India about potential risks to free speech from the increasingly strict efforts of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government to remove social media content it objects to.

Modi's government says it orders content to be taken down only if it breaches local laws, can harm public safety or national security. Congress has long accused Meta and other social media platforms of curbing dissent online by removing party accounts, favouring Modi's government.

Meta has said it restricts content in India to comply with local laws.

In Hyderabad on Friday, protesters carrying placards chanted slogans as they stormed into the building that houses Meta's offices, smashing plants to the ground and clashing with police, according to footage released by the Indian Youth Congress' X account.

Another video showed Congress workers spray-painting anti-Meta slogans on walls outside the building that houses its Mumbai office, clashing with security guards who tried to stop them. In Gurugram near New Delhi, Congress workers chanted slogans and held banners reading "restore youth Congress accounts", official online posts showed.

The Indian Youth Congress posted warnings on X that it would "storm your offices across the country and stage protests" unless Instagram accounts of its leaders are restored.

On Saturday, the Congress wing posted a video of its workers putting up a banner in central Delhi taking a dig at Meta's Mark Zuckerberg, referring to him as "Mark BJPberg" to allege the company's favouritism towards Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party.



Meta's logo and a keyboard are shown in this illustration. (**Reuters/File photo**)

India's IT ministry did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

Telangana opposition politician K T Rama Rao criticised Congress workers over what he called vandalism at Meta's Hyderabad office, saying it had undermined the city's reputation as a safe destination for businesses.

Pradeep Bhandari, a national spokesperson for Modi's ruling party, criticised Congress' actions on Saturday, saying they had "not only vandalised and destroyed Meta's office in Hyderabad" but were also "flaunting it on social media".

"This is Congress Model: Vandalise offices of Private companies," he wrote.

Two such accounts were restored after Friday's protests, but thousands of accounts of journalists, creators and influencers critical of the government remain restricted, Manu Jain, who is in charge of social media for the youth group, told Reuters on Saturday.

Meta must explain how its algorithms restrict posts and must restore accounts taken down on government orders, he added.

Reporters Without Borders has said the removal of journalistic content from social media has been on the rise in India this year, and free speech activists say a new government rule gives social media companies hardly any time to review and decide on takedown requests.

Meta disclosures show that it restricted more than 5.4 million posts or accounts in India under local laws in the first half of 2026, second only to Indonesia and up from about 70,000 in the whole of 2025.

"The large majority of these items included instances where we were obligated to proactively restrict content... based on local law requirements," Meta said.

N Korea's Kim visits factory sites after apparent Trump snub

North Korean leader Kim Jong-un was seen inspecting school equipment and teaching aids, state media said Saturday, after an apparent snub of US President Donald Trump during his Asia tour. Trump met Kim three times during his first term and has repeatedly floated another meeting since his return to the White House, including during his Asia tour this week.

Trump left Asia late Thursday after a landmark trilateral summit which included the Chinese and Russian presidents, without meeting Kim.

The US leader suggested he was too busy to fit it in, and that he and Kim will "have that meeting at some point". Pyongyang has yet to comment on Trump's remarks. North Korea's state media instead released images showing Kim examining teaching aids and science class equipment at factory sites.

During Friday's visit Kim "examined the samples of school fixtures of all indices to be produced by the factory," Pyongyang's official Korean Central News Agency said Saturday.

Science and education are the "clearest expression of our revolutionaries' outlook on the future generations and the revolution," Kim said, according to KCNA. Trump had repeatedly raised the prospect of meeting Kim in China, saying the North Korean leader "would like to" meet him, despite Pyongyang remaining silent on the matter.

Analysts say Pyongyang's closer ties with Beijing and Moscow give it less incentive to engage Washington, complicating Trump's efforts after his party's crushing midterm defeat. (**AFP**)

China's summit snub could strengthen Japan PM's standing at home

AFP
Tokyo

Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi got a cold reception in her first outing to China, but Beijing's "blatant" snub — including a visibly scaled-down welcome — could galvanise her conservative base, experts said on Friday.

Her trip to Shenzhen for the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (Apec) summit marked the first time she met Chinese President Xi Jinping face-to-face since her comments about Taiwan last year plunged relations between the two major Asian powers to historic lows.

Takaichi suggested that Tokyo could intervene militarily in the event that China attacked Taiwan, and a furious China, which views the democratic island as part of its territory, retaliated with trade restrictions and warned its citizens not to travel to Japan.

That backdrop meant "there was little she could expect" from the trip, and "little was indeed achieved in terms of Japan-China relations", Noriyuki Kawamura, a professor emeritus at Nagoya University of Foreign Studies, told AFP.

Takaichi, as expected, failed to secure a formal sit-down with Xi on the Apec sidelines.

She was greeted by relatively low-ranking officials on arrival in Shenzhen and without the elaborate performances that welcomed other world leaders, prompting headlines at home about China's "blatant" snub.

Takaichi was also seen struggling to step off her plane because of what appeared to be an unusually large gap between the plane's door and the top of the boarding stairs.

That prompted online speculation it had been done intentionally by Beijing to embarrass her.

Japan's top government spokesman Minoru Kihara told reporters on Friday that they had been aware of the gap.

"Since we had received that information in advance at the site, we took appropriate measures to ensure safety," Kihara said, without specifying whether the Japanese or Chinese side had provided the information.



Japan's PM Sanae Takaichi (right) leaves the stage after leaders posed for a group photo during the Apec summit in Shenzhen. (**AFP**)

"As a result, Prime Minister Takaichi disembarked from the aircraft safely," he said.

A mostly expressionless Xi twice exchanged handshakes with Takaichi during the two-day forum — first very briefly and then for about 10 seconds as he listened to her speak with a beaming smile on her face.

However, experts say the cold shoulder might not be all bad news for her domestically, potentially stoking support from the most hardcore of pro-Takaichi voters.

"The way they see it, she didn't give in to the snub she got, but shook hands with (Xi) as many as two times with dignity," Kawamura said.

