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03 February 2025



SPORT | Page 1

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### Amir, Macron discuss global developments

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani discussed with President Emmanuel Macron of the French Republic key regional and international developments of common interest. This came during a phone call His Highness the Amir received yesterday from President Macron. Discussion during the call also covered co-operation relations between the two countries and ways to enhance and develop them. **(QNA)**

### Old Doha Port unveils new vision

To further position Old Doha Port as the premier maritime and tourism destination in Qatar and the Middle East, the port unveiled its mission, vision, and values to highlight its future aspirations, and showcase its core principles. Old Doha Port's new brand uplift pays homage to the idea of a harbour re-imagined. This transformation underscores the essence of its history while introducing a dynamic and versatile identity that reflects its unique character. The thoughtful evolution preserves the port's deep-rooted connection to Qatar's heritage while charting a bold course for the future. In line with its enhanced identity, Old Doha Port is aligning its mission, vision, and values to reflect its growing role as a premier destination for marine experiences and tourism. **Page 7**

### Syria's Sharaa meets Saudi Crown Prince on first foreign trip

Syria's transitional president, Ahmed al-Sharaa, met Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman in Riyadh yesterday in his first foreign trip as Syrian leader. Sharaa said in a written statement that he had discussed humanitarian and economic co-operation with the Crown Prince, as well as "extensive future plans in the fields of energy, technology, education and health". A statement by the Saudi state news agency said the pair had discussed improving bilateral ties and regional developments. Sharaa, who was born in Saudi Arabia and spent part of his childhood there, was expected to remain in the kingdom today to visit the Muslim holy city of Makkah.

## Shop Qatar concludes with grand ceremony

Visit Qatar marked the successful conclusion of Shop Qatar 2025 with a closing ceremony featuring an array of activities, including a live musical performance by artist Aziz Maraka, a meet and greet with Spacetoon characters, as well as interactive games and competitions, and the announcement of the final raffle draw winners.

Staggering numbers at this year's edition can be evident in the QR120mn spent in the duration of the festival, with an increase of 50% from the previous year, a statement said.

Prizes with over QR2.5mn, across 5,000 participating retailers totaling 592,000 coupons were distributed.

The celebrations also included a unique competition sponsored by Al Ahli Bank, where 10 winners received QR1,000 each. **To Page 2**



The lucky draw in progress at Shop Qatar 2025 closing ceremony.

## CNN opens new studio at Media City Qatar



QNA  
Doha

Media City Qatar announced that CNN is expanding its footprint in the Middle East through the creation of a new operation in Qatar as part of CNN's broader strategy to deepen its global and regional content creation capabilities. The new CNN operation based in Media City Qatar, a leading hub for global media and technology companies that fosters innovation and collaboration in Qatar's vibrant media landscape, will go live in the second half of 2025.

A team of CNN content creators

will be publishing on digital and social platforms and producing an innovative weekly show for CNN International.

"As Qatar's media hub, Media City Qatar is excited to welcome CNN to our ecosystem, a place where the world's most respected media brands can come together, collaborate, and innovate," said HE the Chairman of Media City Qatar Sheikh Dr Abdulla bin Ali bin Saud al-Thani. "This expansion signals the continued growth of Qatar's strategic role in shaping global conversations from the heart of the Middle East because here, where next is made, we are not only witnessing progress; we are making it happen." **To Page 8**

### Barshim wins 'Arab Athlete' award



Global track and field star Mutaz Barshim of Qatar won the "Ideal Arab Athlete" award at the Arab Sports Culture Association Award 2024 ceremony held at Aspire Zone in Doha yesterday. Mohammed bin Yousef al-Mana, Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Arab Union for Sports Culture Association, was awarded the 'Personality of the Year Award' while Aspire Academy won the 'Best Sports Institution'. The Qatar Football Association won the 'Event of the Year' award for organising 'the AFC Asian Cup and the FIFA Club World Cup'. The Arab Sports Culture Association Award for media was awarded to Qatari media figure Abdullah al-Marri, Editor-in-Chief of *Al-Raya* newspaper. A number of prominent Arab and international sports figures attended the ceremony. **Sport Page 3**

## PM calls for urgent talks on second phase of Gaza deal

QNA  
Doha

HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani emphasised the significance of all parties' commitment to implementing the ceasefire agreement in the Gaza Strip in all its provisions, calling for immediate engagement in the negotiations of the second phase of the agreement and setting an agenda.

In a joint press conference yesterday with Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkiye Hakan Fidan, HE Sheikh Mohammed stressed the importance of consolidating the ceasefire in the Gaza Strip and moving forward with the exchange of hostages and prisoners, noting that this is the only means that can achieve a result in this framework.

●All parties urged to implement the ceasefire agreement in all its provisions  
●Emphasises the immediate need for lifting the sanctions imposed on Syria  
●Reiterates Qatar's rejection of any plan to relocate Gazans

He said that Qatar urges its partners in the international community to continue to pressure to ensure the success of the ceasefire negotiations and to stress that no party will be allowed to obstruct them, so that this window, which has no alternative, is not closed. He noted the continued co-operation of Qatar with partners in the Arab Republic of Egypt and the US to ensure the agreement's full implementation.

HE Sheikh Mohammed added that Qatar looks forward to intensifying regional and international efforts to provide humanitarian aid and support the UN in bringing in and delivering aid to all parts of the Gaza Strip. He underlined the need not to obstruct the entry of any type of aid and to thwart all attempts that aim to make the Gaza Strip uninhabitable.



**PM meets Turkish FM:** HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani met here yesterday with Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkiye Hakan Fidan. The two sides discussed bilateral co-operation relations and ways to boost them, the latest developments in the Gaza Strip, the occupied Palestinian territories and Syria, and several issues of common concern. During the meeting, HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs stressed the need for the two parties to the conflict to continue implementing the ceasefire agreement in Gaza, expressing his appreciation for the close Qatari-Turkish partnership to promote peace and stability in the region. **(QNA)**

with international resolutions. He noted that what the world has witnessed during the past days of tragedy and human suffering of the brethren in the Gaza Strip is beyond description.

HE the Prime Minister and the Minister of Foreign Affairs said that the meeting with Turkish Minister of Foreign Affairs comes in light of the important and strategic developments that the region is going through, and is linked to several files of common interest between Qatar and Turkiye. The meeting dealt with the developments in the occupied Palestinian territories and Syria, and the discussions came as a continuation of communication and joint co-ordination between the two countries.

Regarding the situation in Syria, he noted Qatar's welcome of the steps taken by the Syrian state to restructure it and enhance consensus and unity among all Syrian parties, which paves the way for consolidating civil peace, security and stability, contributes to building a state of law and institutions, and achieves development and prosperity. **To Page 2**

## Tariff pain worth the price: Trump

President Donald Trump on Saturday ordered tariffs of 25% on Canadian and Mexican imports and 10% on Chinese goods starting on Tuesday to address what he calls a national emergency of fentanyl and illegal immigration pouring into the United States.

Mexico and Canada, the top two US trading partners, immediately vowed retaliatory tariffs, while China said it would challenge Trump's move at the World Trade Organisation and take other "countermeasures".

Trump said yesterday the sweeping tariffs that he has imposed on Mexico, Canada and China may cause "some pain" for Americans, as Wall Street and the largest US trading partners signalled hope that the trade war would not last long. He said Americans may feel economic "pain" from his tariffs on key trading partners, but argued it would be "worth the price" to secure US interests.

Critics said that the moves against the three largest US trading partners will hurt Americans by driving prices higher and slowing global growth. Trump defended his decision on social media. "The USA has major deficits with Canada, Mexico, and China (and almost all countries!), owes 36



Cars wait in line to enter the United States at a border crossing at the Canada-US border in Blackpool, Quebec, Canada, yesterday.

Trillion Dollars, and we're not going to be the 'Stupid Country' any longer," the Republican president wrote. Writing in capital letters, Trump added, "This will be the golden age of America! Will there be some pain? Yes, maybe (and maybe not!)." **Page 11**







# World Cup in Stamps Exhibition opens at Sheikh Faisal Museum



The Sheikh Faisal bin Qassim Al Thani Museum has announced the opening of the World Cup in Stamps Exhibition as part of the Qatar National Sport Day celebrations.

The exhibition, on display until February end, was inaugurated by the museum founder HE Sheikh Faisal bin Qassim al-Thani, alongside exhibition curator Mohammed Eid Zantout, a number of guests, stamp collectors and enthusiasts in Qatar.

The unique exhibition explores the rich history of the FIFA World Cup through the world of stamps. It showcases significant moments from the tournament's establishment in 1930 to Qatar's historic hosting of the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022.

Visitors will discover a remarkable collection, including the first-ever World Cup stamp and the first medal issue from the inaugural tournament in Uruguay in 1930.

The World Cup in Stamps Exhibition offers a captivating journey through the evolution of the tournament, featuring an exclusive selection of stamps, including Qatar's World Cup-related issues and special pieces produced for the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022. The exhibition has also been recognised with a Special Large Silver Medal at the 2024 Sharjah Exhibition for Stamps.



HE Sheikh Faisal, said: "The stamps on display document and immortalise the memory of the great achievement of the 2022 FIFA World Cup, which is considered one of the best World Cup tournaments in history."

He praised the exhibition's concept, which brings together important events under one roof, serving as historical documents and treasures that increase in value over time.

"This exhibition should be a travelling one, visiting many regions and countries, to enhance global knowledge of these events and the great efforts made by Qatar during that time – efforts that were extremely significant and culminated in success for the people of Qatar, its leadership, and the entire Arab nation."

Curator Zantout, said: "Hosting this exhibition at such a prestigious and cul-

turally significant institution is a true honour.

I was especially delighted to see HE Sheikh Faisal's enthusiasm for the collection and his passion for stamps and football in general.

"My passion for stamp collecting began in childhood, fuelled by a fascination with Qatari stamps and the joy of sending them from the Meseid Post Office in the 1990s. Over the years, my love for the hobby grew, and I began collecting envelopes in a unique, professional way.

In this exhibition, I've created an inspiring story through World Cup stamps, tracing the key milestones of the tournament's history, all the way to the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022."

Exhibition highlights include: Special edition stamps and philatelic materials produced exclusively for the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022; a total of 40 spread sheets presenting a journey for FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022; showcasing 75 different stamps issued by Qatar Post for FIFA; 32 medals presenting each team, the history of eight stadiums in post-cards, stamps, and envelopes; ten countries issued special stamps supporting FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022: Saudi Arabia, Argentina, Oman, Jordan, Palestine, Bangladesh, Armenia, Cyprus, Serbia, and Morocco.

# QCS honours LuLu Hypermarket Qatar



HE the Minister of Social Development and Family Buthaina bint Ali al-Jabr al-Nuaimi presenting the memento to LuLu Qatar's Shanavas Padiyath as QCS chairman Sheikh Dr Khalid bin Jaber al-Thani looks on.

LuLu Hypermarket Qatar has been honoured by the Qatar Cancer Society (QCS) for its continued commitment to the fight against cancer, a statement from the former said yesterday.

HE the Minister of Social Development and Family Buthaina bint Ali al-Jabr al-Nuaimi presented a memento to Shanavas Padiyath, regional manager, LuLu Qatar at a special ceremony.

