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Insurance Service Results 71% 300 M 514 M
Written Premiums 9.1 B 48% 52%

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BUSINESS | Page 1

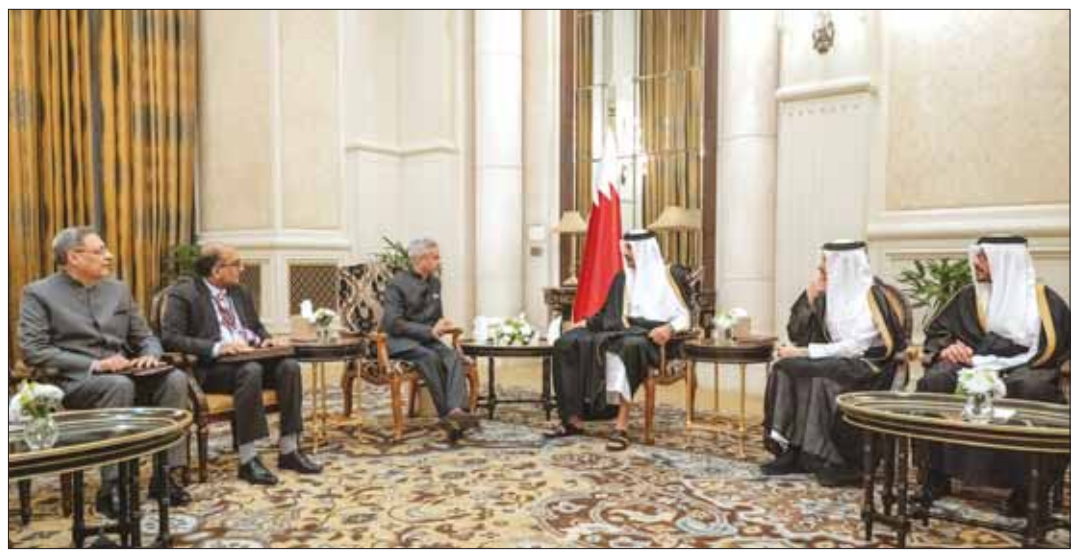
QFC reduces application fees by 90% to stimulate growth, ease entry







PM Modi welcomes Amir in New Delhi





●Amir meets Indian FM, discusses ties, international developments

QNA
New Delhi

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani met yesterday with Minister of External Affairs of the Republic of India Dr Subrahmanyam Jaishankar and his accompanying delegation, at His Highness the Amir's residence in New Delhi.

During the meeting, they discussed bilateral co-operation relations between the two countries, in addition to the latest regional and international developments.

The meeting was attended by HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani and a number of Their Excellencies members of the accompanying official delegation.

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani arrived yesterday in New Delhi, on a state visit to the Republic of India.

His Highness the Amir was welcomed – upon arrival at Palam Air Base – by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Minister of External Affairs Dr Subrahmanyam Jaishankar, ambassador of Qatar in New Delhi Mohammed bin Hassan al-Jaber and ambassador of India in Doha Vipul. Also present were the Qatari embassy staff.

His Highness the Amir is accompanied by HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani and an official delegation. **Page 12**

Saudi crown prince, Rubio hold talks

Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman discussed regional and global developments and efforts to achieve security and stability with US Secretary of State Marco Rubio in Riyadh yesterday, Saudi state news agency SPA reported. Rubio arrived in Saudi Arabia earlier in the day from Israel where he began his first visit to the region as the top US diplomat. **Page 11**

Trump shock unites European leaders



French President Macron welcomes UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer before an informal summit to discuss the situation in Ukraine and European security in Paris yesterday.

European leaders yesterday sought to overcome differences at emergency Paris talks on responding to a shock policy shift on the war in Ukraine by the new US administration of Donald Trump, as Germany bristled at suggestions troops could be deployed. With European policymakers still reeling from US Vice-President JD Vance's withering attack on the European Union at the annual Munich Security Forum, key leaders attended the meeting at the Elysee Palace called at the last minute by President Emmanuel Macron. **Page 11**

Russia, US officials to meet in Saudi today

Top US and Russian diplomats will meet in Saudi Arabia today for talks on resetting the countries' fractured relations and making a tentative start on trying to end the Ukraine war. Both sides played down the chances that the first high-level meeting between the countries since Moscow invaded Ukraine in 2022 would result in a breakthrough. Nevertheless, the very fact of the talks has triggered concern in Kyiv and Europe – left reeling by Washington's dramatic diplomatic moves towards the Kremlin. **Page 11**

MoCI launches Ramadan discount initiative

QNA
Doha

The Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MoCI) has announced the launch of its annual Ramadan discounted consumer goods initiative, offering reduced prices on more than 1,000 essential commodities. The initiative, implemented in co-ordination with major retail complexes across Qatar, will run until the end of the holy month of Ramadan.

In a statement issued yesterday, the ministry emphasised that this initiative aligns with its ongoing efforts to ease the financial burden on consumers. The early launch this year ensures that discounted goods are available well in advance, giving shoppers ample time to benefit from the reduced prices before Ramadan begins.

The initiative covers a wide range of essential products, including food staples such as flour, sugar, rice, pasta, chicken, cooking oil, and milk, as well as non-food items such as tissues, aluminium foil, and household detergents, items that see increased demand during the holy month.

MoCI reaffirmed its commitment to closely monitoring commercial outlets to ensure compliance with the discounted pricing policy. The ministry also encouraged consumers to take advantage of the initiative and shop responsibly while urging them to remain vigilant and report any pricing violations. Complaints and suggestions can be submitted through the ministry's official communication channels.

Arab summit on Trump's Gaza plan postponed to Friday

AFP
Riyadh

A planned Saudi meeting of Arab leaders in response to US President Donald Trump's plan to take control of Gaza has been postponed by a day and expanded, Arab diplomats said yesterday.

"The mini Arab summit in Riyadh has been postponed from Thursday to Friday, February 21," a Saudi source said.

Three Arab states had been expected to attend the summit, but the Saudi source said the expanded meeting will "include the leaders of the six Gulf Co-operation Council countries along with Egypt and Jordan to discuss Arab alternatives to Trump's plans in the Gaza Strip".

The member states of the Gulf Co-operation Council are the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, Oman, Qatar and Kuwait.

Trump had proposed taking over the war-batted Gaza Strip and moving its more than two million residents to Jordan or Egypt — a plan experts say would violate international law.



A Palestinian boy makes his way to refill drinking water in Jabalia in the northern Gaza Strip yesterday.

Arab countries have unanimously rejected the idea or any prospect of displacing Palestinians from their lands.

US Secretary of State Marco Rubio said on Thursday that Washington was open to proposals from Arab countries concerning the Palestinian territory.

QF's Sidra Academy to be completed next year

QNA
Doha

The Public Works Authority 'Ashghal', represented by Building Projects Department, has announced the commencement of the Qatar Sidra Academy project in Education City, in collaboration with Qatar Foundation for Education, Science, and Community Development. The academy will accommodate approximately 1,800 students.

Covering a total area of 74,000 square metres, with 33,000sq m of built-up area, the academy will feature a two-storey main building that includes classrooms, lecture halls, administrative offices, and reception areas for students and visitors.

Ahmed al-Mahmeed, Head of the Public Projects Section, explained that work on the Qatar Sidra Academy has already begun, with the project expected to be completed by the second quarter of 2026. He added that the project heavily relies on locally produced materials, with an estimated 60% of the materials including steel, iron, electrical and mechanical equipment, glass, and aluminium, sourced locally.



Sidra Academy – artist's impression, aerial view.

He also emphasised the commitment of the Building Projects Department to apply the highest local and international standards in health, safety, quality, and technology, to align with global standards throughout all stages of implementation. He pointed out that the Building Projects Department has benefited from advanced digital technologies, specifically Building Information Modeling (BIM), to accurately analyse building systems before commencing construction activities on-site. This proactive approach ensures smooth implementation and avoids technical challenges.