Yu Uchiyama, a political science professor at the University of Tokyo, also told AFP that China's chilly reception was unlikely to cost her popularity at home, pointing out that public support for her didn't wane even after her Taiwan statement a year ago.

"I wouldn't be surprised to see her loyal supporters become upset by the way she was mocked and grow more resentful toward China," Uchiyama said.

A day after the summit ended, China again said Japan's "most urgent task is to correct its wrong words and actions on the Taiwan issue as soon as possible", according to a foreign ministry spokesman in Beijing.

Takaichi's critics at home, however, saw the Apec summit as proof of Japan's diminished global standing under her stewardship and her lack of diplomatic acumen.

Footage circulated widely online of Takaichi approaching President Donald Trump after a group photo and patting him on the back, only to be ignored by the US leader who instead walked away with Xi.

That viral image, coupled with Trump's historic trilateral summit with Xi and Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin, fed social media narratives that she is not taken seriously on the global stage.

"Since when did Japan become such a shameful country? The whole world is laughing at us," one post on X said.

"It is fatal that Trump — the leader of Japan's ally — ignores her like this. How much is she hated?" another said.

Still, concerns for Japan's global reputation could easily be swept aside by a recent surge in distrust towards foreigners that will ultimately help sustain Takaichi's popularity, Uchiyama said.

Complaints about overtourism and soaring land prices linked to foreign investment have sparked Takaichi's push for tighter control of visa rules, prompting voters sceptical on immigration to coalesce around her policies.

On the back of this simmering sentiment "resembling xenophobia", Uchiyama said, it is possible that "people will start to think, 'why is Takaichi treated so badly overseas when she works so hard in her own country?'"

OPINION

Why China is unwilling to be the world's next climate leader

President Xi Jinping showcased China's diplomatic heft this week at the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation forum. But 5,000 miles away at the COP31 international climate conference, which ended on Friday, in the Turkish city of Antalya, Beijing was sending a different message: we're not the leaders you're looking for.

The exit of the United States from international climate diplomacy under President Donald Trump since last year has left a superpower-sized hole in the COP process that many had hoped China would fill, especially after reports last year it was considering hosting COP33 in 2028.

But Beijing has decided against hosting the annual UN climate conference, two people familiar with the matter said this week. China's envoys to COP31, stuck to the country's accustomed low-key playbook, diplomats and observers to the talks said.

"Yes, we would like to see China take more of a role, simply because right now China is the defender of the international world order and the rule of law in the absence of the previous defenders," said Ralph Regenvanu, Vanuatu's climate minister.

China's delegation has been mostly absent from public events at the two-week conference on Turkey's Mediterranean coast, which attempted to address rising temperatures and the worsening impacts of climate change. Inside the closed-door negotiations, China's delegation fulfilled its traditional role of siding with the developing world's demands that wealthy nations give more climate finance and cut emissions faster, while resisting specific targets for phasing out fossil fuels, diplomats said.

While historically, the Western world has emitted the most greenhouse gases, China is now by far the planet's biggest emitter.

It is also a major part of the solution as the largest producer and exporter of the solar panels, wind turbines and electric vehicles needed to curb carbon emissions. A Reuters analysis published ahead of the COP31 conference showed that China sent $132bn in clean technology and investment to the developing world last year, almost on par with all developed world climate finance.

The reluctance to leverage those green credentials into a bigger role in international climate diplomacy reflects the prevailing view in Beijing that doing so would have unwelcome consequences, say observers and analysts. For one, hosting a COP, short for Conference of the Parties, would create pressure for China to propose more ambitious climate targets, which is opposed by groups tied to the country's huge coal sector.

A bigger role on the global climate stage could also spur demands for more climate giving and reopen a long-standing debate over whether the world's second-largest economy belongs in the same league as poorer developing countries. A person familiar with the Chinese government's thinking said the central government saw no advantage in taking on more formal climate leadership. "The central government thinks we are already leading on renewable technology, why should we have this COP?" the person said.

China's ministry of foreign affairs did not immediately respond to questions from Reuters.

There is one area where Beijing has been willing to take a bigger role: trade.

Just as Xi denounced "rampant protectionism" at the APEC summit this week, Chinese negotiators in Antalya pressed for language on the free flow of green trade as a way to promote the clean-technology industries that have become a major source of economic and geopolitical influence. That could counter what China sees as trade restrictions the West has imposed only in the name of climate policy. One European diplomat described the issue as China's key ask in talks with the European Union. — Reuters

Germany and Qatar: From partnership to co-creation

HH the Amir's state visit opens a new chapter. Its success will be measured by what the two countries build together



By Dr Jeremias Kettner



When His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani was received in Berlin this week, most headlines focused on a number: the €15bn that the Qatar Investment Authority plans to invest in Germany over the next five years, with a focus on critical industries and defence. It is an impressive figure, and the choice of sectors says as much as the sum: this is capital aimed at resilience. But the more important story is what the two countries now intend to do together.

This is a new chapter, not a new book. Diplomatic relations date back to 1973. In my doctoral research on German-Qatari relations between 1999 and 2014, I traced how a relationship that began with trade and energy grew, step by step, into a political and financial partnership. Qatar became a long-term shareholder in companies such as Volkswagen, Siemens and Deutsche Bank, and it stayed through difficult years. German companies helped to build Qatar's infrastructure. Trust was not declared. It was earned over decades, often quietly. As I wrote earlier this year in 'Capital', a leading German business magazine, what counts in the Gulf is not the next deal but trust that is built over time and proven when partners support each other through difficult times.

In recent years, this partnership has been given a strategic frame. The Energy Partnership of May 2022 was followed in May 2023 by the agreement on a Strategic Dialogue, which puts the relationship on an institutional footing. Energy remains its backbone. Qatari LNG has become part of Germany's energy security, and the Berlin declaration extends cooperation to renewable energy, ammonia and carbon capture. Energy is also where building together can begin, because the transition requires technology, capital and industrial partners on both sides.