"We are honoured to be part of this noble cause and to support the Qatar Cancer Society in its mission to raise awareness about cancer prevention, early detection, and provide critical support to patients and their families," said Padiyath. "At LuLu Hypermarket, we believe in building a cancer-aware community, and we remain committed to doing our part in combating cancer."

In addition to ongoing advocacy and fundraising efforts, LuLu Hypermarket Qatar played a significant role in the QCS's efforts last year, with the Shop and Donate campaign raising QR125,000 for the society. This contribution further underscores LuLu's commitment to supporting cancer awareness, research, and the wellbeing of those affected by cancer in Qatar.

The event also marked the launch of the Qatar Cancer Society's strategic plan for 2025-2028, aimed at aligning with Qatar's National Vision 2030.

The society's mission is to raise awareness of cancer prevention, early detection, and to provide financial and psychosocial support to those affected. The plan also emphasises the importance of building strong partnerships across sectors, including the government, media, and private organisations like LuLu Hypermarket, to ensure meaningful progress in the fight against cancer.

QCS chairman Sheikh Dr Khalid bin Jaber al-Thani, shared his vision for the future, stating: "The QCS is proud to launch its new 2025-2028 strategy, which truly reflects our ambitious vision of providing a better life for cancer patients and offering the necessary support to combat the disease by building strong partnerships with relevant sectors to ensure the achievement of desired outcomes."

Gulf Times editor-in-chief, Faisal Abdulhameed al-Mudahka, who was also honoured during the event, spoke about the power of collaboration between sectors. "It's incredible to see how the joint efforts of society, media, the private sector, and the government can make a meaningful impact," he said. "Today, we celebrate QCS's accomplishments, and LuLu Hypermarket is a prime example of how companies can partner for a common cause to improve the lives of cancer patients and their families."

# IMS Facilities & Projects Management Secures InterNACHI Accreditation to Elevate Service Quality



As Qatar continues its impressive growth in construction and real estate development, IMS Facilities & Projects Management is proud to announce the launch of its certified property inspection and snagging services. This milestone comes as IMS's expert team achieves accreditation as Certified Professional Inspectors under the globally recognized InterNACHI certification program.

InterNACHI is the world's leading association for property inspectors, ensuring its certified members adhere to the highest international standards of quality and professionalism.

IMS's certified snagging and inspection services are designed to support developers, landlords, and property buyers by identifying and addressing issues before they escalate. This proactive approach helps maintain the quality and functionality of buildings while delivering long-term benefits. Inspections ensure that properties remain in optimal condition, reducing the likelihood of defects and future repairs. Early defect identification minimizes renovation expenses and ensures properties meet the highest standards before



handover. IMS's approach also emphasizes preventive care, which extends the lifespan of buildings and reduces the need for costly renovations.

By maintaining the quality of buildings, landlords can enhance tenant satisfaction and occupancy rates, increasing overall income and long-term profitability. These services align with Qatar's broader vision of achieving world-class construction standards and ensuring long-lasting, high-quality buildings. IMS leverages its

extensive experience in managing successful projects and its skilled team to set new benchmarks for property inspection services in the country.

"As Qatar continues its remarkable journey of development, we are proud to play a role in enhancing the quality and longevity of buildings," said an IMS spokesperson. "Our certified services aim to protect investments, preserve property value, and contribute to the overall excellence of Qatar's real estate sector."



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## IMS Property Inspection Service



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## Labour minister chairs Workforce Planning Committee meeting



The Workforce Planning Committee held its regular meeting yesterday, chaired by HE the Minister of Labour and Chairman of the Committee Dr Ali bin Saeed bin Smaikh al-Marri. The meeting discussed the latest developments in the country's workforce sector, in addition to reviewing the progress of work on initiatives, projects and plans being implemented within the Third National Strategy for an efficient and productive workforce, which contributes to developing national competencies, utilising the talents of highly skilled expatriate workers and raising the percentage of the national workforce in the private sector. **(QNA)**

### Labour ministry launches courses for job seekers

The Ministry of Labour, represented by the Rehabilitation and Skills Development Department, launched yesterday a series of training courses for job seekers with secondary school and university degrees focusing on the use of Microsoft programs and artificial intelligence tools. This initiative aligns with the professional and functional demands of the labour market. Job seekers will be trained on how to use Microsoft programs effectively and to make the best use of the advantages of these programs in the work environment, in addition to training them on how to leverage various Artificial Intelligence tools to enhance their performance. The training course comes within the framework of the Ministry of Labour's efforts to empower male and female job seekers, by providing them with the necessary skills to improve their professional readiness and increase their chances of securing employment, in line with the Third National Development Strategy. **(QNA)**

## Al-Misnad meets UK official

HE the Minister of State for International Co-operation Maryam bint Ali bin Nasser al-Misnad met yesterday in Doha with British Foreign Secretary's Representative for Humanitarian Affairs in the Occupied Palestinian Territories Mark Bryson-Richardson. The two sides discussed bilateral relations and ways to boost them and the enhancement of humanitarian and development co-operation. The agenda also included the flow of humanitarian aid and the Gaza Strip reconstruction along with topics of common interest. The meeting was attended by the Acting Director of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' International Co-operation Department Sultan bin Ahmed al-Asiri and British ambassador in Doha Neerav Patel. **(QNA)**



## Virtual meeting with Palestinian minister

HE the Minister of State for International Co-operation at Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Maryam bint Ali bin Nasser al-Misnad, held a virtual meeting yesterday with Minister of Social Development of Palestine, Samah Abu Aoun. The meeting focused on reviewing bilateral relations and exploring ways to strengthen them. The two sides also discussed enhancing humanitarian and developmental co-operation, providing humanitarian aid, and reconstruction efforts in Gaza, in addition to a host of topics of mutual interest. Present at the meeting was Acting Director of Ministry of Foreign Affairs' International Co-operation Department Sultan bin Ahmed al-Asiri. **(QNA)**



## MoECC official says rules for 'Motor Home' beach to be revealed soon



Saleh al-Kuwari

Saleh Hassan al-Kuwari, director of the Natural Reserves Department at the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change (MoECC), revealed that in the coming days, the conditions for benefiting from the 'Motor Home' beach, which was recently opened experimentally in Sealine, will be announced, noting that some days will be designated for families on the beach, while the rest of the days will be for young people.

Saleh al-Kuwari told Arabic daily *Arrayah* that the department received requests from motorhome owners to establish two motorhome beaches in Al Ghariyah and Umm Bab, similar to the 'Motor Home' beach in the Sealine area, expressing his hope that this will be achieved.

He pointed out that requests are received on the hotline 16066, where those wishing to visit the beach are referred to the person authorised to carry out that task, and then the date of arrival at the beach and the date of departure are determined so that the place is prepared for them, noting that the beach is open to the citizens of the Gulf Co-operation Council countries.



Seaside of the 'Motor Home' beach.

He said: "What we seek is for the visitor to the motorhome beach to get all the necessary services and for all needs to be available. We have the winter season which is the camping season and therefore our goal in Doha was to provide a prepared location for motorhome owners, and to make a headquarters for them in the form of a dedicated beach and to be a place for gathering, getting to know each other and exchanging ideas.

"We take the demands of 'Motor Home' owners into consideration and try, in co-operation with municipalities and other government agencies, to fulfil their demands. The beach is located in the Sealine area, which has excellent, beautiful, clean, and soft white sand. We have provided everything on the beach, including umbrellas, tables and chairs

along the beach, as well as lighting, a public bathroom, sanitation, prepared and designated sites for grilling and lighting fires, garbage containers, and electricity connections.

At present, there are no fees because the beach is now open for trial, and the beach is available to all 'Motor Home' owners, whether young people or families, and the stay at the beach is for two nights and three days, which means that if the motorhome owner comes to the beach on Thursday, he can stay at the beach on Thursday and Friday, and leave on Saturday. I would like to urge the 'Motor Home' owners, to maintain cleanliness in the place and the safety of the electrical connections between the 'Motor Home' and the electricity connection window (transformer) at the site," he said.

## Egypt-Qatar cultural co-operation reveals deep-rooted ties: minister

Egypt-Qatar cultural co-operation is constantly progressing, demonstrating the two Arab countries' established historic ties, said Egypt's Minister of Culture Dr Ahmed Fouad Hano **(pictured)**. Speaking to Qatar News Agency (QNA) following the conclusion of the Egyptian Cultural Week at Darb Al Saai in Umm Salal, Dr Hano voiced hopes for further artistic exchange and joint cultural weeks and training programmes. Part of the approaches to beef up bilateral co-operation, he added, has been the announcement of Qatar as the guest of honour of the Cairo International Book Fair 2027. He also revealed Cairo's plans to host Qatari art exhibitions, film and music festivals, boosting understanding and rapprochement between the people. The Egyptian Cultural Week was held from Jan 28-31. It garnered a huge engagement from artisans as well as art and heritage specialists. Dr Hano hailed the thrilling event as a display of the vital role that artistic performances, traditional crafts, art exhibitions and literary events could play in fostering Egyptian culture and streamlining contacts with Egyptian communities abroad. Addressing approaches to beef up pan-Arab cultural co-operation, he stressed the need for joint Arab projects and initiatives to overcome the current challenges, primarily the disparate Arab cultural policies. **(QNA)**



### QatarEnergy LNG Tender Invitation

No.	TENDER NUMBER / DESCRIPTION	TENDER ISSUE PERIOD	TENDER FEE (QAR)	TENDER BOND (USD)	TENDER CLOSING DATE
1	LTC/C/EPM/6829/24 EPC TO UPGRADE THE ELECTRICAL INTEGRATED CONTROL SYSTEM (EMCS) IN LAFFAN REFINERY (LR1)	28/01/2025 to 09/02/2025	0	90,000	24/02/2025

#### Scope of Work:

The EPC Contractor's scope primarily includes designing, engineering, supply, installation, testing and commissioning for the upgrade of the existing Electrical Monitoring Control System (EMCS) in Laffan Refinery (LR1). This main scope of work shall also include the following: a) Replacing EMCS components with upgraded PLCs, IO, Gateways in the CCB and SSs. b) Upgrade of EMCS Operating System to the latest Operating system, including anti-virus c) Upgrade of ICS 2.5-layer, installation of network management system and disaster management system as per ICS policies. Contract shall also include optional scope as mentioned below. Providing EMCS operations support for a period of 5 years, including the provision of supply of following: a) Approved/qualified Windows update. b) Approved Anti-virus patches. c) DRP assistance.

**Bid Validity:** Bid should be valid for 180 calendar days from the Tender Closing Date.

#### Place for Tender Collection and Bid Submission:

ITT document for this tender will be available in QatarEnergy LNG website under Suppliers tab >Current Open Tenders. The bids shall be submitted through the QatarEnergy LNG online platform (SMART by GEP).