For his part, Saud al-Dosari, Project Manager, confirmed that the academy will include 60 classrooms to meet the needs of all educational stages, in addition to several service facilities to support the educational process. He emphasised that the academy would incorporate the latest technologies and modern designs to create a comprehensive educational environment.

Al-Dosari further added that the project would include diverse educational and recreational facilities, such as a music room, a theatre, art rooms, and multipurpose activity rooms, as well as a library and science labs. The project will also include sport halls, outdoor fields, a swimming pool, and a cafeteria.

It is worth noting that the academy has been designed according to the highest local and international standards, reflecting Qatar's cultural heritage and identity. The architectural designs align with Qatari values and traditions.

In line with sustainability standards, the design conforms to the global GSAS system, with the academy aiming to achieve a 3-star environmental quality rating.

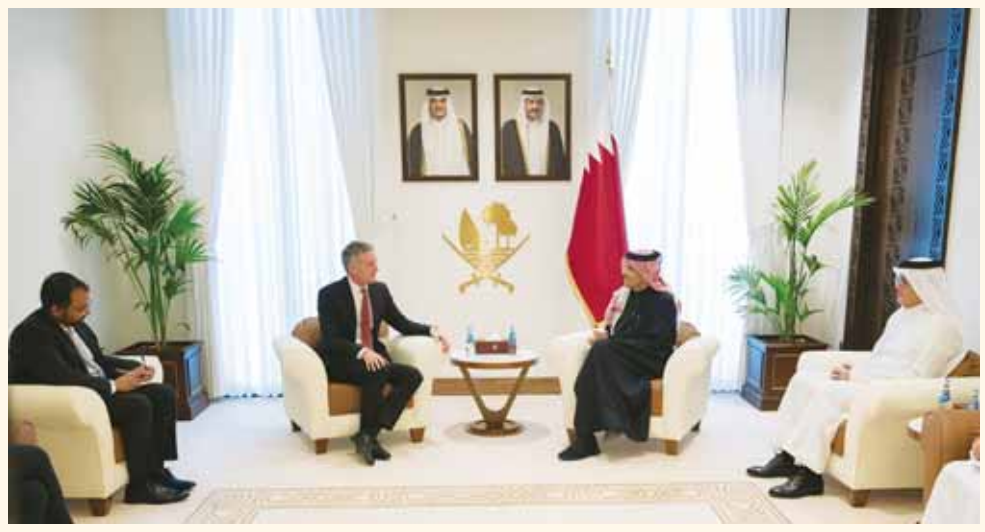
QATAR

Shura speaker meets Turkiye's Constitutional Court President



HE the Shura Council Speaker Hassan bin Abdullah al-Ghanem met in Doha with President of the Constitutional Court of Turkiye Kadir Ozkaya. They discussed ways to further elevate the bilateral relations, especially in the legislative areas, along with issues of common interest. **(QNA)**

PM meets UK official



HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani met yesterday with the visiting UK Secretary of State for Science, Innovation and Technology Peter Kyle. During the meeting, the two sides reviewed the co-operation between the two countries and ways to support and enhance it, in addition to discussing several topics of mutual interest. **(QNA)**

Official

Amir sends cables of congratulations to president of Kosovo

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani and His Highness the Deputy Amir Sheikh Abdullah bin Hamad al-Thani sent yesterday cables of congratulations to President of Kosovo Vjosa Osmani on the anniversary of her country's Independence Day. HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani also sent a similar cable of congratulations to Prime Minister Albin Kurti. **(QNA)**

Al-Khulaifi meets British minister for Middle East



HE the Minister of State at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Dr Mohammed bin Abdulaziz bin Saleh al-Khulaifi met in London with Minister for the Middle East and North Africa at the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office Hamish Falconer. Discussions during the meeting focused on the close ties between the two nations and ways to bolster them, in addition to the developments in the region, particularly in the Gaza Strip, the occupied Palestinian territories, Syria and Lebanon. Falconer thanked Qatar for its efforts that helped secure the release of a female British citizen under the Gaza ceasefire deal and the exchange of hostages and prisoners. **(QNA)**

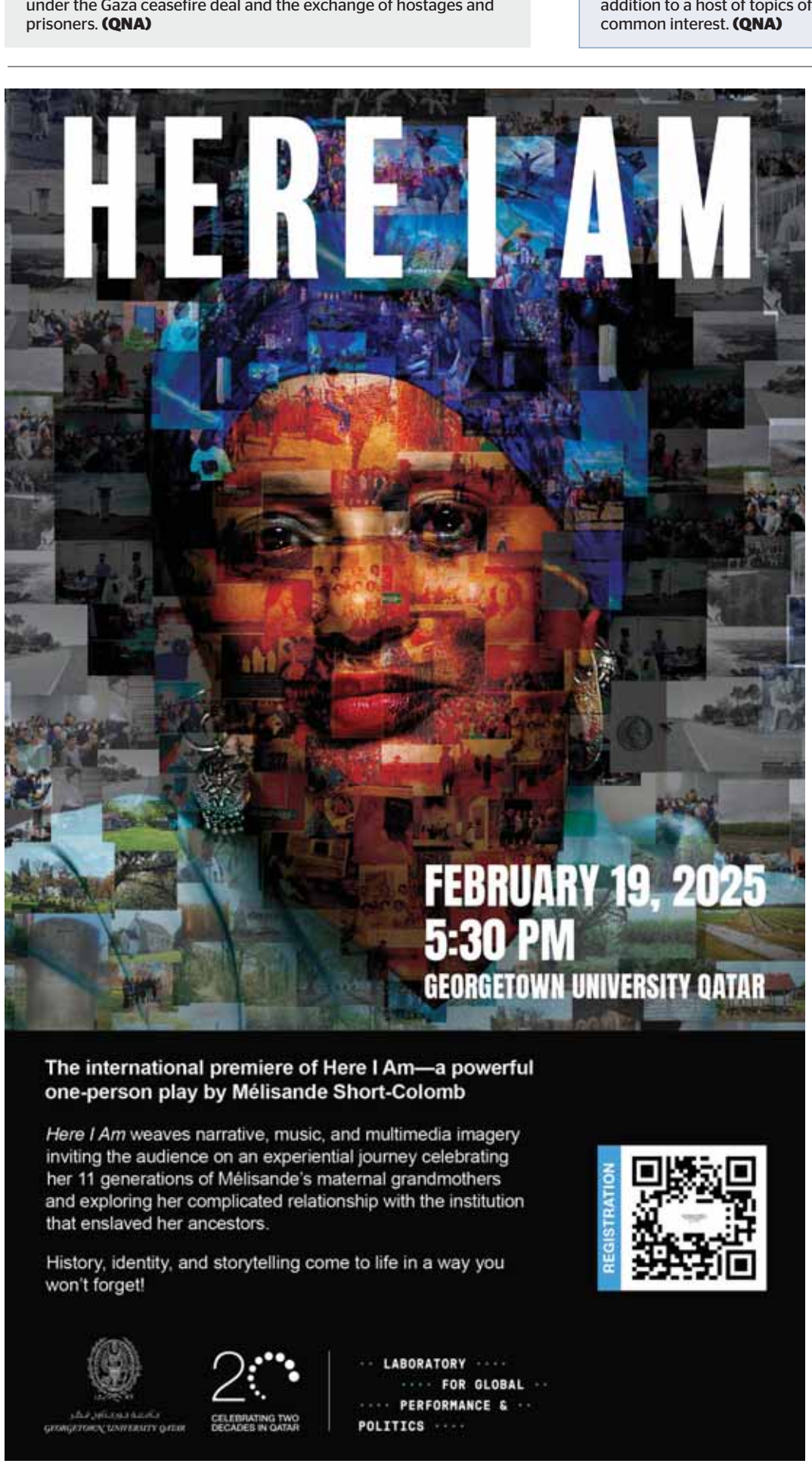
Al-Misnad meets ambassadors of Bahrain, Tunisia, Iran