That trust is the foundation for what comes next. The joint declaration signed in Berlin names artificial intelligence, quantum technology and digital administration as priorities. Hamad Bin Khalifa University, Charite and Humboldt University have agreed to work together on AI and health, and a joint research centre in Doha and Berlin is planned. The declaration also encourages Qatari investment in research and development and in innovative small and medium-sized companies, not only in large corporations. The first Strategic Dialogue between the two governments is due in early 2027.

The easy version of this story is that Germany has the technology and Qatar has the capital. It is wrong. Qatar builds: its own research institutes, an Arabic large language model developed in Doha, and DEEP Qatar, launched this year by QIA, the QRDI Council and ESMT Berlin together with partners such as RWTH Aachen and Forschungszentrum Jülich. Germany brings research depth and industrial precision. Qatar brings speed of deployment, patient capital and reach that Europe does not have. Neither side produces the outcome alone.

So the direction is from buying and selling to building together. I see four elements.

The first is co-creation. German and Qatari partners should define problems and design solutions jointly, from the start, and not simply export finished products in one direction and capital in the other.

The second is co-investment, and with it co-ownership. Qatari investment in Germany has long been concentrated in established industries, but this is changing. QIA is a major shareholder in the energy company RWE and took part in its capital increase this year, and in 2022 it led a funding round for the Munich software company Celonis. I see plenty of further opportunities in German and European deep tech, from space and robotics to autonomous systems, AI and quantum technology. The growth stage is where it is decided whether such a company becomes a global one. When Qatari and European investors back these companies side by side, they share risk, governance and knowledge. That is the difference between buying technology and co-owning the capability behind it.

Qatar has already created an instrument for this. QIA's Fund of Funds programme, launched in 2024 and expanded this year to $3bn, brings international fund managers to Doha. I would like to see more capital managers there, including more from Germany and Europe. The case for them is strong. For many private equity and venture funds and their portfolio companies, Qatar and the wider GCC are attractive markets in their own right, and Doha is a hub and gateway to further growth markets across Asia and Africa. The programme is a wonderful opportunity to build capital bridges and co-investments, not only with QIA but also with the banks and family offices of the region.

The third is joint research and development. Universities, research institutes and companies from both countries can work on the same questions in energy, AI, health and advanced manufacturing. The fourth is commercialisation, and it is the hardest. Research only creates value when it becomes products, companies and jobs. Too many European companies still see the Gulf as a sales market. The larger opportunity is Qatar as a launchpad, not a destination, with networks built over decades that no European company can assemble alone. Qatari institutions, in turn, become co-owners of what is developed, not only customers.

Why does this matter now? We live in a multipolar world with several centres of power and a series of overlapping crises: energy shocks, strained supply chains and rapid technological change. No country, large or small, can secure its resilience alone. Those who cooperate will come through these times stronger than those who try to stand apart.

For Germany, Qatar matters far beyond investment. It is a reliable energy partner at a time when energy security has become a strategic question for Europe. It is a mediator that keeps channels open where others cannot, and the joint declaration calls Qatar a "strategic partner for peace", with a new agreement to cooperate on reconciliation and conflict resolution. It has all the advantages of an agile, resilient and prosperous city-state: Qatar can decide quickly and test new technologies at national scale. And it has built remarkable networks over the years, as a mediator, as an investor, as an aid donor and through its cultural and economic diplomacy.

Germany, in turn, has much to offer Qatar. It brings a deep industrial base, engineering and manufacturing excellence, and world-class research. It brings experience in building and running complex infrastructure, and growing strength in industrial data and applied AI. Germany is Europe's largest economy and its leading middle power, with global networks of its own, and it is a gateway to the European single market. Both governments support a comprehensive free trade agreement between the EU and the GCC.

Within Germany, two federal states are particularly well placed to take the partnership further, and both of their Minister-Presidents have travelled to Doha. Hendrik Wüst of North Rhine-Westphalia visited with a business delegation in April 2025. His state has since concluded a strategic cooperation agreement with Qatar and is opening an economic office in Doha, and its universities and research centres are partners in DEEP Qatar.

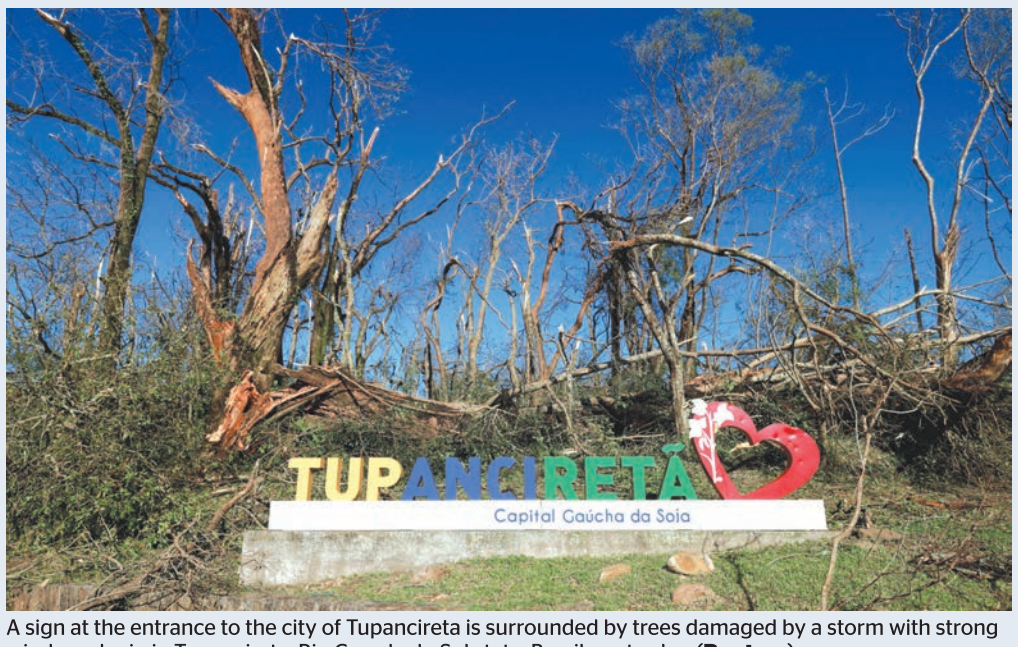
Markus Söder of Bavaria met HH the Amir in Doha earlier this month to explore closer cooperation in investment and AI. Bavaria, where I am based, is home to one of Europe's leading deep-tech clusters around Munich, from AI to aerospace and robotics. Partnerships are built not only in capitals but in the regions where the companies, universities and talent are.