**Note:** Effective from 1st July 2023, bids received from Local Companies (established under the Laws of State of Qatar with local Commercial Registration) who are not in possession of an ICV score in the ICV portal by Bid Closing Date (or commercial bid submission date if separately mentioned/notified) will not be accepted. Local Company that has been established for less than 2 years and insurance companies are exempted from this requirement. For further details please visit ICV Digital Portal:- <https://icv.qa/en-US/>



### QatarEnergy LNG Tender Invitation

No.	TENDER NUMBER / DESCRIPTION	TENDER ISSUE PERIOD	TENDER FEE (QAR)	TENDER BOND (QAR)	TENDER CLOSING DATE
1	LTC/C/OFS/6971/25 MAINTENANCE OF HVAC AND LIGHTING SYSTEMS AT OFFSHORE ON A CALL OFF BASIS	02/02/2025 to 16/02/2025	0	200,000	24/02/2025

#### Scope of Work:

Company's offshore facility requires Maintenance of HVAC and Lighting Systems on Call off basis. Contractor shall perform the work by providing qualified resources with all tools and tackles; The duration of Contract shall be for five (05) years with a sole option for Company to extend it for further up to two (02) years.

**Bid Validity:** Bid should be valid for 180 calendar days from the Tender Closing Date.

#### Place for Tender Collection and Bid Submission:

ITT document for this tender will be available in QatarEnergy LNG website under Suppliers tab >Current Open Tenders. The bids shall be submitted through the QatarEnergy LNG online platform (SMART by GEP).

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# Fifty One East showcases latest pieces from global brands

By Joseph Varghese  
Staff Reporter

Fifty One East pavilion is hosting some of the leading global luxury brands at the ongoing Doha Jewellery and Watches Exhibition (DJWE) 2025 at the Doha Exhibition and Convention Centre.



The Little Frog



KERIS presents the innovative WOW Project.

TUDOR has unveiled its latest models, including the new Black Bay with a 41mm steel case which was released in Geneva's Watches & Wonders 2024, and the Pelagos FXD "Cycling Edition", crafted from black carbon composite, launched earlier last year.

These models exemplify TUDOR's dedication to precision, durability, and timeless style, presented within a strikingly designed section.

Azza Fahmy Jewellery unveiled the second chapter of its high jewellery collection, "Tales of the Nile".

Inspired by Ottoman elegance and nature's beauty, the collection features emeralds, rubellites, tanzanites, and aquamarines in 18ct gold designs.

Signature pieces include The Chains of Happiness Necklace and The Garden of Light Choker, showcasing the brand's timeless artistry.

David Yurman's Sculpted Cable Collection takes centre stage, offering a modern interpretation of the brand's signature Cable motif.

The collection reflects the legacy of Yurman's original bracelet gifted to his wife Sybil, reimagined with architectural and sculptural elements by his son, Evan.

Intricate designs featuring wavelike patterns, carved fluting, and diamond pavé promise to captivate visitors.

Additionally, Annamaria Cammilli presents novelties from its Dunes, Firenze, and Sultana collections, highlighting the brand's mastery of blending art and unique techniques.

L'Âme by Fifty One East is presenting vibrant transformable jewellery adorned with diamonds and gold, combining elegance with personal meaning.

Falamank by Tarfa Itani debuts its Bubbles collection, alongside Splash, Art Deco, and FUN collections, showcasing playful sophistication.

J by JOELLE is offering ear piercing and styling by the celebrity jewellery designer, Joelle Moughalian.

WOLF highlights iconic storage solutions like the Silver Box, Ballet Musical Jewellery Box, and Ida Trunk.

Genesis spotlights their latest Baroque and Trill collections, redefining pearl jewellery with innovative designs.



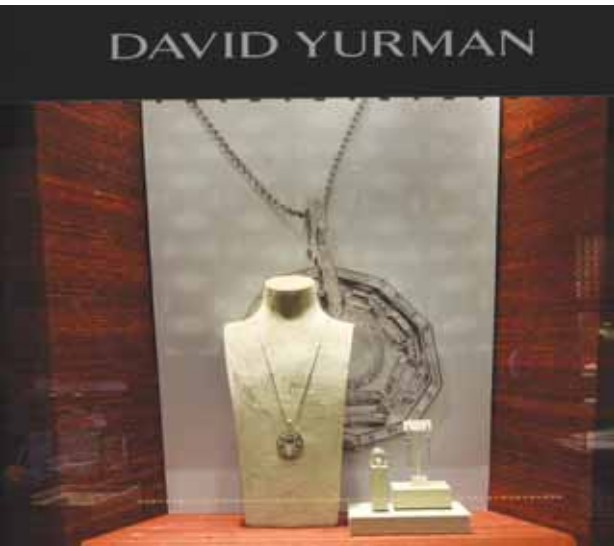
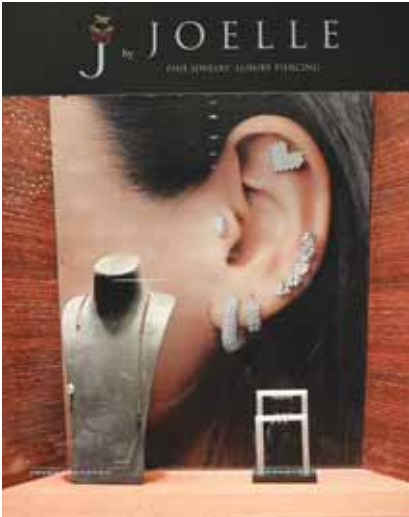
A TUDOR showcase at the Fifty One East pavilion at the DJWE 2025. **PICTURES:** Shaji Kayamkulam



Left: Some pieces from the Falamank collection.

Right: Iconic pieces from J by JOELLE.

Below: Pieces from Annamaria Cammilli.



David Yurman's collection at the Fifty One East pavilion.

Right: Pieces from Yvan Tufenkjian.

The Little Frog unveils its latest collection with unique handmade heart designs.

As for Yvan Tufenkjian, the legacy brand has introduced its latest "Edge of Grace" collection which blends bold geometry and refined elegance.

A new brand at Fifty East this year is the

Swiss brand KERIS that is presenting the innovative WOW Project, allowing luxury watch collectors to transform their timepieces into personalised works of art.

The project helps the timepiece to be projected seven times bigger than its original size.

This exclusive bespoke experience, presented for the first time in Qatar through the DJWE, offers a unique fusion of functionality and creativity.

The DJWE 2025 will conclude on Wednesday (February 5).

## CHANEL presents iconic creations at Fifty One East pavilion

By Joseph Varghese  
Staff Reporter

CHANEL, the French brand synonymous for luxury, is showcasing some of its latest collections at the ongoing Doha Jewellery and Watches Exhibition (DJWE) 2025.

Stationed at the Fifty One East pavilion, the iconic brand is presenting some of its exquisite and stunning jewellery and watches collections, enchanting the visitors.

CHANEL is bringing a unique perspective to the DJWE, enabling visitors to retrace the history of its most cherished icons, its renowned fine jewellery collections, and the latest high-end watches.

The French House is showcasing its iconic COCO CRUSH, inspired by the quilted motif, a signature of the House since 1955; Collection N°5, an homage to the most iconic number in CHANEL's history; and Plume de CHANEL, an elegant reinterpretation of the feather motif, emblematic of the House since 1932.

CHANEL is also presenting at the exhibition the latest novelties from its celebrated timepieces, including J12, an icon in watchmaking, Mademoiselle Privé, and Première, offering a captivating glimpse into the timeless artistry and innovation that define the House.

CHANEL's Musical Clock Couture Workshop is a masterpiece of technical and aesthetic sophistication.

This creation merges artistry with precision, bringing Gabrielle Chanel's apartment to life.

The automation features couture busts that move in a graceful choreography to the melody of My Woman by Al Bowlly.

The diamond-encrusted chandelier, gold plinth and meticulously crafted musical mechanism are a testament to CHANEL's extraordinary craftsmanship.

traordinary craftsmanship.

The unique time display on a tape measure and the winding key, suspended from a gold chain necklace, further elevates it as a true *tour de force*.

Another major attraction is the CHANEL J12 X-Ray Pink Edition, introduced in 2024 with limited number and designed to highlight the striking hue of pink sapphires.

The J12 Pink Edition watch stands out for its mesmerising design in which the transparent case, dial and the bracelet show off the watch's mechanics and gems to perfection.

The total of 93 baguette-cut pink sapphires makes this the most adorned piece in this limited collection with these gems even appearing in the bracelet.

This is a testament to CHANEL's commitment and it is limited to only 12 pieces.



Iconic CHANEL collections on display. **PICTURES:** Shaji Kayamkulam

## Qatar Tourism sponsors diamond, gem conference

Qatar Tourism (QT) sponsored the 2025 Doha International Diamond & Gem Conference (DIDGC), which took place on January 29-31 at The Ned Doha, a statement said yesterday.

The event welcomed prominent global figures, including government officials, diamond industry leaders, and experts from over 40 countries.

The conference explored key trends, fostered collaboration, and addressed challenges in the diamond and gemstone industry.

The opening ceremony featured a welcome address by QT and Visit Qatar chairman HE Saad bin Ali al-Kharji.

"The synergy between this event and



the Doha Jewellery and Watches Exhibition, which is currently being hosted by Qatar Tourism, underscores Qatar's strategic vision of becoming a global hub for luxury, blending world-class infrastructure, exceptional hospitality, and cultural heritage," he said.

"We're excited that we succeeded in organising this inaugural conference in

the span of just three months and look forward to meaningful and productive sessions," said Alex Popov, chair of the DIDGC Organising Committee.

The conference featured keynote speeches, panel discussions, and interactive sessions led by prominent global figures, including HE the Minister of State for Foreign Trade Affairs Dr Ahmed bin Mohammed al-Sayed, Botswana's Minister of Minerals and Energy Bogolo Joy Kenewendo, Dubai Multi Commodities Centre executive chairman Ahmed bin Sulayem, World Diamond Council president Feriel Zerouki, and the Gem & Jewellery Export Promotion Council vice-chairman Kirit Bhansali, the statement added.



# DJWE 2025: Alfardan Jewellery unveils Solevre, a revolutionary new luxury brand

Alfardan Jewellery, a name synonymous with excellence and timeless luxury, has redefined the world of fine jewellery with the launch of its latest innovation, Solevre.

This groundbreaking brand, a highly valuable addition to Alfardan Jewellery's prestigious portfolio, is currently on showcase at the 21st edition of the Doha Jewellery & Watches Exhibition (DJWE), which will run until Feb 5 at the Doha Exhibition and Convention Centre (DECC).

The much-anticipated debut of Solevre marks a new era in luxury jewellery, blending unparalleled craftsmanship with innovative designs. Showcased exclusively at the Alfardan Jewellery Pavilion.

Solevre presents an extraordinary collection of fine jewellery, meticulously crafted to captivate collectors, connoisseurs, and fashion enthusiasts alike.

The collection features a stunning array of bracelets, crafted in exquisite white gold and platinum and adorned with dazzling half-carat diamonds that looks like a whole carat.

The diamond collection starts from 10-50 pointers, with each stone appearing significantly larger due to Solevre's exceptional craftsmanship. A 10-pointer sparkles like a 30-pointer, a 30-pointer radiates the brilliance of a 50-pointer, and a 50-pointer mirrors the presence of a full carat.



Solevre uses only high-grade diamonds with a G colour rating, ensuring superior quality. Each diamond is carefully selected to meet the highest standards of brilliance and refinement. The collection is designed to suit all styles, budgets, and age groups, making luxury accessible to every jewellery enthusiast.