HE the Minister of State for International Co-operation Maryam bint Ali bin Nasser al-Misnad yesterday met separately with Bahraini ambassador Mohammed bin Ali al-Ghatam, Tunisian ambassador Farhad Khalif and Iranian ambassador Ali Saleh Abadi. Discussion during the meetings, revolved around co-operation relations between Qatar and the three countries, and the latest developments in the humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip, in addition to a host of topics of common interest. **(QNA)**





Shura Council reviews draft law to support innovation, research

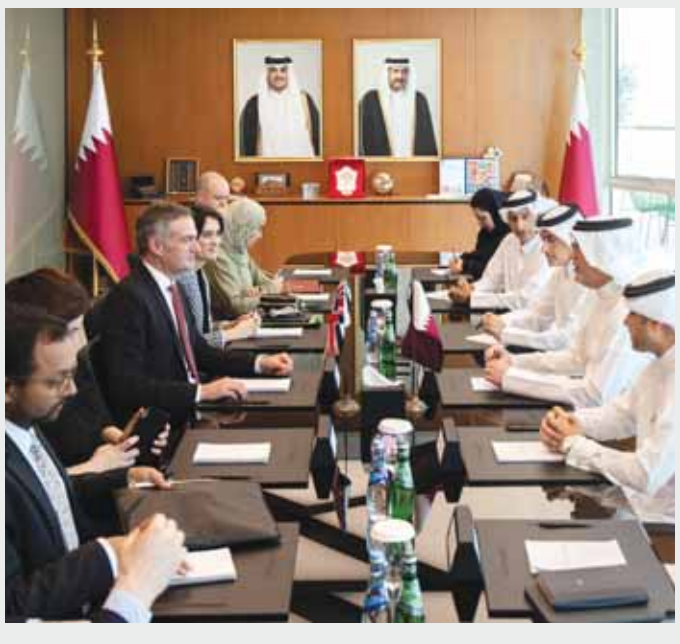


The Shura Council held yesterday its weekly session, chaired by its Speaker HE Hassan bin Abdullah al-Ghanem. At the beginning of the session, HE the Shura Council Secretary-General Nayef bin Mohammed al-Mahmoud read out the agenda, and the minutes of the previous session were approved.

During the session, the Council approved a draft law amending some provisions of Law No 20 of 2018 regarding the regulation of tourism, and a draft law amending some provisions of Law No 21 of 2018 regarding the regulation of business events. Both were referred to the esteemed government after the report of the Council's Education, Culture, Sports, and Information Affairs Committee was reviewed.

The Council also reviewed a draft law concerning support for innovation and scientific research, referred by the esteemed government, and decided to refer it to the Financial and Economic Affairs Committee for study. The session also reviewed two reports: one on the Council's participation in the Third International Forum "Women of the Third Millennium," held in Moscow last November, and the other on participation in the Parliamentary Forum of the 10th edition of the Rome MED Mediterranean Dialogues in Rome, Italy, last November. **(QNA)**

Co-operation talks in AI, digital transformation



HE the Minister of Communications and Information Technology Mohammed bin Ali al-Mannai met with a British delegation led by British Secretary of State for Science, Innovation & Technology Peter John Kyle. During the meeting, discussions focused on fostering collaboration in artificial intelligence and digital transformation, cloud computing, data management, and workforce digital skills development. The meeting also explored the development of partnerships in digital innovation and entrepreneurship within the communications and information technology sector by exchanging expertise to encourage investment in startups. **(QNA)**

Al-Muraikhi holds meetings in Muscat



HE the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Sultan bin Saad al-Muraikhi met yesterday with Maldives Foreign Minister Dr Abdulla Khaleel, Yemeni Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates Mustapha Ahmed Noman and Bangladeshi Adviser for Foreign Affairs Touhid Hossain on the sidelines of the 8th Indian Ocean Conference held in Muscat, Oman. The meetings discussed bilateral relations and ways to support and develop them, in addition to several topics of mutual interest. **(QNA)**

Qatar, Netherlands hold political consultations



The foreign ministries of Qatar and the Netherlands held yesterday their fourth round of political consultations in Doha. The consultation round was co-chaired by HE the Secretary-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Dr Ahmed bin Hassan al-Hammadi and Secretary-General of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs Christiaan Rebergen. The agenda included bilateral relations and topics of common interest. **(QNA)**

MoT's hydrographic survey to ensure navigation safety, marine protection

By Shafeeq Alingal
Staff Reporter



The hydrographic survey by the Ministry of Transport (MoT) will enhance the safety and protect navigation and the marine environment, a senior official has said. Ibrahim al-Kuwari, director of the Office of the Assistant Undersecretary for Maritime Transport Affairs, while talking to Qatar TV, said the survey helps the traffic avoid places where navigation is prohibited and shipwrecks in Qatari waters.

"The survey serves as a guide to help marine traffic in Qatar in line with the economic growth and development requirements pursued by Qatar," he said. It aims to update navigational charts, regulate the movement of ships through the passages and establish a marine traffic division system to regulate the entry and exit of ships through the specified sea passages.

This will be achieved according to the specifications and requirements of the International Maritime Organisation (IMO), and the International Organisation for Hydrographic Survey (IHO) while meeting the requirements stipulated in the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS).

The survey, according to al-Kuwari, include identifying areas for throwing anchors in the country, the locations of shipwrecks in Qatari waters, and placing appropriate navigational signs for them and updating Qatari maritime maps. The 5-phase project also includes suggesting vessel holding areas, providing a dedicated navigational marking system and siting navigational marks for locations of reserves.

The project will also put together a programme to regularly examine the navigational signs, using eco-friendly technologies such as batteries and solar panels, to achieve better lighting. The programme also includes determining the additional dimensions that navigational markers should capture to fulfil the work needs to ensure safe navigation such as sight. The project is especially important for enhancing and protecting the marine environment in step with Qatar's economic growth and development requirements, using the latest eco-friendly, surveillance, and marking systems in line with the goals of the Third Qatar National Development Strategy and Qatar National Vision 2030.

The ministry will train its employees concerned with navigational aid services in line with the requirements of the International Organisation for Marine Aids to Navigation.

The project is aligned with the action plans of the National Strategy for Logistic Services Sector (transportation and warehousing sector) 2024-2030 that aims at solidifying Qatar's position as a global logistics hub, supporting economic diversification and enabling traders and investors with less time and cost.

QBRI opens applications for 2025 summer research programme

Hamad Bin Khalifa University (HBKU)'s Qatar Biomedical Research Institute (QBRI) invites undergraduate students to apply for the ninth edition of its Summer Research Programme (SRP). SRP applicants must be enrolled in an undergraduate programme in a biological or medical-related science and hold a minimum GPA of 3.0.

The top candidates are interviewed before making final admission decisions. Applications must be submitted by February 27 at https://www.hbku.edu.qa/en/academic-events/QBRI-SRP25

Scheduled to take place from May 18-July 10, the SRP will immerse participants in QBRI's intensive research environment where they will work under the guidance of distinguished scientists and gain hands-on experience within state-of-the-art laboratories.

In keeping with previous years, successful applicants will have the opportunity to tailor their experience to their field of interest and work at QBRI's Diabetes Research Centre, Translational Oncology Research Centre, or Neurological Disorders Research Centre. They should expect to make contributions to projects focused on biomarker development, stem cells, breast cancer, autism, diabetes, and more.

The programme will bolster professional development by offering seminars and workshops that target critical skills needed for successful careers in scientific research. Participants will also have the chance to engage with the wider QBRI community and absorb insights in a diverse range of biomedical fields.

Dr Omar Albagha, acting executive director, QBRI, said: "We always look forward to welcoming students to our Summer Research Programme. Our successful applicants will join a national centre of excellence dedicated to improving and transforming healthcare with the aim of achieving personalised medicine. The knowledge and experience that they will acquire will not only benefit their undergraduate studies but also influence their future research and career paths."

Dukhan Bank names Feb winners of Thara'a draw

Dukhan Bank has announced the names of the most recent round of draw winners for Thara'a, its Shariah-compliant savings account, at the bank's headquarters.