Put these strengths together and both sides win. Germany gains patient capital, speed of deployment and new markets for its technology companies. Qatar gains co-ownership of frontier technology, knowledge transfer and skilled jobs, in line with its National Vision 2030. Resilience grows in both directions: European technology strengthens Qatar's resilience, and Qatar's reach helps European companies become globally viable. The result is technologies and companies that neither side would build alone.

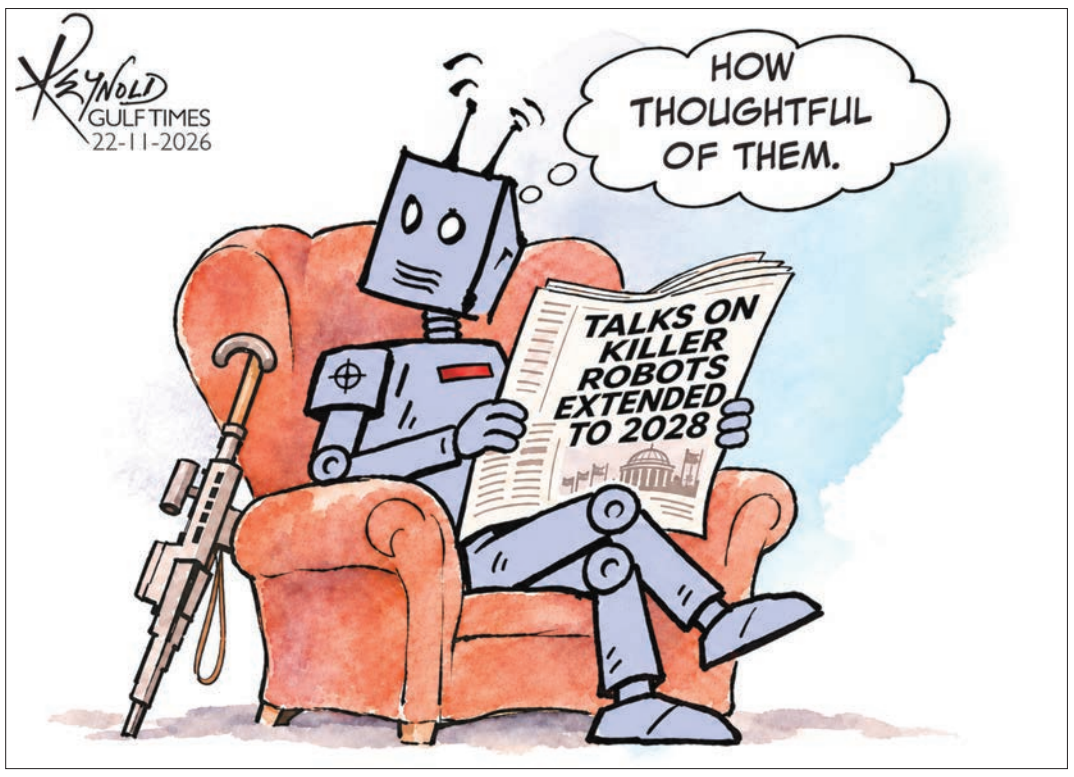
A state visit lasts two days. The real test comes in the years that follow, in laboratories, factories and investment committees. The bridges between Germany and Qatar are built. Now we should use them to build things together.

• Dr Jeremias Kettner is the founder of East West Bridges. The firm sets up partnership and co-investment structures between technology companies and investors in Europe and the Gulf, in both directions. It advises both sides and builds platforms of its own. It works with private equity and venture capital funds and family offices. He is also a Senior Advisor at Agora Strategy. He holds a PhD from Freie Universität Berlin and is the author of "German Foreign Policy towards Qatar, 1999–2014" (Springer VS, 2019, published in German). He publishes regularly in European and GCC media and speaks on bridge-building and cross-regional business.

Weather-beaten



A sign at the entrance to the city of Tupancireta is surrounded by trees damaged by a storm with strong winds and rain in Tupancireta, Rio Grande do Sul state, Brazil, yesterday. (**Reuters**)



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Countries open path towards international agreement on regulating 'killer robots'

AFP
Geneva

Countries opened a path yesterday towards finding an international agreement on regulating lethal autonomous weapons systems — though campaigners seeking to stop so-called killer robots were disappointed by the "weakened" outcome.

After five gruelling days of talks at the UN, which dragged on into overtime, states agreed on building some form of pact over the next two years.

However, with warfare being radically transformed by artificial intelligence, non-governmental organisations wanted far swifter, legally binding rules on handing power over human life and death to autonomous machines.

With full consensus required for any decision, talks at the UN's Review Conference of the Convention on Conventional Weapons in Geneva finally concluded at nearly 4:45am on yesterday.

The 128 countries party to the convention "agreed to launch the elaboration of an international instrument on lethal autonomous weapons systems, which should be conducted over the next two years", conference president Julien Thoni told reporters afterwards.

While a majority of states want a legally binding agreement, countries that have the technology, including the US and Russia, are reluctant to have their hands tied.

The process ahead should flesh out "which weapons can be forbidden according to international humanitarian law, and which is not forbidden but can be regulated", Thoni told AFP.

The Swiss diplomat said the parties would work on the instrument, and then decide on whether it should be a treaty, along with the extent to which its provisions should be binding.

He stressed that having the world's major military powers agreeing to work towards an instrument on lethal autonomous weapons systems (LAWS) was a big step forward.

Brazilian ambassador Frederico Meyer described a balancing act as "some countries have the power, some countries have the majority".

Before midnight, during a break in talks, delegates spent a long period huddled tightly around Russia's representative.