These breathtaking pieces, available in various sizes, reflect the ultimate fusion of elegance, sophistication, and modernity.

Solevre stands as a testament to Alfardan Jewellery's commitment to pioneering excellence, setting new benchmarks in the realm of high jewellery. This surprise unveiling adds an element of exclusivity to this year's DJWE, making it an unmissable event for those who appreciate the finest craftsmanship and luxury.



Explore the grand reveal of Solevre and witness the beginning of a new chapter in fine jewellery.



(From left) Dana, Noor, and Zohour Alfardan during the launch of Solevre at the Alfardan Jewellery Pavilion inside the Doha Jewellery & Watches Exhibition 2025. **PICTURE:** Noushad Thekkayil

## Dolce&Gabbana collaborates with Alfardan Jewellery to present a special watch collection



Dolce&Gabbana has expanded its range of precious items with a special collection of timepieces created in collaboration with Alfardan Jewellery.

Dolce&Gabbana's love for creativity and watchmaking expertise comes to life in these creations that reimagine some of the brand's most iconic models, offering a new and luxurious interpretation through the use of refined techniques, exquisite gemstones, and innovative colour variations for dials and straps.

The new designs stand out for their extraordinary decorative beauty, a result of passionate craftsmanship and meticulous attention to detail. Designed and developed in Italy directly by Dolce&Gabbana alongside Alfardan Jewellery to create a tailored offering for the local market, the timepieces are built and assembled by Swiss master watchmakers, ensuring high-quality performance and finishing.

Among the highlights is the Sofia watch, featuring a Milano-link bracelet in 18kt rose gold, made even more radiant by the colourless diamonds set on the bezel of the iconic square case and a mother-of-pearl dial.

The DG7 family is enriched with new models that perfectly combine style and functionality through unique components and precious materials. A standout edition showcases the art of engraving and inlay work, featuring a strap and an 18kt rose gold case fully adorned with colourless diamonds that frame and elevate the dial.

Timeless and classic elegance inspires the DG7 Tapered watches with a bracelet, case, and dial in 18kt white or rose gold, illuminated by colourless diamonds.

The new Dolce&Gabbana timepieces, created in collaboration with Alfardan Jewellery, is being showcased at Alfardan Jewellery booth at DJWE 2025 in Doha, Qatar, and will be then available at select Alfardan Jewellery boutiques.







Al Zain Jewellery is known for its unique collections that include classic Arabic pieces embodying gold, diamonds and pearls with elements of Arab architecture. **PICTURES:** Shaji Kayamkulam

## Al Zain Jewellery highlights heritage, modernity at DJWE

Al Zain Jewellery is marking its presence at the Doha Jewellery and Watches Exhibition (DJWE) by featuring a collection of elegant creations that exude exquisite craftsmanship and iconic designs. The brand is known for its unique collections that include classic Arabic pieces embodying gold, diamonds and pearls with elements of Arab architecture.

Among Al Zain's specialties are jewellery with a perfect balance between heritage and modernity and highlighting the beauty of pure Bahraini pearls as one of the pillars of the brand's legacy.

With 14 boutiques across the Middle East, Al Zain has established its presence in the US to secure its position as a luxury brand that blends authenticity and creativity.

Established in 1930 in Bahrain, Al Zain is driven by a bold vision to introduce rich Arabian heritage through contemporary art forms.

With two state-of-the-art factories in Bahrain, Al Zain's artisans meticulously handcraft highest grade raw materials into exquisite works of art.

They create pieces ranging from contemporary everyday 18k, to bespoke high jewellery.



## Almuftah showcases quality and craftsmanship

By Shafeeq Alingal  
Staff Reporter

Almuftah Jewellery is featuring luxurious watches and jewellery brands at the ongoing Doha Jewellery and Watches Exhibition (DJWE).

Almuftah's pavilion has turned out to be a symbol of distinction and elegance that reflects the spirit of jewellery and watch collectors.

"We are known for quality, luxury, craftsmanship, extreme precision, creativity and innovation in an exceptional artistic form," Almuftah Jewellery divisional manager Alexander Wensky told *Gulf Times* while highlighting that the group has unveiled a stunning selection of fine jewellery and luxury watches from esteemed



global brands at the DJWE.

The pavilion showcases a curated selection of the finest international jewellery and watches.

Each piece exemplifies the elegance of craftsmanship and highlights the artistry with captivating designs.

Among the highlights is Sarcar which offers limitless personalisa-



Almuftah Jewellery is featuring luxurious watches and jewellery brands at the ongoing DJWE 2025. **PICTURES:** Shaji Kayamkulam



Alexander Wensky

Renowned brands including Movado, Century, Arzano, Zanelle, Sarcar, Charriol, Raynas Joaillerie, Ebel, Rizan and Solitaire are on sale at Almuftah pavilion.

The jewellery items include necklaces, pendants, bracelets, bangles, earrings, rings and cufflinks that meet the tastes of Qatari collectors.

The bridal sets at the pavilion are evoking a good response from the buyers as they fit for special occasions and are replete with luxury wearables.

Wensky noted that the DJWE is gaining global attention and has become one of the biggest jewellery and luxury watch exhibitions in the region while showcasing local companies and international brands and turning out to be an ideal platform for all luxury lovers.

Almuftah Jewellery has cultivated a legacy as a distinguished player in the jewellery industry over the past several decades.

It has positioned itself as a premier importer and retailer specialising in watches, jewellery, gold ornaments, diamonds, precious stones, and pearls.

## Safari '10, 20, 30 Promotion' starts today

Leading hypermarket chain Safari is launching today its "10, 20, 30 Promotion", offering thousands of products for QR10, 20, and 30, including fruits, vegetables, fish, meat, bakery items, hot food, and other food products.

"Cosmetics, household items, ready-made garments, footwear, electronics, computer accessories, daily necessities, food grains, and textiles are also part of this incredible sale," a statement said yesterday.

Some of the attractions include a 1,300g Sadia Chicken Griller for QR10, a 3-litre Curry Leaf Pressure Cooker for QR20, and a combo of 100ml Sapil Solid Perfume

and 150ml deodorant for QR30.

Other highlights are an 18-bottle pack of 1.5-litre Dana Mineral Water for QR10, Kohinoor Everyday Basmati Rice for QR20, and a 3-litre Kitchen Maid Flask for QR30.

The Safari Bakery and Hot Food section also offers a wide range of dishes, ranging from Western, South Indian, North Indian, Arabic, and Chinese dishes to combo offers.

In addition to dishes such as Chicken Biryani, Chicken Majboos, and Choco Roll, the deli section includes fresh jams, Raumi Cheese, Baladi Feta Plain Cheese, Red Cheddar Cheese, Tannihia Beef Mortadella, and various

types of pickles, all available as part of the 10, 20, 30 Promotion.

The frozen section features a variety of juices, drinking water, chicken parts, chicken nuggets, ice creams, and milk and dairy products, all available for QR10, 20, and 30.

The grocery section is also stocked with many snacks and other food products at "unbeatable prices".

In the household category, Safari has prepared a wide range of multipurpose products from brands such as Enchanter, Dove, Sebamed, Pantene, Lux, Olay, and Johnson & Johnson.

The cosmetics section includes perfumes, body sprays, makeup

sets, various soaps, face washes, body lotions, and other health and beauty care products, all available at "incredible prices".

The stationery section offers many school and office essentials, including items from Faber-Castell, Maped School Kits, and various stationery sets.

There is a wide range of items available in the toys section and sports section under the promotion.

In the garments and ready-made section, Safari has lined up collection of quality items, including men's wear, ladies' churidars, churidar materials, ladies' denim jackets, kids' wear, footwear, ladies' bags, and newborn



baby items, all available for QR 10, 20, and 30.

"The electronics category is also part of this promotion ... from emergency lights, trimmers,

torches, and calculators to headsets, smartwatches, and many other electronic devices, the deals are unbeatable," the statement added.

## Old Doha Port unveils new mission, vision and values

The Old Doha Port has unveiled its new mission, vision and values to further position itself as the premier maritime and tourism destination in Qatar and the Middle East.

Old Doha Port's new brand uplift pays homage to the idea of a harbour re-imagined, a statement said.

This transformation, the statement said, underscores the essence of its history while introducing a dynamic and versatile identity that reflects its unique character.

The evolution preserves the port's deep-rooted connection to Qatar's heritage while charting a bold course for the future.

This strategic shift acknowledges the diverse expectations of visitors, employees, stakeholders, and communities at the local,

regional, and international levels.

"Our mission is to be a harbour reimagined, where Doha's rich past meets its future," Old Doha Port chief executive Mohammed Abdullah al-Mulla said.

"We are committed to connecting the local community and international visitors to a lifestyle destination where history lives, maritime tourism thrives, and culture prospers," he said.

"As for our vision, it is to be the Middle East's finest maritime and tourism destination, leading landmark advances in marina experiences, symbolising Qatar's maritime heritage, restoring the historical link between the city and the sea, and shaping the future of tourism growth in the region," al-Mulla added.

Home to The Terminal - the official marine gateway to Qatar - Old Doha Port features two marinas with over 450 berths accommodating all types of maritime vessels, including superyachts.

Since the World Cup 2022, the port has transformed into a vibrant must-visit destination.

Highlights include parks, the colourful Mina District, The Terminal, the reimagined Containers Yard, and 250,000sq m of lush greenery.

To complement its transformation, Old Doha Port is also launching a new website, [www.odp.qa](http://www.odp.qa), offering visitors an engaging and seamless way to explore the port's offerings, stay updated on events, and plan their experience effortlessly.

## MoECC successfully monitors wild sand cat

The Ministry of Environment and Climate Change (MoECC) has announced its success in monitoring the sand cat as part of a project studying sand cats and other mammals in Qatar.

The sand cat is classified as an endangered species in Qatar due to the rapid urban expansion and the hunting of rodents, which are its primary food source. The environmental significance of the sand cat lies in its vital role in maintaining ecological balance through the control of rodent and insect populations.

The MoECC explained that the sand cat is small in size, with a body length ranging between 39-52 cm, a tail length of 23-31 cm, and a weight of 1.5 to 3.5 kg.

Besides, the cat's fur is light sandy in colour with faint black



stripes or spots. It has large, side-oriented ears that help dissipate heat, alongside dense fur that protects it from heat and sand.

Accordingly, MoECC noted that the sand cat inhabits desert and sandy environments, such as the Arabian deserts, North Africa, and Central Asia. It is a nocturnal animal, spending daylight hours in burrows to shield itself from the sun's heat, and feeds on rodents, small birds, and reptiles.



## LG PuriCare AeroFurniture launched in Qatar

LG Electronics (LG) has announced the launch of the LG PuriCare AeroFurniture, a state-of-the-art air purifier that "redefines modern home living".

Combining cutting-edge air purification technology with a stylish, multifunctional design, the LG AeroFurniture has won various awards, such as the Gold Award for iF design, reddot winner 2023 for innovative product and Honoree of Home Appliances at CES 2023.

Hiding the air purifier in a piece of home furniture, the LG PuriCare AeroFurniture looks like a stylish side-table that fits beautifully in the home aesthetic, a statement said.