The draw for February was conducted under the supervision of a representative of the Qualitative License and Market Control Department at the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.

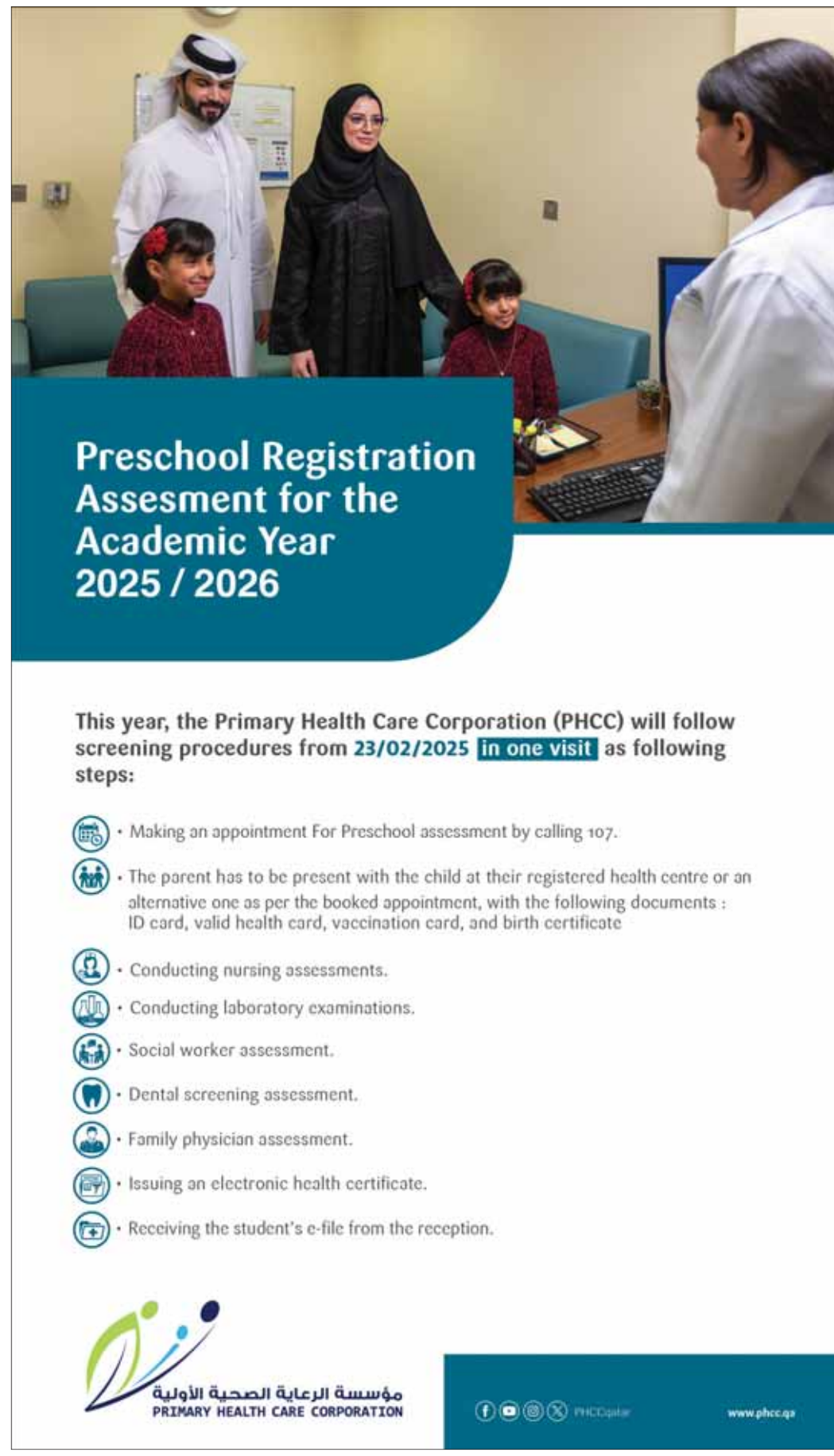
The winner of the draw is Mohamed Ayari, who won the top prize of QR50,000, while the following winners each received QR5,000: Hoyam Abidalla, Fatima al-Abdulla, Mohammad Alkouz, Noor Alyafei, Frankis Marzo, Ahmed Aboudeif, Wadha al-Mudahka, Dana Abdeen, Layla Aljaber, Tayeb al-Habshi, Jamal al-Mohammadi, Jassim al-Mejali, Abdulla al-Khulaifi, Aldana al-Saad, Muna al-Maslamani, Saoud al-Baker,
Abdulrahman Mahmoud, Mohammed al-Kaabi, Ahlam Alsanadi, Abdulla Mutheeb, Maryam al-Saadi, Ahmad Abdulla, Abdelhadi Abdelhamid, Hanane Amine, Mahmoud al-Mahmoud, Ali al-Haddad, Abdulaziz al-Jaber, Rabab Abbas, Lolwa Alfehaid, Ebrahim al-Tamimi, Ahmad al-Fakhri, Aisha al-Hamad, Shaikha Alyafei, Fai Chan, and Mohammed Almarri.



Dukhan Bank continues its customer-centric approach with its enhanced Tharaa Savings Account campaign, reaffirming its commitment to rewarding clients. The upgraded campaign now features a total prize pool of QR5.025mn, with 327 winners throughout the year. The initiative includes three grand prizes of QR1mn each, awarded every four months, along with monthly draws featuring a QR50,000 prize and 35 additional prizes of QR5,000.

Thara'a, a Shariah-compliant savings account, offers customers exclusive benefits, including access to Dukhan Bank's innovative digital banking services. Customers interested in participating can open a Thara'a Savings Account via Dukhan Bank's website, mobile app, or by visiting any branch.

For more information, customers can call 800 8555 or reach out to Rashid, the bank's virtual assistant, via WhatsApp at 44100888.



QATAR

Attorney-general meets Turkish Constitutional Court president



HE the Attorney-General Dr Issa bin Saad al-Jafali al-Nuaimi met yesterday with the visiting President of the Constitutional Court of Turkiye Kadir Ozkaya, and his accompanying delegation. During the meeting, the two sides discussed areas of mutual interest, ways to enhance co-operation in the legal field and to facilitate the exchange of expertise. (**QNA**)

Qatar expresses concern over Israeli air strike on southern Lebanon

Qatar has expressed deep concern over the Israeli occupation's air strike on southern Lebanon and called on all parties to strictly adhere to the ceasefire agreement and avoid escalation to ensure the region's security and stability.

In a statement yesterday, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs reiterated Qatar's firm and supportive position towards Lebanon, its unity and territorial integrity, and its continuous support for the Lebanese people. It also stressed the necessity for Israeli occupation forces to withdraw from all Lebanese territories. **(QNA)**

Qatar takes part in Global Alliance meeting on two-state solution





Qatar participated in the Fourth High-level Meeting of the Global Alliance for the Implementation of the Two-State Solution, held in Cairo, Egypt. Qatar was represented in the meeting by Director of the Arab Affairs Department at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Nayef bin Abdullah al-Emadi. The meeting comes as a continuation of what was agreed upon in the previous meeting in Oslo, and an affirmation of the importance of supporting the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) in the context of the two-state solution. **(QNA)**

Labour ministry launches 'Erada Programme' to empower Qatari talent in tech, digital sectors



The Ministry of Labour has launched the 'Erada Programme' a pioneering initiative aimed at empowering young Qatari talent and preparing them for the technology and digital sectors, in partnership with the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology and Microsoft.

This initiative supports the objectives of the Private Sector Nationalisation Law and the Human Development Pillar of Qatar National Vision 2030.

This programme is part of the Ministry of Labour's broader strategy to collaborate with private sector entities to upskill the national workforce, ensure equal access to training opportunities, and keep pace with digital transformation. By leveraging cutting-edge technologies, the programme will enhance the skills of Qatari youth, increase their competitiveness in the labour market, and boost productivity in key sectors.

The 'Erada Programme' aims to develop a highly skilled generation of Qatari professionals capable of leading the future, reinforcing Qatar's position as a global hub for innovation and knowledge.