Later, a group of 15 delegates broke out for hushed talks on a staircase.

Diplomats inside could be seen pointing at amended text on the screens and refuelling on packets of crisps.

Campaign groups said the outcome fell well short of expectations.

Once activated, LAWS are capable of selecting and attacking targets without any human intervention.

According to Stop Killer Robots, a global coalition of more than 300 organisations, such systems have already been tested or deployed, including during the war in Ukraine.

"States adopted a watered-down mandate that fails to chart a clear path towards a legally binding instrument," said the group.

"Over 95 states expressed their support for a treaty. In the final hours, a small number of states weakened the mandate introducing uncertainty about the legal status of the final document."

Verity Coyle, the deputy director for arms at Human Rights Watch, said the outcome "does not provide the urgent action needed to agree new rules — but the technology is racing ahead", she said.

Rain Liivoja, a director of the Asia-Pacific Institute for Law and Security, said the decision was one "nobody wanted but everyone could grudgingly live with", adding that consensus merely "makes everyone equally unhappy".

"It remains possible — likely, even — that there will be no treaty by the end of 2028," he added.

UN disarmament chief Izumi Nakamitsu said getting an instrument completed in two years was a "very compressed timeframe" which would require "a lot of negotiations".

She said countries should start thinking as soon as tomorrow about how to get as strong an instrument as possible to ban and regulate LAWS.

"The consequences of not having a strong instrument are very clear," she told reporters.

She said a group of governmental experts from the countries would make recommendations on the legal nature and specific form of the instrument, including whether it should be a binding protocol.

"The path to, or possibility to, have a legally binding instrument is still open," she insisted.

Russia-bound cargo ship hit by drones near Finland

Reuters
Helsinki

A cargo ship bound for Russia's Baltic exclave of Kaliningrad was struck by drones in international waters in the Gulf of Finland yesterday, Russian and Finnish authorities said, prompting Finland to tighten security measures in the area.

The vessel was damaged west of Russia's Gogland island, caught fire and later drifted into Finnish territorial waters, Finland's Defence Forces said, corroborating an earlier account by Russian officials.

Leningrad region Governor Aleksandr Drozdenko said the vessel had been attacked by two drones in international waters about three nautical miles from Russia's border. The crew was being evacuated and the extent of the damage was being assessed, he said.

Finland's defence ministry said the military had reintroduced temporary aviation and maritime restrictions in the eastern Gulf of Finland as a precaution to protect civilians and enable authorities to operate if drones needed to be intercepted.

Finland had informed its allies about the incident, the ministry said.

Estonia's Police and Border Guard Board said in an emailed statement it had been informed that a fire had broken out aboard the Russian cargo vessel Sparta II and that preliminary information indicated there had been explosions on board.

"The war is spilling over into our neighbouring areas. Finnish authorities are handling the situation in the Gulf of Finland, where a drone strike has hit a Russian merchant vessel. Ukraine has the right to fight against the aggressor," Finnish Prime Minister Petteri Orpo said on X.

"The situation poses no danger to other maritime traffic... Preparations for potential rescue operations are being made in cooperation with other authorities in Finland and internationally," the Finnish Border Guard said in a statement.

Drozdenko also said 80 drones had been shot down over the Leningrad region and lifted a drone threat warning.

Swedish Prime Minister Ulf Kristersson said on X his country was monitoring the situation and had offered help to its neighbour Finland, without giving details.

Ukraine's foreign ministry did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Kaliningrad Governor Alexei Besprozvannykh said the incident posed no threat to supplies to the region.

Gogland lies in the eastern Gulf of Finland, about 40 km from Finland's coast.

Kaliningrad is a Russian exclave on the Baltic Sea between Poland and Lithuania that has occasionally been a flashpoint between Russia and Nato and the European Union.

Trump said Europe spending a lot on Ukraine: Zelensky

Reuters
Kyiv

US President Donald Trump told European leaders this week they were spending a lot on the war in Ukraine and could use that money at home if a peace deal were reached with Russia, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said yesterday.

Trump called into a meeting of Ukraine's Coalition of the Willing allies in Berlin on Thursday following his trilateral meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin and Chinese President Xi Jinping at an APEC summit in Shenzhen.

"He said that Europe is spending a lot of money, and they could spend it on themselves after the end (of the war)," Zelensky, who attended the meeting in Berlin, told reporters before talks with British Defence Secretary Wes Streeting in Kyiv. "It didn't sound like a threat."

Trump said on his return to Washington on Friday that Putin had clearly expressed his desire to end the war in Ukraine by diplomatic means during their talks. But Zelensky said he was not convinced about Putin's intentions.

"I'm a little bit more skeptical than Americans that he's ready for compromises. That's what I said to the American team, by the way," he said.


President Volodymyr Zelensky and his wife placing flames at the memorial dedicated to the 'Heavenly Hundred Heroes'. (**AFP**)

Putin has shown no sign of dropping his demand that Ukraine surrender all of its eastern region of Donbas in return for peace. Zelensky has rejected this, saying many Ukrainian soldiers have died defending land there since Russia's full-scale invasion in 2022.

Zelensky welcomed recent announcements by US envoys on including Europe as full partners in the peace process, which resumed after a nine-month hiatus with talks in Abu Dhabi this month. But he said the US envoys now needed to agree an agenda and the timing for another round of talks.

"Certainly, America will try to make the meeting happen as soon as possible. And I am confident Russia will take all steps to slightly postpone such a meeting," Zelensky said.

Putin accused Kyiv and Europe on Thursday of not being able to make compromises to resolve the war in Ukraine.

Zelensky reiterated yesterday that he was ready to attend a meeting of the Group of 20 major economies, which Trump is due to host next month in Miami, and that he would be happy to hold direct talks with Putin there. So far he has not been invited.

Zelensky said Streeting's visit, following a heavy Russian bombardment of Kyiv this week, was an important show of solidarity.

Putin had promised retaliation for airstrikes that crippled a major bridge linking Crimea, which Russia seized and annexed in 2014, to Russia's Krasnodar region this week.