Additionally, its compact size ensures that it not only fits in most spaces, but also maintains its chic look.

Thanks to its 360° Hepa filter, the LG PuriCare AeroFurniture eliminates 99.9% of airborne bacteria and ultrafine dust as small as 0.01 microns.

This is complemented further with the UVnano Technology, which ensures 99.99% of bacteria on fan blades are removed to keep the air pure.

The LG PuriCare AeroFurniture is also peacefully quiet, the statement said, registering at only 21dB, which is even quieter than a library.

The tabletop of the LG PuriCare AeroFurniture also serves an additional purpose, with its wireless charging capabilities.

Unlike normal air purifiers, the LG PuriCare AeroFurniture comes with mood lighting.

At the touch of a button or with the LG

ThinQ app, users can monitor air quality, adjust settings, and receive filter replacement alerts, through their smartphones.

"We are thrilled to introduce the LG AeroFurniture AS20 to the Qatari market," said C V Rappai, the director and chief executive of Video Home & Electronic Centre.

"This product represents LG's vision of delivering cutting-edge technology with aesthetic design," he said. "It's not just an air purifier; it's a lifestyle upgrade for health-conscious and design-savvy consumers in Qatar."

The LG AeroFurniture is now available across leading hypermarkets, LG brand shops and leading electronics retail chains and e-commerce platforms.

For exclusive offers customers may visit [www.jumbosouq.com](http://www.jumbosouq.com)





## Qatar, Egypt sign MoU to enhance legal ties

**Q**atar and Egypt signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) in the field of justice and law.

The MoU was signed by HE the Minister of Justice and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Ibrahim bin Ali al-Mohannadi and the visiting Egyptian Minister of Justice Counsellor Adnan Fangri.

The MoU aims to enhance co-operation in the legal field, exchange expertise in training fields,

prepare and implement support and capacity building programmes for legal practitioners, in addition to exchanging laws, legislation, research and legal studies. The MoU also aims to organise and hold forums and conferences that address specialised topics in legal sciences to advance the legal sectors and services in the two brotherly countries.

On the sidelines of the MoU signing, HE al-Mohannadi met

with Fangri. During the meeting, the two sides discussed ways to enhance legal co-operation between Qatar and Egypt, and develop it in various legal and judicial fields.

The meeting was attended by Egyptian ambassador in Doha, Amr Kamal El-Din El-Sherbiny, alongside several senior officials from the Ministry of Justice and the Cabinet's General Secretariat. **(QNA)**

## Msheireb Properties showcases future of technology at event

**Downtown Tech attracts over 130,000 visitors**

**M**sheireb Properties organised the first edition of Downtown Tech, which brought together a host of leading technology companies in Qatar to explore the future of technology.

The two-day event featured four specialised zones dedicated to artificial intelligence (AI), robotics, Internet of Things (IoT), and Autonomous Vehicles interconnected through a central nervous system design symbolising the fusion of human creativity and technological innovation.

The Downtown Tech drew over 130,000 visitors from tech enthusiasts, alongside those specialised in this sector and innovators, transforming Barahat Msheireb into an immersive technology hub that manifested the growing stature of Qatar as a centre of technological innovation in the region.

Visitors experienced a diverse range of technological innovations throughout the event, from fascinating live demonstrations of robotics and AI applications to cutting-edge smart home and IoT technology showcases. The event featured impressive autonomous vehicle displays, complemented by interactive workshops and panel discussions.

The event's unique zones and



interactive elements created a platform for meaningful dialogue and knowledge exchange. As a venue, Msheireb Downtown Doha played a pivotal role, offering a living example of smart city principles in action. With its cutting-edge infrastructure and intelligent urban design, the district embodies energy efficiency, seamless connectivity, and a user-centric approach to urban planning.

Senior ICT Manager at Msheireb Properties, Ahmed al-Korbi, stated that Downtown Tech represents a commitment to making technology accessible and engaging for everyone.

He highlighted that as operators of one of the world's most advanced smart cities, with over 650,000 connected IoT devices, Msheireb Properties wanted to create an in-

teractive platform where the community could experience the future of technology firsthand.

Executive Director of Blue Lake Motors, Christopher Preston, said Qatar's enthusiasm for innovative mobility solutions makes it the perfect place to see the future of transportation come to life. He indicated that Msheireb Downtown Doha has been the ideal setting to showcase next-generation automotive technology and it's a pleasure to work with like-minded entrepreneurs.

Msheireb Properties is a subsidiary of Qatar Foundation for Education, Sciences and Community Development and Qatar's leading sustainable property developer, supporting the goals of Qatar National Vision 2030 and Qatar Foundation's objectives. **(QNA)**

## CNN opens new studio at Media City Qatar

**From Page 1**

In addition, this expansion provides CNN with additional resource in the Gulf and Middle East at a time when the region is central to the global news agenda from coverage of geopolitics and breaking news through to stories on business, technology, sport, culture and travel. CNN will also provide training in journalism and production to students and young professionals in Qatar.

"CNN has a deep commitment to editorial coverage of the Middle East," said Executive Vice President and Managing Editor of CNN Worldwide Mike McCarthy. "Whether by adding to our ability to report from the region, providing new, cutting-edge studio facilities, or allowing us to tell a wider range of stories from here in new ways, including via a brand new weekly show, this new operation in Qatar both underscores and expands that commitment."

"CNN's brand promise is built on being a global source for trusted, timely news and information," added CNN International Commercial Executive Vice President Phil Nelson. "This expansion into Qatar will bolster our regional and global operations, adding to our long-standing footprint in the Middle East. We look forward to launching innovative formats and content propositions from this new studio in Media City Qatar in the second half of 2025."

## Israeli military blows up buildings in West Bank refugee camp

**Reuters**  
Ramallah/Jerusalem

**T**he Israeli military blew up buildings in the Jenin refugee camp in the occupied West Bank yesterday in an operation that the Palestinian state news agency said levelled around 20 buildings.

Footage capturing the demolitions showed a series of simultaneous explosions in the densely populated camp. Thick clouds of smoke rose above the Palestinian city where Israeli forces have been conducting a major military operation for nearly two weeks that the Israeli military says is targeting Palestinian fighters and the seizure of weapons stockpiles.

The Israeli military said 23 structures had been "dismantled" in the northern West Bank after explosives laboratories, weapons and observation posts were uncovered by its forces.

In a previous statement yesterday it shared images of firearms, ammunition, and what appeared to be gas canisters. It did not say where exactly those images were taken. Jenin Government Hospital Director Wisam Baker told the Palestinian state news agency that part of the hospital was damaged in the explosions but that there had been no casualties.

Jenin is home to a crowded refugee camp of descendants of Palestinians who were driven out, or fled their homes, in the 1948 war when the state of Israel was established. The refugee camp there has been a centre of fighters' activity for decades and the target of repeated raids by Israeli security forces. Israeli forces, backed by helicopters and armoured bulldozers, began the assault on the city on Jan 21, two days after a ceasefire in Gaza between Israel and the Hamas group took effect.

Israel regards the West Bank as one part of a multi-front war

against foreign-backed groups established around its borders, from Gaza to Lebanon and including the Houthis in Yemen, and it turned its attention to the area immediately after the halt to fighting in Gaza. The United Nations' agency for Palestinian refugees has said that almost all of the Jenin camp's 20,000 residents have been displaced over the past two months.

Hamas yesterday called for an "escalation in the resistance" against Israel following the demolition of buildings in Jenin.

The Palestinian Authority exercises limited governance over the West Bank where around 3mn Palestinians live and over which Israel maintains overall military control.

Israeli forces have engaged in gun battles with local fighters since the operation began. Defence Minister Israel Katz on Wednesday said security forces would stay until the operation is complete, without saying when that would be.

## Minister honours 152 distinguished employees



**H**E the Minister of Endowments (Awqaf) and Islamic Affairs Ghanem bin Shaheen al-Ghanem honoured yesterday the distinguished employees in the various departments of the ministry for 2024, during a ceremony held in the presence of HE the Undersecretary of the Ministry of Endowments and Islamic Affairs Sheikh Dr Khalid bin Mohammed bin Ghanem al-Thani, assistant undersecretaries of the ministry, a number of department directors and heads of sections, and with the participation and presence of the media.

This honour comes in line with achieving the first pillar of Qatar National Vision 2030 in the human development axis, and within the ministry's efforts to support and motivate its human cadres, in appreciation of their role in achieving strategic goals, and establishing a work environment based on distinguished performance and innovation.

In this context, Director of the Human Resources Department at the ministry Mohammed Hassan al-Maliki said that this moment is not only a tribute to the

shared values, but it is also an appreciation of the impressive achievements that can be made when employees work hard and with dedication to achieve the ministry's distinguished success.

Al-Maliki urged all the honoured employees to continue their hard work and diligence, to be an important tributary of achievement and institutional development, and to maintain this distinction and creativity to be a role model and a source of inspiration for their brethren and fellow employees.

He noted that this ceremony is distinguished by honouring three employees with disabilities in various departments for the first time and that the administration pays great attention to developing its cadres.

Head of Training and Administrative Development Department Salwa Abdullah al-Badr al-Mutawa said that the selection of distinguished employees is based on precise criteria, as the administration takes into account a number of points when nominating departments for their ideal and most efficient

employees. The number of honoured employees reached 152 from various ministry departments.

The departments that were honoured included the Department of Financial and Administrative Affairs, the General Directorate of Endowments, the Department of Human Resources, the Department of Islamic Affairs, the Department of Engineering Affairs, the Department of Mosques, the Department of Information Systems, the Department of Research and Islamic Studies, the Department of Planning, Quality and Innovation, the Department of Internal Audit, the Department of Zakat Fund, the Department of Haj and Umrah, the Department of Da'wah and Religious Guidance, the Department of Public Relations and Communication, the Department of Legal Affairs, and the Sheikh Abdullah Bin Zaid Al Mahmoud Islamic Cultural Center.

The ministry will honour distinguished female employees for 2024 at a special ceremony today. **(QNA)**

## Two private health centres closed for violations

The Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) has announced the administrative closure of two private health centres for violating health requirements related to the sterilisation of medical instruments. This decision is part of the ministry's ongoing monitoring and inspection efforts,

carried out by the Health Facilities Department. The inspections cover both public and private healthcare facilities to ensure compliance with the policies and laws governing the sector, most notably Law No 11 of 1982 on the Regulating Medical Treatment Institutions. **(QNA)**

## QC implemented 300 projects worth over QR40mn in Somalia



**Q**atar Charity (QC) announced yesterday that its Somalia office had implemented around 300 humanitarian and development projects in 2024, totalling over QR40mn.

A QC statement said the projects benefited over 600,000 people across various regions in the eastern African nation.

The office also signed several co-operation and partnership agreements with UN, international organisations and relevant government bodies, which contributed to co-ordinating efforts and enhancing the impact of its projects and aid.

The projects covered sectors such as water and sanitation, food security, health, education, social welfare, economic empowerment, and social housing.



These efforts were part of the QC's comprehensive response to address the humanitarian challenges caused by the ongoing crises in Somalia, includ-

ing providing humanitarian aid and rehabilitating infrastructure amid the successive disasters of drought, floods, and conflicts. **(QNA)**





# Djibouti drone attack kills eight rebels: govt

AFP  
Addis Ababa

Djibouti security forces launched a drone attack near the Ethiopian border, killing eight members of a rebel group and an unknown number of civilians, authorities said yesterday.