It also seeks to increase the national workforce participation in the technology sector, in line with the National Strategy for an Effective and Highly Productive Workforce (2024-2030).

Commenting on the programme, Assistant Undersecretary for National Manpower Affairs at the Ministry of Labour, Shaikha Abdulrahman al-Badi, said that the 'Erada Programme' is a key Ministry of Labour initiative in empowering young national professionals.

Aligned with the private sector nationalisation plan, the programme provides specialised training and advanced digital skills, improving both local and international employment prospects, in addition to supporting Qatar's transition to a sustainable economy, in line with the Third National Development Strategy, she added.

Al-Badi further noted that the 'Erada Programme' reinforces efforts to establish a highly skilled national workforce with advanced digital and technological capabilities. This, in turn, enhances productivity, boosts market performance, and drives sustainable development and innovation in Qatar, supporting the goal of a knowledge-based economy outlined in Qatar National Vision 2030.

In turn, Director of Human Resources at the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology, Abdullah Mohammed al-Khalifa, remarked: "The 'Erada Programme' is a significant milestone in our ministry's efforts to achieve one of the key objectives of the Digital Agenda 2030: training the national workforce with advanced digital skills."

Al-Khalifa added that the 'Erada Programme' seeks to empower the national workforce to gain advanced expertise in areas such as artificial intelligence and cloud computing. He also said that this collaboration among the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology, the Ministry of Labour, and Microsoft reflects their commitment to developing human capital and creating quality opportunities that contribute to enhancing the competitiveness of the national workforce in the communications and information technology sector. **(QNA)**

Int'l conference on religious freedom and peacemaking begins in Doha today

Under the patronage of HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani, the Doha International Center for Interfaith Dialogue (DICID), in collaboration with the Multi-Faith Neighbors Network (MFNN), will hold the upcoming international conference titled "From Religious Freedom to Religious Responsibility: Peacemaking in a Destabilised World".

The event will take place in Doha, Qatar, from February 18-20, 2025. Building on the success of last year's conference, "From Religious Freedom to Religious Responsibility: Building Communities of Advocacy and Action", this year's edition takes a crucial step forward by focusing on peacemaking.

The conference will explore the intersection between religious freedom and the collective responsibility of faith communities in fostering peace amidst global instability.

In a statement to Qatar News Agency (QNA), Chairman of DICID Prof Ibrahim bin Saleh al-Naimi emphasised the conference's alignment with DICID's mission and vision. "At a time when the world faces unprecedented challenges, DICID remains committed to promoting dialogue, coexistence, and mutual respect. "This conference is an extension of our efforts to ensure that religious freedom is not just a right but a responsibility towards building sustainable peace," he added.

He noted that the conference seeks to explore the role of religions in conflict resolution, promote peace, and emphasises religious responsibility in an increasingly challenging world. The conference aims to strengthen interfaith dialogue highlighting the role of religions in fostering peace and coexistence; discuss successful conflict resolution models; explore ways to enhance peace initiatives; analyse challenges in peacebuilding; highlight the role of humanitarian organisations in peace efforts, he added.

Attendees will engage in discussions on religious pluralism, human rights, and legislative perspectives, exchanging best practices and strategies for fostering interfaith collaboration. With its strong focus on actionable outcomes, the conference aims to translate discussions into tangible initiatives that promote lasting peace, he said. **(QNA)**

QAPCO
شركة قطر للبتروكيماويات
QATAR PETROCHEMICAL COMPANY

QAPCO invites qualified service providers to participate in the following tender

Effective from 01st July 2023, Bids from Local Suppliers and Contractors (companies established under the Law of State of Qatar) who are not in possession of an ICV score in the ICV portal (https://icv.qa/en-US) by Tender closing date (or commercial bid submission date if separately mentioned / notified) will not be accepted. Local companies that have been established for less than 2 years are exempted from this requirement.
For further details, please visit ICV portal (https://icv.qa/en-US).

Sl No.	Tender Reference and Description	(i) Deadline for Submission of Information & Interest for Bidding	(ii) Tender Fee	(iii) Tender Publication on ARIBA	(iv) Tender Bond	Bid Closing Date
1	RFQ: P04-01-147 5 Years Services Contract for Scaffolding, Painting, Insulation, and Refractory works	20th Feb 2025	QAR 1000. 00 (One Thousand)	23rd Feb 2025	QAR 500,000. 00 (Five Hundred Thousand)	27th Mar 2025 12:00 Noon Doha LT

i. Interested bidders to communicate their willingness to bid and contact details to QAPCO Procurement (procurement@qapco.com.qa) indicating company name, address, telephone, official E-mail..etc. latest by the deadline for Submission of Information & Interest for Bidding indicated above.
ii. Reference Number and Description of the tender must be mentioned in the email.
iii. Non-refundable tender fee as indicated above is payable to QAPCO through **QNB account # 0013-001688-060** only at any QNB branch latest by 20 February 2025.
iv. Tender link will be sent via email notification from ARIBA system to the confirmed bidders. Tender Document will be accessible only after attaching the evidence of the tender fee payment in ARIBA by the bidder followed by Qapco approval.
v. QAPCO shall reply with the access to "ARIBA eSourcing RFP event" along with necessary instructions and guidelines for the bid submission.
vi. **Tender Bond (Bank Guarantee)**: Original tender bond must be submitted by hand to the following address latest by the Bid closing date & time:

Qatar Petrochemical Company (QAPCO) Q.P.J.S.C.
P. O. BOX 756, QAPCO Doha Office, The Gate Mall, Bay Tower 2, 11th Floor
Tel.: +974 4033 8109 / 102
Attention: Procurement Group Manager

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

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

Note: Bidders who are not registered in QAPCO are requested to complete the supplier registration process during the tendering period (Detailed steps about ARIBA registration can be accessed via QAPCO website www.qapco.com)

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

Fanar to introduce new Muslims to virtues of fasting

The Sheikh Abdullah bin Zaid Al Mahmoud Islamic Cultural Center (Fanar) has tailored an education programme to introduce new Muslims to the virtues of fasting.

The programme includes a series of lectures in English, Hindi and Filipino

The move is part of the Awqaf-affiliated centre's tireless efforts to meet the cultural and cognitive needs of new reverts, strengthen their connection to Islam, and boost their worship during the holy month of Ramadan.

The programme includes a series of lectures in English, Hindi and Filipino, presented in the main Fanar premises in Doha and its branches in the Workers' City and Al Khor.

It falls into several levels: the foundational level that focuses on the basics of Islam and advanced levels that delve deeper into the provisions of Islamic law. **(QNA)**

قطر للطاقة
QatarEnergy
LNG

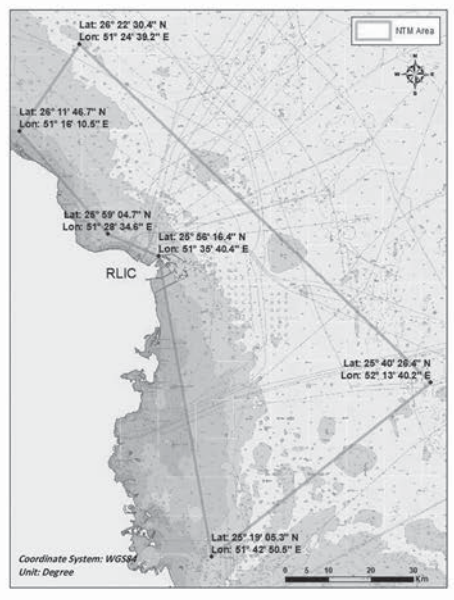
Public Announcement
To all Ships, Fishermen and Mariners
Seismic Survey Acquisition by Vessels AOS Glory, Stanford Hawk, GMS Apollo, Voyager Explorer, BGP Honor, and Safa Searcher
Seismic Survey Works Offshore Qatar from 27th November 2024 – 27th November 2025

Pursuant to and under directives from the Department of Seafarers Affairs & Registration, Ministry of Transport, State of Qatar, this announcement is to inform all Vessels, Mariners and Fishermen that QatarEnergy LNG intends to perform Ocean Bottom Node Seismic Survey Works with Vessels AOS Glory, Stanford Hawk, GMS Apollo, Voyager Explorer, BGP Honor, and Safa Searcher in the locations bound by the coordinates shown in the diagram below.