Zelensky dismissed Putin's assertion that the bridge had been used only for civilian transportation, saying a search of social media showed hundreds of images of military vehicles crossing the bridge.

Zelensky said Russia had again attacked civilian targets overnight in the industrial city of Kryvyi Rih — his hometown — where at least two people were killed, including a seven-year-old boy. Both sides denied deliberately targeting civilian infrastructure.

Streeting said it was pointless for Putin to use the language of peace at international summits if his forces then bombarded civilian infrastructure. He said a Russian violation of Polish airspace — which Polish authorities said was probably by two missiles and a drone — before military exercises on Friday for the "Coalition of the Willing" was "an outrageous provocation".

"The best response, and the response that I would appeal to all of our allies to undertake, is to do more to support Ukraine," he said.

Fossil fuel dispute threatens to scupper climate deal

AFP
Antalya

A fight over fossil fuels threatened to derail UN climate talks Saturday as nations pushed back against a proposed agreement that scrapped any mention of planet-heating coal, oil and gas. Negotiations dragged into extra time after the summit in Turkiye sailed past Friday's scheduled closing time, with talks through the night failing to break the impasse.

COP31 co-hosts Australia and Turkiye are scrambling to produce a revised draft deal as time runs out and delegates prepare to leave after two weeks of exhaustive negotiations. "Getting bogged down in individual words and expressions and undermining this process serves no one's interests," said COP31 President and Turkish Environment Minister Murat Kurum, who urged countries to "act responsibly" and compromise.



Activists unsatisfied with the second draft text at COP31 hold a silent protest outside at the Antalya Expo Centre, in Antalya. (**AFP**)

Expectations of a major breakthrough in the Turkish city of Antalya have been low as countries grapple with an oil price shock and geopolitical tensions stemming from the war in Iran.

The summit follows a string of climate-linked disasters from Europe to Nepal and Indonesia and unfolds as a super El Nino pattern amplifies the risks.

A draft climate deal unveiled earlier this week called for a faster phase-out of fossil fuels but a second, pared-down version released Thursday stripped away all mentions of coal, oil and gas.

Fossil fuels omission from the draft sparked protests. "That is a red line for us. We're talking about the root cause of all of this," Tuvalu's Climate Minister Maina Talia said. While, European Union climate envoy Wopke Hoekstra said: "Clearly there's no compromise yet. It's better to have no deal than to have a bad deal."

Ireland's Climate Minister Darragh O'Brien said there were around "130 countries at this COP who want — at the very least — a reference to fossil fuel and phase-out" in the final text.

Nato will defend every inch of Polish territory: Rutte

Reuters
Warsaw

Nato will defend every inch of Polish territory, Nato Secretary General Mark Rutte said in Warsaw, a day after Poland said Russia violated its airspace with three objects that were probably two missiles and a drone. "I can guarantee that Nato will defend every inch of Polish territory," Rutte said, Polish Press Agency PAP reported on Saturday.

The head of Nato forces in Europe, General Alexus Grynkewich, would do everything necessary to identify any threats to defense and deterrence capabilities and would implement appropriate adjustments if needed, Rutte said, according to PAP.

Drones have repeatedly strayed into the airspace of countries on Nato's eastern flank during Russia's war in Ukraine, fuelling tension with the Western military alliance and stoking fears that the conflict could spread.

Friday's intrusion came as Poland was hosting military exercises involving the "Coalition of the Willing" that groups allies of Ukraine, a coincidence Polish officials were of opinion should not be considered accidental.

On Monday, a meeting of Nato's North Atlantic Council will be held in Brussels to discuss the violation of Polish airspace by Russian missiles, PAP also reported yesterday.

French protesters rally for sixth weekend over living costs, public services

AFP
Paris

France saw nationwide demonstrations for the sixth weekend in a row yesterday, as protesters took to the streets to demand better public services and express anger over the rising cost of living and inequality.

The protest movement, sparked in mid-September by high school students demanding better learning conditions, fuelled a nationwide campaign against soaring prices, inadequate public services and police brutality that spread across Europe, even as turnout in France has dwindled.

Several thousand people gathered in central Paris's Place de la Republique square in a festive atmosphere, with musicians playing, food trucks, costumes and homemade signs.

Flags and vests of trade unions and left-wing parties mingled with those of student organisations and the Yellow Vest movement, which is marking its anniversary eight years after it rattled President Emmanuel Macron's government.

One group had set up mock headstones proclaiming the death of France's public services, including social security and education.

"In a number of countries, young people are going through the same thing, namely precarity. You have to choose between having a roof over your head, getting medical care, and being able to eat your fill," said Manon Moret, general secretary of the students' union Unef.

On Friday crowds rallied across multiple countries to vent anger over issues from high living costs to military spending and the climate crisis.

Protestors are ramping up pressure on political leaders they accuse of ignoring the concerns of young people. "I want to live, not survive," read one placard held by a protester in Paris.



Protesters wearing costumes stand atop a bus stop in Paris. (**AFP**)

Another read: "No to the licence to kill", in reference to a law adopted by France's parliament on Friday increasing protection for law enforcement officers using their weapons — heavily criticised by the left.

The protests have been largely peaceful but have seen fringe violence and accusations of police brutality.

At least 31 people have been seriously injured by security forces since the protests began, according to a count by AFP based on direct testimonies, victims' lawyers and NGO records. Authorities have not provided an official toll.

Last month, some rallies across France degenerated into clashes between riot police and demonstrators, with shops looted and buildings attacked and torched.

Interior Minister Laurent Nunez had warned regional authorities to be "particularly vigilant regarding the groups most hostile to law enforcement" after the police law was adopted.

Protesters marched yesterday in cities from Lille in the north to Marseille in the south and Lyon in the southeast.

Clashes broke out on the sidelines of some protests as people set fire to vehicles and bins and police fired tear gas.

The interior ministry had said the demonstrations began in a "generally calm" atmosphere and turnout was "down compared to previous days".