“A drone attack was carried out against a terrorist group at Addorta, a Djiboutian locality some six kilometres from the border with Ethiopia,” the defence ministry stated.

“Eight terrorists were neutralised,” the ministry said. It added that “collateral damage was unfortunately reported among Djiboutian civilians” but did not give details.

The Horn of Africa state announced it had opened an investigation, adding the rebels had been engaged in “hostile actions” which constituted “a potential threat to our advanced posts”.

Questioned by AFP, Alexis Mohamed, an advisor to Djibouti President Ismael Omar Guelleh, said the militants were members of the Armed Front for the Restoration of Unity and Democracy

(FRUD A), which Djibouti considers a terrorist group.

Ethiopian daily Addis Standard reported the drone attack took place on the Ethiopian side, which Djibouti rejected. Mohamed insisted the attack was on Djibouti territory.

Ethiopian authorities did not immediately respond to AFP requests to comment.

In October 2022, seven soldiers were killed, and six kidnapped, in an attack on their barracks at Garabtisan, north of Djibouti, which authorities blamed on FRUD. The kidnapped soldiers were released several weeks later.

Recruited from the Afar community in northern Djibouti, FRUD launched an anti-government rebellion in 1991, claiming to defend Afar interests against the Issas, the country's other main ethnic community.

The group later split. While FRUD is part of a four-party coalition backing President Guelleh, its armed wing FRUD A continues to carry out attacks.

Located on one of the world's busiest shipping routes, where the Red Sea meets the Gulf of Aden, Djibouti hosts important US military and French military bases.

## Tanzanian army confirms two soldiers killed in DR Congo

AFP  
Dar es Salaam

Two Tanzanian soldiers have been killed in clashes in the last 10 days in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo, the army confirmed yesterday.

The offensive by the Rwandan-backed M23 armed group, which has captured the major city of Goma and promised to march on to capital Kinshasa, has rattled international observers.

It is the latest escalation in a mineral-rich region bedevilled by decades of fighting involving dozens of armed groups.

Tanzanian Peoples Defence Force (TPDF) soldiers had been deployed under the Southern African Development Community (SADC), a regional bloc operating in eastern DR Congo.

“Following a series of attacks in the areas of Sake and Goma carried out by M23 rebels on the 24th and 28th of January 2025, JWTZ has lost two soldiers,” army spokesperson Gaudentius Ilonda said, using the Swahili abbrevia-

tion for the TPDF. He confirmed that four others had been wounded and were currently receiving treatment in Goma.

Ilonda said the remaining units - without giving any further details - “continue to carry out their duties under the guidance of SADC”.

Preparations were underway to repatriate the bodies of the Tanzanian soldiers, he added.

So far 13 South Africans, three Malawians, and a Uruguayan national have died in the DR Congo clashes.

Earlier this week, SADC called for a joint summit with the eight-country East African Community (EAC) over the crisis.

Yesterday, Rwanda said it would welcome such a meeting, while also criticising SADC's involvement in DRC.

Rwanda has never admitted to military involvement in support of the M23 group, however, a United Nations expert report last July said it had roughly 4,000 troops in eastern DR Congo, and accused Kigali of having “de facto” control over the group.



Displaced people from Sake gather in front of a room where they are taking refuge with their families, following the intensification of fighting between M23 rebels and the Congolese army, in Goma, North Kivu province, in eastern DR Congo, yesterday.

# Congo’s displaced fear violence, abuse if they return home

Reuters  
Lac Vert, DR Congo

Widow Francine Nsen-giyumva and her three children have little to eat and sleep on the hard ground, but like many others at a makeshift displacement centre in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo she is scared to return home.

Yesterday, she and other women and children gathered outside at the centre, a school in the Lac Vert district of Goma, the city seized by M23 rebels last week in the worst escalation of fighting in the region in more than a decade.

The insurgents want to show they can restore order and have urged civilians to return to normal life, but 23-year-old Nsen-giyumva said it would not be safe to go back to her village of Nzulo, near Goma.

“Those who took our land are still there, still killing people and terrorising” she said, cooking a pot of beans over an open fire.

“We will only return when



A person drives as another holds bags of potatoes from the Kibati market, days after the M23 rebel group seized the town of Goma, North Kivu province, in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, yesterday.

there is peace.” The group is among the hundreds of thousands more people displaced by the surge in hostilities since the start of the year. Many, like Floride Furaha, have had to flee multiple times.

She and other women at the centre discussed the scourge

of physical abuse and violence that has risen sharply during the conflict, particularly in their province of North Kivu, aid agency Medecins Sans Frontieres (MSF) warned last September.

“This is why we fled,” Furaha said. “Many of us have been

abused. They enter the houses and physically abuse the mother and her daughters.”

On Friday, the United Nations accused both the M23 and the Congolese army of serious, recent human rights abuses. They have not responded to requests for comment.

# Centuries-old Algerian indigenous tradition champions sharing

AFP  
Bejaia

In a village nestled in the mountains of northeastern Algeria, locals and visitors gathered under a cold winter sky to celebrate Tamechrit, a centuries-old Berber tradition rooted in sharing.

Seeking to preserve a practice that faded during the Algerian civil war of the 1990s, villagers marked Tamechrit with Berber music and food on the occasion coinciding in January with the Amazigh new year.

The minority community of Berbers refer to themselves as the Amazigh, meaning “free people”. They have long fought for recognition for their ancient culture and language in modern states across North Africa.

Berbers are descendants of pre-Arab North Africans, whose historic homelands stretched from the Canary Isles and Morocco to the deserts of western Egypt.

“We hope to perpetuate this tradition during cultural or religious festivals,” bringing together different people from the village and even those who have left, Dahmane Barbacha, a 41-year-old from Ath Atig village, told AFP.

Children wore temporary Amazigh face paintings at the event that dates back to the 13th century, according to historian Saleh Ahmed Baroudi.



Children dressed in traditional outfits watch as men prepare portions of meat as part of Algeria's Tamechrit, based on the Amazigh New Year's traditions, in Bajaia.

Tamechrit means “offering” in Tamazight, the community's language recognised as an official language alongside Arabic in Algeria.

It represents “an occasion for gathering, fraternity, and reconciliation between families” across Amazigh villages, said Baroudi, who teaches contemporary Algerian history.

Different regions of the country use other names for the custom, he added.

The merrymaking is also held to observe major Islamic events such as the fasting month of Ramadan, Prophet Muhammad's (PBUH) birthday, and others.

It is often held in Zawiyas, small places for worship and religious teaching, usually where a local saint or holy figure lived and was buried.

Baroudi said most of those sites are in mountainous regions,

adding to the “spiritual dimension” of Tamechrit.

The festival begins days in advance, when men from the village collect donations to purchase cattle whose meat is later distributed equally among families.

During the event a communal meal - usually couscous prepared by village women - is served to everyone, regardless of social standing.

Ammar Benkherouf, a 36-year-old living in France, said he has been taking annual leaves in recent years to attend the ceremony.

“I can't describe the happiness it brings me to help keep this heritage alive,” he told AFP.

By midday, the communal couscous is served to villagers and visitors while volunteers distribute the portioned meat around the village's households.

Tamechrit had also been a tool

for fostering solidarity during Algeria's Independence War against French colonial rule from 1954-1962, according to Baroudi.

The ritual then faded during the country's civil war between 1992 and 2002, a conflict between authorities and fighter groups that claimed the lives of around 200,000 after the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) party won municipal and legislative elections.

Tamechrit then “made a comeback in the early 2000s” with the end of the civil war, said Baroudi.

Today, Tamechrit continues to bring together villagers and resolve conflicts between them.

Farhat Medhous, a 31-year-old who heads a cultural association in Ath Atig, said his group now looks to “restore women's participation in these traditions inherited from their ancestors”.

He said that, traditionally, women held their own gatherings in a separate area from the men's, but their involvement diminished even after the civil war.

In addition, he added, the association aims at teaching the younger generations Tamechrit values, meaning sharing and reconciliation.

He said this year's festivity was organised by villagers aged 18-40.

“We have held activities for children to teach them the values of volunteerism and community,” said Medhous. “This prepares them to preserve these traditions as they grow older.”

## Rwanda ‘welcomes’ proposed African summit on DRC conflict

AFP  
Nairobi

Rwanda welcomed yesterday calls for a summit of two African regional groups to discuss the escalating conflict in DR Congo.

The M23 armed group, that the UN and several nations say is backed by Rwanda, have made substantial gains in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo, taking the major city of Goma and vowing to march on the capital.

It is the latest escalation in a mineral-rich region bedevilled by decades of fighting involving dozens of armed groups, and has rattled the continent with regional blocs holding emergency summits over the spiralling tensions.

The 16-nation South African Development Community on Friday called for a summit with the eight-country East African Community to “deliberate on the way forward regarding the security situation in the DRC”.

The Rwandan foreign ministry said it “welcomes the proposed joint summit”, adding in a statement it had “consistently advocated for a political solution to the ongoing conflict”.

The SADC emergency session was not attended by President Paul Kagame of Rwanda - which is not a member of the bloc - but Congolese leader Felix Tshisekedi was present virtually.

Earlier in the week, Kagame ap-

peared at an EAC emergency session when the DR Congo president was absent.

The SADC meeting was convened after soldiers from two member states, South Africa and Malawi, were killed in the fighting around Goma where they were deployed.

Some were part of SAMIDRC (Southern African Development Community Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo).

In yesterday's statement, Rwanda's foreign ministry criticised the presence of the force in DR Congo, saying it should “not be there because they are adding to the problems that already existed”. Kagame has made similar remarks previously.

While Rwanda has never admitted to military involvement in support of the M23 group a United Nations expert report last July said it had roughly 4,000 troops in eastern DR Congo, and accused Kigali of having “de facto” control over the group.

Rwanda alleges that DR Congo supports and shelters the FDLR, an armed group created by former Hutu leaders who massacred Tutsis during the 1994 Rwandan genocide.

The intensified fighting has provoked fears of a humanitarian crisis. In a region already home to hundreds of thousands of internally displaced people, the fighting has forced another 500,000 people to flee their homes, said the UN.



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GULF TIMES

REM sleep delay linked to Alzheimer’s risk

With ‘always connected’ being the buzzword of the times, sleep has become a compromise or elusive factor for many. To add to the woes, scientists have now shown that both the quality and the amount of sleep we get may influence our risk of developing Alzheimer’s disease. A study suggests that people who take significantly longer to start the dream phase of sleep, known as rapid eye movement (REM), may be experiencing an early symptom of the disease. REM follows three phases of non-REM sleep, each deeper than the last. The four phases take 90 minutes or more to complete, depending on age, and a person may cycle through them four or five times in a typical night. Older people take longer to reach REM. During REM sleep, the brain processes memories, especially those that are emotionally charged, and puts them into long-term storage. “The delay in REM sleep disrupts the brain’s ability to consolidate memories by interfering with the process that contributes to learning and memory,” says Yue Leng, PhD, an associate professor in the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences at the University of California, San Francisco (UCSF), in a release. “If it is insufficient or delayed, it may increase the stress hormone cortisol. This can impair the brain’s hippocampus, a critical structure for memory consolidation.” Leng, part of the UCSF Weill Institute for Neurosciences, is a senior author of the paper, which appears in *Alzheimer’s and Dementia: The Journal of the Alzheimer’s Association*.