All Vessels, Mariners and Fishermen are expected to keep clear of the survey locations during the operations.

QatarEnergy LNG takes no responsibility for any loss or damage caused to outside parties in association with this operation, following publication of this notice.

Point	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE
1	26° 22' 30.4"N	51° 24' 39.2"E
2	25° 40' 26.4"N	52° 13' 40.2"E
3	25° 19' 05.3"N	51° 42' 50.5"E
4	25° 56' 16.4"N	51° 35' 40.4"E
5	25° 59' 04.7"N	51° 28' 34.6"E
6	26° 11' 46.7"N	51° 16' 10.5"E



Any further inquiries should be addressed to: Tel. +974 44531797

QIB launches Qard Hassan for Retirees initiative

Qatar Islamic Bank (QIB) has announced the launch of the Qard Hassan for Retirees initiative, a new financing product designed exclusively for retirees.

Developed in collaboration with the General Retirement and Social Insurance Authority (GRSIA), the initiative reflects QIB's commitment to supporting the financial well-being of retired individuals by providing them with access to profit-free financing in line with Sharia principles.

With 'Qard Hassan', eligible retirees can apply for financing up to five times their monthly pension, up to QR300,000.

The financing is available for a tenure of up to 60 months, offering retirees flexibility in managing their financial needs.

QIB 'Qard Hassan' ensures that retirees can access funds without incurring any additional costs, reinforcing QIB's dedication to providing responsible and inclusive financial solutions.

Retirees can benefit from the financing initiative twice, providing them with crucial financial support when needed. No Takaful insurance is required as part of the financing terms, making the process more accessible and convenient for applicants. To apply, retirees must submit a completed 'Qard Hassan' application form, a recent retirement pension certificate, and a valid Qatar ID.



D Anand, general manager of QIB Personal Banking Group, said: "We are pleased to collaborate with GRSIA in their initiative supporting the financial well-being of retired individuals. The launch of Qard Hassan for Retirees highlights QIB's commitment to cater to the evolving needs of this segment in line with the bank's social responsibility. Through this partnership, QIB ensures that retirees have access to sustainable and transparent financial support, enhancing their financial security."

Retirees interested in applying for 'Qard Hassan' can visit QIB's official website or their nearest QIB branch for further details.

Qatar takes part in GCC tourism meeting

Qatar participated in the 9th meeting of the ministers responsible for tourism in the Gulf Co-operation Council (GCC) countries yesterday in Kuwait, Qatar Tourism (QT) has said.

The meeting explored ways to enhance tourism co-operation among member states and support regional integration in this vital sector. The Qatari delegation was led by QT chairman HE Saad bin Ali al-Kharji.

The meeting discussed the potential for further tourism collaboration among Gulf states through specialised discussion sessions, which examined prospects for tourism integration, mechanisms for unifying regional promotional efforts, and enhanced co-operation in organising joint events and initiatives.

During the meeting, Al Ain was announced as the Gulf Tourism Capital for 2025, in recognition of its rich tourism offerings, including natural, cultural, and heritage assets that reflect the region's diversity.



Qatari delegation at the 9th GCC ministerial meeting for tourism officials yesterday.

Additionally, the establishment of GCC Tourism Day on January 20 each year was approved, providing an annual occasion to highlight the achievements of the Gulf tourism sector and showcase leading projects and initiatives.

At the conclusion of the meeting, it was agreed that the next ministerial meeting will take place in April 2026 in the UAE.

Ministry of Labour participates in QF Career Fair

The Ministry of Labour, represented by its Department of Qualifying and Skills Development, participated yesterday in the Career Fair organised by Qatar Foundation (QF) at Education City. The event aimed to enhance engagement with Qatari graduates and the children of Qatari women seeking employment in the private sector, introducing them to the training and qualification programmes and initiatives offered by the ministry. The fair featured the participation of 110 leading institutions and companies providing direct employment opportunities for graduates.

The ministry's participation in the fair, held on Feb 16-17, was part of its ongoing efforts to raise awareness among graduates about in-demand academic specialisations and guide them towards career paths that align with their qualifications, skills, and professional aspirations. This initiative aligns with the Third National Development Strategy (2024-2030), which seeks to develop a highly skilled and competitive national workforce while enhancing the productivity of the private sector.

At its pavilion, the department provided an overview of the workshops, initiatives, programmes, and training courses available to support Qatari graduates entering the labour market. The objective is to help students select academic specialisations that meet market demands and equip graduates with the necessary skills to compete for opportunities across various economic sectors.



The fair also featured strong participation from several prestigious Qatar Foundation universities, offering graduates a platform to explore career opportunities and engage in direct job interviews with prospective employers from the private sector.

The ministry's participation in this career fair reflects its commitment to supporting job-seeking graduates both Qataris and children of Qatari women by empowering them to integrate successfully into the workforce. This initiative contributes to increasing the presence of the national workforce in the private sector, in line with the country's sustainable development goals, the national localisation plan, and the Human Development Pillar of Qatar National Vision 2030. **(QNA)**

VCUarts Qatar Interior Design Student Theses accepted by the US-based Environmental Design Research Association (EDRA)

The designs, proposed by two recent graduates during their final year at the QF partner university, address issues such as digital dependency and obesity.

Never have the ramifications of lifestyle on the mental and physical health of children and young adults been in the news as it is now.

The negative effects of consuming highly processed food, lack of physical activity, and digital dependency, especially among children, are studied and reported by experts ranging from pediatricians, psychiatrists, psychologists, dieticians and population health experts to policymakers, counselors and educators.

In this context, and considering that children spend most of their time at home or in school until their early teens, ways to promote healthy lifestyles have become a necessity rather than a nice-to-have when it comes to designing spaces they frequent.

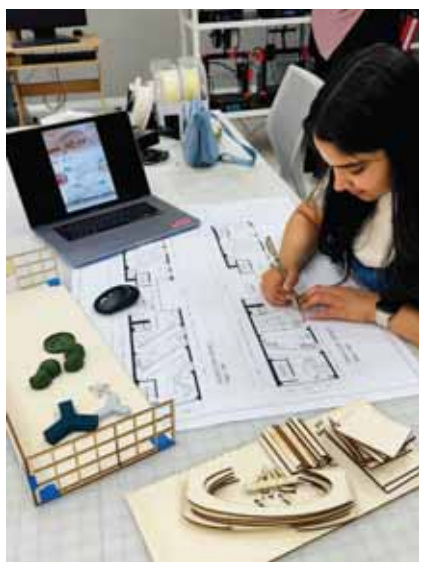
Two BFA interior design graduates from VCUarts Qatar – Gowri Maelathil and Shahd Alkaabi – have been doing just that. During their final year of study at the University from 2023 to 2024, they chose to focus on designs that enhance physical activity and movement among children. The graduates' theses were part of their capstone projects during their senior year.

The significance and universal application of their research were highlighted recently when their proposals were accepted by the US-based Environmental Design Research Association (EDRA) last year.

EDRA is an international, interdisciplinary organization that aims to advance and disseminate research, teaching, and practice to improve an understanding of the relationships among people, their built environments, and natural ecosystems.









Minimizing digital dependency

Gowri Maelathil's project, titled 'Analogue Orchard: A multi-sensory and interactive Primary school in Australia' asked the question, "To What Extent Does Technology Usage in Primary Education Impact the Cognitive Development of Primary Children in Australia?"

The inspiration for the theses came from a visit to Australia in the summer of 2023.

She says, "While visiting family and friends, I noticed that most children were addicted to digital devices. One particular instance that got me thinking was when I asked a child what she did after school, and she said she watches shows and plays games on her iPad. Nowhere in this six-year-old's reply did I hear 'going outside' or 'playing with friends.'