Avril Bas, who attended the Paris protest with her knitting group to support high school students' demands for better learning conditions, was not discouraged by the lower turnout. "If we take care of our young people, our students, we'll have a wonderful tomorrow and that's why I'm here," the 27-year-old told AFP.

"We'll be there next week and the next week and as long as we're needed," she said.

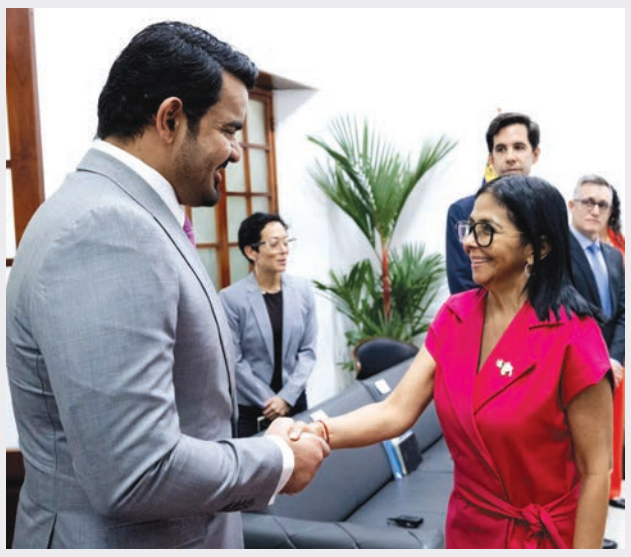
QATAR

Qatar, US discuss defence relations



Qatar's pivotal role in regional diplomacy and its commitment to safeguarding maritime security formed the backdrop to high-level defence talks in Doha yesterday, as efforts continued to find a peaceful resolution to the US-Iran crisis. HE Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Defence Affairs Sheikh Saoud bin Abdulrahman al-Thani met Admiral Charles Bradford Cooper, Commander of US Central Command (Centcom), and his accompanying delegation during their visit to Qatar. They reviewed issues of mutual interest and explored ways to strengthen bilateral co-operation. Senior military officers and officials from both sides attended. The talks assume particular significance amid Qatar's sustained diplomatic engagement with Washington and Tehran, aimed at bridging differences, containing regional escalation and restoring stability. Doha has consistently championed dialogue over confrontation while firmly defending the sovereignty of regional states and freedom of navigation through the strategically vital Strait of Hormuz.

Acting President of Venezuela meets president of Olympic Council of Asia



Acting President of Venezuela Dr Delcy Rodriguez Gomez met with HE President of the Olympic Council of Asia (OCA) Sheikh Joaan bin Hamad al-Thani, in Caracas, Venezuela.
Both sides discussed prospects for co-operation and ways to strengthen coordination and further develop relations in support of the Olympic Movement. They also exchanged views on the role of sport in promoting international cooperation and strengthening the values of friendship and mutual understanding among peoples. HE the OCA President also met with President of the Venezuelan Olympic Committee, Maria Jose Soto Gil, to discuss ways to enhance cooperation in the sporting and Olympic fields and further strengthen coordination between the OCA and the Venezuelan Olympic Committee. **(QNA)**



Richter masterpiece finds a home in Doha

By Tawfik Lamari
Staff Reporter





A mesmerising interplay of colour, geometry and infinite reflections has found a permanent home on Doha's waterfront, where one of the world's most celebrated contemporary artists has transformed a lifetime of experimentation into an architectural masterpiece.

Qatar Museums yesterday unveiled Doha Pavilion: Gerhard Richter, a striking new addition to the capital's cultural landscape that blurs the boundaries between painting, sculpture and architecture, inviting visitors into a world where art appears to stretch beyond the limits of space.

Nestled in MIA Park, against the magnificent backdrop of the Museum of Islamic Art, the hexagonal pavilion is both a work of art in its own right and a sanctuary for Richter's extraordinary visual explorations.

Conceived by the renowned German artist and realised in collaboration with Selldorf Architects, the permanent installation celebrates a fascinating dialogue between contemporary abstraction and the intricate mathematical traditions of Islamic art.

For Doha, it represents another milestone in an ambitious cultural journey that has transformed public spaces into living galleries, making world-class art accessible beyond the conventional confines of museums.

HE Chairperson of Qatar Museums Sheikha Al Mayassa bint Hamad al-Thani captured that vision, saying: "Art becomes part of a city's identity when it becomes part of people's lives."

She said the pavilion would allow visitors to discover connections between contemporary art and the geometric traditions of Islamic visual culture, while reinforcing Qatar's commitment to making culture an integral part of everyday life.

Rooted in Qatar's heritage yet open to the world, the pavilion also forms part of a broader cultural landscape encompassing the Museum of Islamic Art, the National Museum of Qatar and the future Art Mill Museum. Rather than standing as an isolated monument, Sheikha Al Mayassa envisages it as an anchor for a vibrant neighbourhood where art encourages people to gather, interact and engage with one another.

The inspiration for the pavilion dates back to Richter's visit to Doha in 2013, when the city's architecture and history sparked an idea that would eventually take shape more than a decade later.

"Doha is the right place and the only place for my Pavilion," Richter declared, underscoring the deeply personal connection between the work and its setting.

A striking new landmark at MIA Park blends contemporary abstraction with the timeless geometry of Islamic art

The building's six exterior walls are adorned with elaborate patterns derived from Richter's celebrated Strip series, a body of work that transforms abstract painting through mathematical precision and digital manipulation. The process began with his 1990 Abstract Painting (724-4), whose digital image he divided into progressively smaller vertical sections, eventually producing 8,192 strips. Through mirroring and repetition, these fragments evolved into intricate, symmetrical compositions.

The resulting visual rhythm echoes the interlacing arabesques and endlessly repeating geometric patterns characteristic of Islamic art, where mathematics and imagination have long converged to evoke a sense of infinity. Inside, three monumental Strip paintings immerse visitors in fields of horizontal colour, while a specially designed, three-part Strip Tower rises at the centre of the pavilion.