Delay in REM sleep may increase Alzheimer’s risk by disrupting memory consolidation and elevating stress hormones, with delayed REM linked to higher levels of toxic proteins amyloid and tau

Researchers followed 128 people with an average age of 70 from the neurology unit of the China-Japan Friendship Hospital in Beijing. Half had Alzheimer’s, and about one-third had mild cognitive impairment, a frequent precursor to Alzheimer’s. The rest had normal cognition. The participants in the study slept overnight in the clinic, so researchers could measure their brainwave activity, eye movement, heart rate, and breathing. Fitness trackers can capture some of this information, but it is less precise. The researchers divided the participants into early and delayed REM sleep. On average, the early group reached REM less than 98 minutes after falling asleep, while the late group reached it more than 193 minutes after falling asleep. Those with Alzheimer’s were more likely to have delayed REM sleep, and they also tended to have higher levels of the two toxic proteins, amyloid and tau, found in people with the condition. Those with delayed REM sleep had 16% more amyloid and 29% more tau than those with early REM sleep. They also had 39% less of a healthy protein called brain-derived neurotrophic factor (BDNF), which drops in Alzheimer’s. “Future research should study the effects of certain medications that influence sleep patterns, as these may modify disease progression,” Leng explained. Melatonin can boost REM sleep, and studies in mice have shown that it decreases tau and amyloid accumulation. Other drugs that treat insomnia by blocking a chemical that suppresses REM sleep also have been shown to decrease tau and amyloid. People who are concerned about their risk for Alzheimer’s should practice healthy sleep habits that facilitate the transition from light sleep to REM sleep. “This includes treating conditions like sleep apnoea and avoiding heavy drinking since both can interfere with a healthy sleep cycle,” said Dantao Peng, MD, of the Department of Neurology at the China-Japan Friendship Hospital in Beijing, who is also a senior author of the paper. “Patients taking certain antidepressants and sedatives that reduce REM sleep should discuss their concerns with their doctor if they are worried about Alzheimer’s.”

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In Paris, celebrating Assad’s fall



A Syrian girl reacts as she attends an evening party to celebrate the fall of Assad’s regime in Syria at the Maison de la Mutualite in Paris. (AFP)

For millions of children in food crises, heightened risk of lifelong damage

By Jennifer Rigby

London

A surge in the flow of aid into the Gaza Strip since the truce between Israel and Hamas took effect on January 19 is likely to ease the acute food emergency afflicting people in the war-ravaged territory, especially its children. But even after relief reaches them, the hunger they have endured could cast a shadow over their health for years to come. More than 60,000 children in Gaza will need treatment for acute malnutrition in 2025, according to United Nations estimates from January 22. Some have already died – estimates of how many vary widely. Survivors who are able to return to adequate levels of nutrition nonetheless face an insidious threat: the multiple long-term health problems linked to childhood malnutrition. This troubling prospect is of urgent global concern. As Reuters has reported in a series of articles, famine and other acute food crises have ravaged populations across the developing world over the past year, from Haiti to Afghanistan to Sudan and many other African nations, as well as Gaza. About 131mn children, nearly 40mn of them under age 5, live in areas experiencing acute food crises around the world, according to estimates provided exclusively to Reuters by the United Nations’ World Food Programme. Nearly 4.7mn pregnant women live in these areas, the United Nations Population Fund said. The UN estimates are based on the most recent data from countries where assessments were possible. The lasting damage of childhood hunger is wide-ranging and can be profound, according to scientists, nutrition experts and officials at humanitarian organisations. Children who experience severe malnutrition may never reach their full cognitive or physical potential, according to multiple studies that have tracked survivors of past food shortages. Other studies have shown that undernutrition in childhood, and even in the womb, can be associated with increased risk of cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes and other non-communicable illnesses later in life.

“People focus, quite rightly, on the short-term aspects of malnutrition,” said Marko Kerac, professor of nutrition for global health at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. “What’s missed ... is that the damage done will not suddenly stop when the emergency stops.” Studies have shown that some effects of severe hunger can be mitigated if a child later gains access to good nutrition. But that is a big

if. In many countries where food crises occur, poverty, war and civil strife persist long after the crisis has passed, limiting children’s access to adequate food and healthcare. That makes it hard to get exact data on how many are affected in both the short and long-term, said Hannah Stephenson, head of nutrition with Save the Children. But “the more severely malnourished a child is, the harder it will be to recover,” she said. The duration of malnourishment is also a crucial variable, she said. She and other experts stressed that while every malnourished child is a tragedy, famines and other food crises can do lasting harm to society as whole by leaving an entire generation with physical and cognitive deficits. “It costs the person, the family, the country,” said Professor Mubarek Abera, a child and maternal nutrition and mental health researcher at Jimma University in Ethiopia who was born during that country’s famine in the early 1980s. In a food crisis, children are more vulnerable than adults to malnourishment and death from starvation or infectious diseases, which are more lethal to those weakened by hunger. Children are also more vulnerable than adults to long-term health problems from a period of extreme malnourishment, scientists said, because their bodies and brains are still developing. There are four different kinds of undernutrition, as defined by the World Health Organisation. All can be present during a famine or other severe food crisis, leave lasting marks, and can also co-exist in one child: **Wasting** This occurs when a child’s weight is low for their height and often indicates a recent episode of intense hunger and weight loss. It is a medical emergency, but 90% of children can recover in the short-term if they get treatment, which involves therapeutic foods, antibiotics and deworming. In 2023, the UN children’s agency Unicef estimated that 73% of children in the most urgent need received treatment. **Stunting** This is when a child’s height is low for their age, and it is usually seen as a broad indicator of chronic undernourishment, putting a child at risk of not reaching full physical or cognitive potential. Nutritionists are divided over the extent to which children can recover from stunting if they later receive adequate nutrition. Many believe the effects are irreversible, particularly for those who experience deficiencies for a long time during their development.

**Underweight** A child is underweight when their weight is low for their age. An underweight child can be stunted or wasted or both. **Micronutrient deficiencies** Sometimes described by WHO as “hidden hunger,” this form of undernutrition occurs when vitamins, minerals and other essential nutrients essential to healthy growth are missing from a child’s diet. They can occur on their own or as part of stunting and wasting. Key micronutrient deficiencies include iodine, vitamin A and iron. A lack of dietary iodine is the leading cause of brain damage in childhood globally. Vitamin A deficiency can cause blindness. Iron deficiency also impacts brain development, the UN health agency says. The damage can be irreversible if the child cannot quickly access the needed nutrients. Many variables can affect how a child’s body copes with an extreme lack of food. A child who is already suffering with chronic malnutrition, or has a disability, is often more vulnerable to both the short-term and long-term impacts of a food crisis, said Amir Kirolos, a doctor with Britain’s National Health Service who worked on a study in Malawi led by the University of Liverpool/Malawi-Liverpool Wellcome Trust. In their study, Kirolos and his fellow researchers followed up on a group of 1,024 children in Blantyre, Malawi, one, seven and 15 years after they were treated in hospital for acute malnutrition between July 2006 and March 2007. Many of them had underlying conditions that made them more vulnerable to malnutrition. After one year, the team could confirm the survival of only 462, or 45%, of the children. A few of them had left the area or were untraceable, but 427 of them had died during treatment or shortly after. Mortality was greatest among the youngest and those who were the most malnourished when they came for treatment, as well as those with HIV or a disability. By 2021, 15 years after the initial hospitalisation, only 168 of the original cohort were alive and traceable. In effect, they represented the very healthiest of those originally treated, but as adolescents, they still bore evidence of malnutrition. They were shorter compared to their siblings or adolescents in the community, and they had some signs of weaker grip strength, an indicator of reduced overall muscle strength. The gaps were smaller than they had been seven years after treatment, showing that some recovery and catch-up is possible, Kirolos said. A growing body of research has shown that babies born to women who were pregnant during a hunger crisis are also at risk of long-term damage. In a study published in *Science* magazine last August, scientists focused on the 1932-33 Ukraine famine engineered by the Soviet government of Joseph Stalin. That man-made disaster killed about 4mn people. And as the researchers found, it also had lingering health effects on the survivors, particularly among those who were exposed in utero. The researchers cross-referenced the birth records of 10mn Ukrainians born before, during and after the famine with diabetes diagnoses from a national registry seven decades later. They found that exposure to famine in early gestation increased the risk of type 2 diabetes two-fold. “I’m now finally satisfied that there’s something going on,” said Bertie Lumey, lead author of the study and a professor of epidemiology at Columbia University Medical Center in New York. Studies of the Great Chinese Famine of 1958-62 and the Dutch Hunger Winter at the end of World War Two have yielded similar findings. Researchers have also shown that malnourishment in the womb resulted in higher rates of obesity and schizophrenia later in life. In a systematic review of dozens of studies, researchers found a strong association between exposure to severe malnutrition in childhood and a higher risk of some non-communicable diseases, including diabetes and cardiovascular disease, later in life. — Reuters





# Rubio meets Panama leader on Trump demands for canal

AFP  
Panama City

US Secretary of State Marco Rubio met yesterday with Panama's leader to press President Donald Trump's demand that the United States take back the Panama Canal, as protesters vented anger on the streets.

Trump has refused to back down on threats to seize the vital waterway, and it remains unclear what Rubio can achieve diplomatically that would please him, with Panama firmly rejecting any claims against its sovereignty.

Rubio, in his first meeting abroad as the top US diplomat, walked past an honour guard outside the whitewashed walls of President Jose Raul Mulino's official residence in the tropical capital's old quarter.

Rubio shook hands with Foreign Minister Javier Martinez-Acha and flashed a thumbs-up sign before heading into talks with Mulino.

Sitting next to senior aides, Rubio and Mulino made no comments to reporters.

Rubio later in the day will tour the Panama Canal, the crucial link between the Atlantic and Pacific oceans through which some 40% of US container traffic passes.

Trump and Rubio say that US competitor China has gained too

much power around the canal and could shut it down in a potential conflict, with catastrophic consequences for the United States.

Small but intense protests broke out in Panama ahead of Rubio's visit, with police firing tear gas.

Protesters burned an effigy of Rubio wearing a red, white and blue suit and held up pictures of him and Trump before a Nazi flag.

"Rubio, get out of Panama!" around 200 demonstrators chanted as the former senator met Mulino. Police prevented the crowd from approaching the Old City.

"To the imperial messenger," union leader Saul Mendez said of Rubio, "we reiterate that there is absolutely nothing here for Trump. Panama is a free and sovereign nation."

Mulino, in response to pressure, ordered an audit of a Hong Kong-based company that controls ports on both sides of the canal.

Speaking to reporters on Friday, Trump said that concession was not enough and that Panama had "totally violated" the understanding when the United States handed back the canal.

"They've already offered to do many things," Trump said of Panama, "but we think it's appropriate that we take it back."