"I realized that despite increasing awareness of digital dependency, it is still a rising issue worldwide. Further research revealed that Australia is one of the top countries in terms of access and integration of technology within schools and homes."

For her research, she conducted three interviews with experts in Australia, including Dr. Kimberly O'Brien, a top child psychologist, Professor Wesley Imms at the University of Melbourne, who is a member of LEaRN (Learning Environments Applied Research Network), and a school teacher.

To reduce the appeal and dominance of technology, Maelethil says children need better-designed learning environments to keep them engaged, excited, and energetic. Such interiors, she says, would also support children's cognitive development, including creativity, critical thinking skills, memory, communication, empathy, etc.

Maelethil proposed a design that incorporated specific layouts and furniture and supported children's cognitive development, including creativity, critical thinking skills, memory, communication, empathy, etc.

She explains, "If children have to use the same uncomfortable chair for seven hours a day, they are bound to turn to technology as a fun escape. Hence, I preferred furniture that offered ergonomic variety such as bean bags, group modular seating, armchairs, irregularly formed seats, etc., giving children the power of choice and allowing them to change their seats when they want to."

She also designed a free exploration space where the layout is divided into different zones in relation to the various subjects in the curriculum, guiding children's learning. Here, according to her, children can learn through play, acquiring core developmental skills such as curiosity, creativity, exploring independently, communicating, and problem-solving as they interact with other children.

Colors were chosen to complement the function of each space, with warm colors used to boost activity, and cool colors to foster concentration. The overall aim was that children should draw stimulation from the space they are in rather than from technology.

She sums up, "I came up with interior design options that can be implemented in any school, worldwide. Such designs may be cost-effective as well, as they would reduce investment in technology."

Combatting obesity through design

The rising rate of childhood obesity has proven to be a concern worldwide, with it being linked to adult health problems such as hypertension, diabetes, metabolic abnormalities, cardiovascular risks, and psychological difficulties.

In Qatar, it has been established that around 75% of schoolchildren fail to meet age-appropriate levels of physical activity, with over half of all school-aged children deemed to be overweight or obese.

Shahd Alkaabi, a Qatari, decided to do something about this. In her final-year thesis titled 'Childhood Obesity,' she explored interior layouts that promote physical activity.

Her research process unearthed several findings – some unexpected. One notable discovery was the significant influence of cultural and societal norms on children's eating habits and physical activity levels. Additionally, Alkaabi was surprised by the disparities in access to healthy food options and recreational facilities among various socioeconomic groups within the country.

Alkaabi says, "My findings highlighted the complex interplay between environmental factors and health outcomes, emphasizing the need for targeted interventions to address childhood obesity effectively. At the same time, they underscored the importance of designs in enhancing a population's health."

Alkaabi conducted in peer-reviewed journals and child psychology. She applied the concept of kinetic design to spaces and accessories, such as furniture, with the aim of enhancing movement among children. For instance, she incorporated problem-solving components into some of the furniture, keeping the user engaged and active, physically and mentally. For her color palette, she chose hues of purple and blue.

She says, "This design can be adapted to various settings, including residential homes, schools, community centers, and public spaces like parks and recreational areas. In residential settings, such designs can be integrated into new construction projects or incorporated into renovations to promote healthier lifestyles for families.

"In educational settings, interior designers can collaborate with school administrators to create environments that support physical activity and well-being among students. Similarly, community centers and public spaces can benefit from design interventions that encourage active living and social interaction."

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Sustainable Gut Health at Zulal Wellness Resort during Holy Month of Ramadan

Tailored retreat programmes and dietary plans optimise the body for healthy fasting









The Middle East's largest and first full-immersion wellness destination, Zulal Wellness Resort by Chiva-Som, is supporting guests on their journey towards holistic wellness and spiritual purification during the Holy Month of Ramadan with tailormade sustainable wellness and dietary programmes specifically designed to prepare mind and body for periods of fasting, devotion and reflection.

Ramadan is a special time for reflection, self-improvement, kindness and spirituality, when those observing the Holy Month fast from dawn to dusk. Fasting has been used as a healing, spiritual and purification process for centuries, allowing the body to detox from overeating and exposure to unwanted chemicals in food and the environment. Changes to eating habits, sleeping patterns and daily routine can however affect physical and mental health, so it is especially important to look after one's wellbeing during any period of fasting.

Aligned with the phases of the Holy Month – prior, during and post-season – Zulal Wellness Resort's tailored programmes and specially-devised meal plans are focused on preparing for and supporting fasting, bringing guests' digestive and metabolic systems back to optimal function as well as rebalancing mind, body and spirit.

Before stepping into Ramadan, Zulal Wellness Resort's Cleanse & Revive programme is an ideal way to prepare the digestive system for a long period of fasting. It's thoughtfully designed to support the natural detoxification process by balancing the microbiome and improving the metabolism through wellness meals, cleansing treatments and mindfulness practices.

The first 10 days of Ramadan are considered the days of Mercy; a time to reflect on the body as a blessing, and care for it accordingly. Healing the gut by acting on the mental balance is the right step to take control of the health, especially during Ramadan. Zulal's Mind-Body Retreat and Gut Healing Diet work in tandem to re-establish the connection between gut and brain, balance the mind and heal the gut.

The middle 10 days of the Holy Month are aligned with Forgiveness and provide an opportunity to internalise and establish healthy physical and mental lifestyle choices. Building on the positive habits initiated during the first two phases, Zulal's Sustainable Weight Loss programme focuses on restoring the gut and digestive system functions. The programme combines a personalised diet programme with metabolism-boosting exercises and detoxifying treatments to support and educate guests on best practices to help achieve their long-term wellness goals.

While the first 20 days of Zulal's Ramadan programme are aligned with self-discovery and self-improvement, the last 10 are centred on connection, the familial nature of Holy Month and bringing people together. Zulal's unique dedicated family offering, Zulal Discovery, offers an inclusive Family Wellness Retreat focused on encouraging families including the young ones to explore health habits, while fostering stronger connections between families. The programme is designed to create shared experiences that strengthen bonds whilst enjoying family-centric activities and meals for a memorable Ramadan experience – especially for children fasting for the first time.

Zulal Discovery's Kids on Us offer gives the whole family the opportunity to experience more for less this Ramadan, with complimentary accommodation for two children up to the age of 16. It includes meals, as well as Iftar & Suhour during the holy month) a family consultation and full access to the wide range of wellness activities and facilities at Zulal Discovery.