Two towering mirrors amplify the experience, reflecting the artworks, architecture and visitors themselves in an ever-changing interplay of light, colour and seemingly limitless space.

Outside stands Brunnen (Well), a stone sculpture that extends the artistic experience beyond the pavilion's walls. Architect Annabelle Selldorf described the project as the culmination of years of Richter's research into abstraction, with intensely physical patterns that invite viewers to lose themselves in their apparent endlessness.

The pavilion also carries a diplomatic and cultural significance, emerging as a lasting legacy of the Qatar-Germany 2017 Year of Culture and joining an impressive collection of public artworks in MIA Park by internationally acclaimed artists including Richard Serra, Nairy Baghramian, Peter Fischli and David Weiss.

Richter, whose influential career spans more than six decades, has consistently challenged conventional ideas of representation, exploring the relationships between images, memory, history and human perception.

His Doha creation distils those artistic inquiries into a singular architectural experience, one that invites contemplation as much as admiration.

The unveiling coincides with the launch of Rubaiya Qatar 2026, the country's inaugural international visual arts quadrennial, running from November 21 until April 30, 2027.

It also forms part of Qatar Creates Fall/Winter 2026-27, an expansive cultural season bringing together exhibitions, design, fashion, film, public art and creative dialogue across the capital.

As Doha continues to redefine its place on the global cultural map, Richter's pavilion offers something beyond another architectural landmark: a space where the precision of mathematics meets the poetry of imagination, and where art becomes an enduring part of the city's everyday life.

'The films I have made are cinema with a conscience'

By A Staff Reporter
Doha



Indian actor and filmmaker Nandita Das at DFF 2026.

Indian actor and filmmaker Nandita Das said cinema carries a greater responsibility in a world full of strife, violence and prejudice, a day after she received the Doha Film Festival (DFF) 2026 Creative Excellence Award. Das and Syrian actor Taim Hasan received the award at the opening ceremony for their outstanding contributions to cinema.

Speaking to the media in Doha on her first visit to the city, Das said the award recognised choices that have often gone against the grain. "My choices have been different. My well-wishers ask why I am not doing more mainstream cinema. An award like this feels like encouragement, a hug. I am very grateful for the recognition of the choices I have made," said Das.

"The films I have made are cinema with a conscience. They do not divide people or widen the fractures in the world. That kind of cinema is becoming rarer as everything becomes more commercialised. This award recognises everyone who takes on that responsibility. Art is not a luxury. It is primal. We all seek it, create it and need it, and it is our responsibility to reflect the realities of the world."

She said festivals are a strong platform for independent films, but many films reach a festival and go no further. "We need a whole infrastructure of distributors, producers, cinema owners, patrons and minds that help independent cinema."

Das has acted in more than 40 films and directed three, many that deal with prejudice and discrimination. "When you see discrimination, an instinct kicks in. We are all prejudiced, and I am aware of my own, which I try to fight. For me, telling stories that challenge prejudice has become both an instinctive and a conscious decision," said Das.

Das said India makes about a thousand films a year, and that producers and audiences each blame the other for what reaches the screen. Even streaming platforms, which once opened space for independent films, now face pressure to go mainstream. "Time is the true test of art. Guru Dutt's 'Kaagaz Ke Phool' did not do well when it was released, and today it is seen as one of the greatest films from India. If you have deep conviction in what you believe, you will find the courage and the ways to tell those stories, however small that space may be," said Das.

Asked about technology and AI, including the use of actors' voices, Das said the film industry faces a challenge it has not fully prepared for. "Lived experience cannot be duplicated. Independent cinema, which is more nuanced and unique, will have its time. Craft and art will have greater value than machine-made things, because what is easily available loses its value. We should not be too scared of AI, nor embrace it blindly. We should focus on what is meaningful, creative and original."

'Arab Rising Stars' felicitated at Doha Film Festival

Arab Rising Stars made their Doha debut at Doha Film Festival (DFF) 2026, marking Screen International's 10th year identifying emerging regional talent. The first year of the award honoured creative talents Nadia al-Khater, Avan Jamal, Marawan Waleed and Lina Malaika.

Doha Film Festival initiatives like Arab Rising Stars bring together emerging talent with established industry voices, and continues to foster cross-cultural exchange and support original stories from the region and beyond.

Qatar-based filmmaker Nadia al-Khater, whose short film *Light to Ashes* (Qatar/France) features in DFF 2026's International Short Film Competition, spoke about the creative challenges and opportunities facing Arab filmmakers. Addressing challenging stereotypes, she said: "There are many narratives and external expectations we have to push against. Not succumbing to outside viewpoints is important, and there are plenty of opportunities to challenge this because we have a lot to say."

Iraqi-Kurdish actress Avan Jamal who stars as a Peshmerga sniper in the war drama *No Paradise If You Are Killed by a Woman* (Norway/ Iraq/ United Arab Emirates/ Sweden), Iraq's submission for the 99th Academy Awards, spoke about the importance of bringing stories from her community to the screen. "It is a true honour and privilege to be part of Arab Rising Stars.

Emotions like love, hope, family and survival are universal, and what we are doing is telling our stories with authenticity and sharing them with the world."

Egyptian actor Marawan Waleed, star of the psychological thriller *Safe Exit* (Egypt/ Libya/ Tunisia/ Qatar/ Germany), reflected on his experience: "I am very proud to be chosen and happy to be here with DFF, meeting so many people and building connections at such an exciting time."

Saudi filmmaker, creative director, writer and cultural consultant Lina Malaika shared her pride in representing Saudi voices across cinema, writing and creative media. Speaking on the achievement, she said: "I am extremely honoured to be selected among such inspiring creatives, and I am proud to represent Saudi Arabia on a global stage through cinema, writing and creative work."

Indian actor and filmmaker Nandita Das said cinema carries a greater responsibility in a world full of strife, violence and prejudice, a day after she received the Doha Film Festival (DFF) 2026 Creative Excellence Award.

Das and Syrian actor Taim Hasan received the award at the opening ceremony for their outstanding contributions to cinema. **(QNA)**