The Panama Canal — which Trump has dubbed as a modern "wonder of the world" — was

built by the United States at the cost of thousands of lives of labourers, mostly people of African descent from Barbados, Jamaica and elsewhere in the Caribbean.

The United States maintained control of the canal when it opened in 1914 but began to negotiate following deadly riots in 1964 by Panamanians angered over foreign control.

Jimmy Carter sealed the agreement that gave the canal to Panama at the end of 1999, with the late president seeing a moral imperative for the United States to respect a smaller but still sovereign country.

Trump takes a vastly different view and has returned to the "big stick" approach of the early 20th century, in which the United States threatened force to have its way, especially in Latin America.

In his first week in office, Trump prepared massive tariffs on Colombia to force the US ally to take back deported citizens on military planes, after the country's leftist president complained that they were not being treated in a dignified way.

Just as Rubio started his trip, Trump signed off on sanctions on the top three US trading partners — Canada, Mexico and China — and told Canada it should be the 51st US state.

Rubio, the first Hispanic secretary of state and a devout Catholic, started yesterday in Panama City attending Mass at a church



Panama's President Jose Raul Mulino (left) greeting US Secretary of State Marco Rubio on arrival at the presidential palace in Panama City yesterday. (AFP)

built four centuries ago in the Old City. He will travel to four more Latin American countries — El Salvador, Costa Rica, Guatemala and the Dominican Republic — where he is expected to press for co-operation on Trump's key priority of deporting migrants from the United States.

# Trump: Tariff pain will be worth the price

AFP  
Palm Beach

President Donald Trump said yesterday that Americans may feel economic "pain" from his tariffs on key trading partners, but argued it would be "worth the price" to secure US interests.

On Saturday, Trump finally signed off on threatened 25% tariffs on neighbouring Mexico and Canada — despite sharing a free trade pact — and hit China with a 10-percent tariff in addition to already enacted levies.

The president had vowed since before his inauguration to take such action, claiming the countries were not doing enough to halt illegal immigration and the trafficking of the deadly opioid fentanyl into the United States.

In imposing the tariffs, which are set to begin tomorrow, Trump invoked the International Emergency Economic Powers Act.

The move provoked immediate vows of retaliation from all three countries, while analysts warned that the ensuing trade war would likely slow US growth and raise consumer prices over the short term.

"Will there be some pain? Yes, maybe (and maybe not!)" Trump wrote last morning in all-caps on his Truth Social media platform.

"But we will Make America Great Again, and it will all be worth the price that must be paid."

The president and his advisers had previously resisted acknowledging that tariffs could raise US consumer prices, after frustration over rising costs was seen as a major factor in his November election victory over Democrat Kamala Harris.

Apparently seeking to limit a spike in fuel and electricity prices, Trump put the levy on energy imports from Canada at only 10%.

In a separate social media post, Trump called again for America's northern neighbour to become a US state, heightening tensions further with one of his country's

closest allies.

While claiming the United States pays "hundreds of billions of dollars to SUBSIDIZE Canada," Trump added, "Without this massive subsidy, Canada ceases to exist as a viable Country."

"Therefore, Canada should become our Cherished 51st State," he wrote on Truth Social, claiming the move would bring "much lower taxes, and far better military protection for the people of Canada — AND NO TARIFFS!"

The US Census Bureau listed the country's 2024 trade deficit in goods with Canada as \$55bn.

Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau vowed Saturday that his country would hit back with 25% levies of its own on select American goods worth Can\$155bn (US\$106.6bn), with a first round tomorrow followed by a second one in three weeks.

Leaders of several Canadian provinces have already announced retaliatory actions as well, such as the immediate halt of US liquor purchases.

Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum meanwhile said she had directed her economy minister to "implement Plan B," which includes yet-unspecified "tariff and non-tariff measures."

On Friday, the right-leaning editorial board of the *Wall Street Journal* newspaper blasted Trump's tariffs in a piece titled *The Dumbest Trade War in History*, saying, "American consumers will feel the bite of higher costs for some goods."

Trump clapped back yesterday, saying: "The 'Tariff Lobby,' headed by the *Globalist*, and always wrong, *Wall Street Journal*, is working hard to justify... the decades long RIPOFF OF AMERICA, both with regard to TRADE, CRIME, AND POISONOUS DRUGS."

He has long decried US trade deficits as a sign of other countries taking advantage of Americans.

"THOSE DAYS ARE OVER!" said Trump, who began his Sunday with a visit to one of his golf courses in Florida.

## EU vows firm response if slapped with tariffs

The European Union insisted yesterday it would retaliate "firmly" if US President Donald Trump hit it with tariffs, as Brussels decried his sweeping measures against Canada, Mexico and China.

Brussels until now has said it hopes to avoid a trade conflict with Trump through negotiation.

But on Friday the US leader doubled down by saying he "absolutely" planned to target the EU in future, after first slapping levies on his North American neighbours and China.

"The European Union regrets the US decision to impose tariffs on Canada, Mexico and China," said a spokesman for the European Commission.

"Tariffs create unnecessary economic disruption and drive inflation. They are hurtful to all sides."

The spokesman said "the EU would respond firmly to any trading partner that unfairly or arbitrarily imposes tariffs on EU goods".

"At this time, we are not aware of any additional tariffs being imposed on EU products," he added.

He said the 27-nation EU remained committed to low tariffs to "drive growth and economic stability within a strong, rules-based trading system".

And he reiterated the EU's commitment to its

trade and investment relationship with the United States — "the biggest in the world".

"There is a lot at stake," said the spokesman.

"We should both be looking at strengthening this relationship."

Trump has not hidden his enmity for the EU, accusing it of treating the United States "very, very unfairly" on trade. Tensions have also risen over his repeated insistence that he wants to take Greenland from EU member Denmark.

Back in 2018, during his first term, Trump imposed tariffs on European steel and aluminium exports — leading the EU to respond with its own higher duties.

As a result, Europe has been gaming out scenarios for months to ensure it is ready this time around, should he decide to unleash a new trade conflict with the bloc.

EU diplomats and officials insist they stand united and have the tools to respond to any Trump measures — but experts also point to likely cracks if he ups the pressure.

Economic powerhouse Germany — facing a fraught election this month and sluggish economy — has been squeamish over tariffs.

Trump is also likely to try to play the interests of the individual EU states off against each other.

Some European leaders have already been

jostling to get closer to him, with Italy's Giorgia Meloni leading the pack.

Italian Foreign Minister Antonio Tajani wrote yesterday that a "tariff war does not help anybody", saying Italy has ideas to protect its companies and that Rome will be a mediator with Washington.

EU officials remain hopeful they can talk Trump out of pulling the tariff trigger.

European Commission chief Ursula von der Leyen back in November floated a potential plan to keep Trump on side: buying more liquefied natural gas from the United States. That has been billed as a potential win-win by Brussels as it would help the bloc ditch supplies from Russia while also placating the US leader.

Trump himself has demanded the EU buy more US oil and gas — while also complaining the bloc does not import enough American cars and farm products.

EU leaders are expected to discuss the looming tariff threat from Trump in Brussels today at a gathering intended to focus on defence issues.

American military might still underpins European security through Nato, and US allies nervously eyeing Russia fear that riling Trump could threaten Washington's role protecting their continent.

## China denounces Trump tariff: 'Fentanyl is America's problem'

China's government yesterday denounced the Trump administration's imposition of a long-threatened 10% tariff on Chinese imports while leaving the door open for talks with the US that could avoid a deepening conflict.

Beijing will challenge President Donald Trump's tariff at the World Trade Organisation — a symbolic gesture — and take unspecified "countermeasures" in response to the levy, which takes effect tomorrow, China's finance and commerce ministries said.

That response stopped short of the immediate escalation that had marked China's trade showdown with Trump in his first term as president and repeated the more measured language Beijing has

used in recent weeks.

Trump on Saturday ordered 25% tariffs on Canadian and Mexican imports and 10% on goods from China, saying Beijing needed to stanch the flow of fentanyl, a deadly opioid, into the United States.

China's toned-down response marked a contrast with the direct retaliation and heated language from Canada, a long-time US ally, and Mexico, the top destination for US exports.

China's commerce ministry said in a statement that Trump's move "seriously violates" international trade rules, urging the US to "engage in frank dialogue and strengthen co-operation".

Filing a lawsuit with the WTO could allow Beijing a win in messaging

by standing up for the rules-based trading system long advocated by US administrations of both parties.

Beijing has taken the same step in a challenge to tariffs of up to 45% on Chinese-made electric vehicles by the European Union.

At the same time, a WTO appeal poses no immediate cost or threat to Washington.

The WTO's dispute settlement system has been effectively shut down since 2019 when Trump blocked appointments of judges to handle appeals.

Since President Barack Obama, the US has charged that the WTO appeals body had overstepped its authority.

For weeks Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson Mao Ning has said Beijing believes there is no winner

in a trade war. Chinese officials have also been encouraged by signs Trump could be seeking a more nuanced relationship with China since a conversation he had with Chinese leader Xi Jinping last month. Both Republicans and Democrats have come to view China as the biggest foreign policy and economic challenge to the United States.

China's massive trade surplus — almost \$1tn last year — is a vulnerability for Beijing. China's exports in key industries, including autos, have been growing faster in volume than value, suggesting manufacturers are discounting to try to win overseas sales when demand at home has been sputtering.



Georgian police detain a protester as anti-government demonstrators attempt to block a highway entrance to the capital Tbilisi yesterday. (AFP)

# Georgia police arrest 2 opposition leaders

AFP  
Tbilisi

Georgian police yesterday arrested two opposition leaders during a street protest against the ruling party, which has been accused of democratic backsliding and of moving Tbilisi closer to Russia.

The Black Sea nation has been rocked by daily mass protests since the Georgian Dream party claimed victory in October parliamentary elections rejected by the opposition as falsified.

Prime Minister Irakli Kobakhidze's announcement on November 28 that his cabinet would not pursue the opening of European Union membership talks with Brussels until 2028 further fuelled the demonstrations.

On Sunday, police detained the leader

of the liberal pro-European Akhali party, Nika Melia, and former Tbilisi mayor Gigi Ugulava, a prominent opposition figure, an AFP reporter saw.

The arrests were made as thousands of demonstrators attempted to block a highway entrance to the capital, Tbilisi.

Both Melia and Ugulava had spent years in prison under Georgian Dream's rule on charges that rights groups have denounced as politically motivated.

Several other people were also detained during the protest, with at least one appearing to have been injured.

Prior to the rally, the interior ministry issued a statement warning demonstrators that blocking the highway "is a criminal offence punishable by up to four years in prison."

In the first wave of protests that began in late November, riot police used tear gas and water cannon to disperse

the crowds, arresting more than 400 demonstrators, according to the interior ministry.

Georgia's top human-rights official, ombudsman Levan Ioseliani, and Amnesty International have accused police of torturing those arrested.

Georgian rights activists have denounced what they say is a mounting campaign of intimidation, beatings and arrests against those taking to the streets.

Tbilisi's security forces and judiciary have faced persistent accusations of repression against the ruling party's opponents.

Accused by Brussels and Washington of democratic backsliding and steering EU-candidate Tbilisi away from its European path, the Georgian Dream government is facing growing international isolation.



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