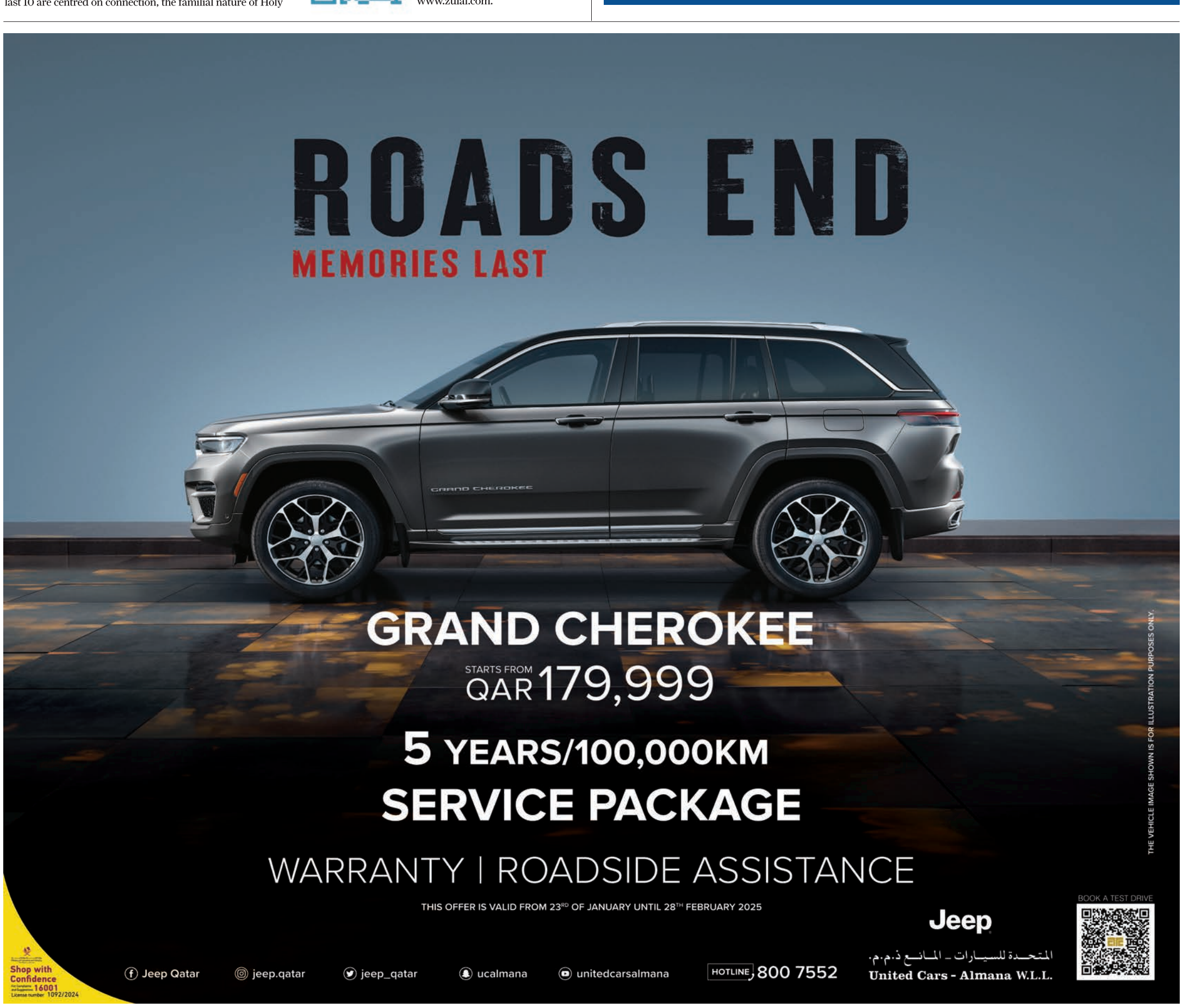
Couples and solo travelers can also experience more wellbeing this Ramadan with the exclusive Wellness Plus offer. Guests can enjoy five nights of award-winning wellness and daily meals for the price of four, as well as a choice of additional treatments for every day that they stay.

Each retreat programme at Zulal Wellness Resort includes accommodation and individually tailored wellness cuisine meals per day; a personal health and wellness consultation; customised treatments based on individual goals and Ramadan practice; and full access to daily activities and the wellness centre, including hydrothermal suite, sauna, steam rooms, Himalayan salt room and swimming pools.

For more information or reservations, please email Zulal Wellness Resort by Chiva-Som at reservations@zulal.com, call/WhatsApp +974 4477 6555 or visit www.zulal.com.







QATAR





Participants from the Hind bint Abi Sofiane Girls Secondary School with officials.

Right: HE Sheikh Faisal bin Qassim al-Thani with other dignitaries at the ceremony.

Left: Participants from the Qatar Science and Technology Secondary School for Boys with officials.





Participants from the Omar Bin Al-Khattab Model School for Boys with officials.

Alf honours winners of 10th 'Destination Imagination'

By Tawfik Lamari
Staff Reporter

Al Faisal without Borders Foundation (Alf) held an awards ceremony to honour the winning school teams in the 10th edition of the Destination Imagination programme 2024/25 academic year.

The programme, implemented by the Alf Foundation in partnership with the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MoEHE), has been running in public and private schools across Qatar for the past decade.

In his opening speech, Alf chairman HE Sheikh Faisal bin Qassim al-Thani "expressed his delight at attending the ceremony to recognise the outstanding school teams that participated in the 10th edition of Destination Imagination".

He emphasised the Alf Foundation's commitment to delivering innovative programmes that foster the development of students' skills across all age groups.

HE Sheikh Faisal highlighted that the participation of international teams in this year's regional championship is a testament to the programme's success and Qatar's excellence in its implementation.

He also extended his gratitude to the MoEHE for its continued support over the years, Qatar University for hosting the national championship for the third consecutive year, and all participating schools for their dedication.

Alf Foundation general manager engineer Abdullatif Ali al-Yafei "reiterated the foundation's vision of leadership through programmes that enrich Qatari culture and share its rich heritage with the world".

He noted that Destination Imagination is an internationally recognised programme implemented in over 30 countries and more than 50 US states.

Over the past nine years, it has impacted more than 30,000 students in Qatar's public and private schools.

For the 2024/25 edition, 104 public and private schools participated, forming 222 teams with nearly 2,000 students from various academic levels.

This year also saw participation of student teams from Poland, competing alongside Qatar school and university teams in a special Destination Imagination challenge.

The local championship, held on February 14-15 at Qatar University's College of Education, showcased the remarkable creativity and innovation of participating students.

Al-Yafei highlighted the programme's role in integrating non-traditional learning methods into school activities, helping students develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills.

He also noted that Destination Imagination serves as a platform to highlight Qatar's rich culture and showcase students' talents to more than 10,000 global participants in the programme's international championship, set to take place in May in Kansas, US.

Al-Yafei extended his deep appreciation to HE Sheikh Faisal for his unwavering support, to HE the Minister of Education and Higher Education Lolwah bint Rashid bin Mohammed AlKhater for her continued endorsement of the Alf Foundation's programmes, and to Qatar University president Dr Omar bin Mohammed al-Ansari for hosting the national championship.

Gratitude was also expressed to the judges, volunteers, and Alf Foundation staff for their contributions.

During her address, Maha Zayed al-Qaqa al-Ruwaili, the assistant undersecretary for educational affairs at the MoEHE, "emphasised the significance of this achievement, recognising the dedication of students in striving for excellence".

She reaffirmed the ministry's vision of "A Pioneering Learner for Sustainable Development", which aims to create an integrated educational environment that nurtures leadership, entrepreneurial thinking, and innovation, equipping students to make well-informed decisions and tackle future challenges.

Al-Ruwaili further noted that Destination Imagination aligns with this vision by fostering communication skills, creativity, and critical thinking, preparing students to navigate an ever-evolving world with confidence and competence.

School team leaders praised the programme for its impact on students, particularly in enhancing teamwork, imagination, and innovation.

Qatar Charity supported over 700,000 in Sudan last year

Qatar Charity (QC) projects supported 736,400 war-affected people in Sudan throughout 2024, a statement said yesterday.

Throughout the year, the QC launched a series of impactful humanitarian projects, significantly aiding displaced families and communities affected by the war.

These projects focused on alleviating the severity of the ongoing crisis, particularly in areas like food security, health sector support, and assistance to the most vulnerable groups in Sudan.

In 2024, the QC launched one of its largest food security projects to date, distributing 50,000 food baskets to families affected by the war.

It was funded by the Qatar Fund for Development (QFFD).

Qatar Charity field teams delivered food assistance to the most impacted states, such as Khartoum, Al Jazirah, Sennar, Gedaref, Kassala, the Red Sea, Nile, White Nile, and Northern States.

Approximately 300,000 people, including displaced persons and host communities, benefitted from this food security project last year.

As part of its emergency medical supplies project, the QC provided essential medications for kidney dialysis patients, cancer patients, and blood bank services.

Supported by the QFFD, the QC distributed 70% of the received medical aid to regions in dire need of these supplies.

More than 7,000 people directly and indirectly benefited from the project in shelters such as Al-Mirganiya, Al-Suraybah, Al-Karmata, Biryay, and Tarawa.

The project included waste management campaigns, training for shelter staff on water chlorination, and workshops on disease prevention for displaced families.

In addition to providing 60 tonnes of medicines, laboratory consumables, and blood bags, the QC also supported health workers, administrative staff, and patients at hospitals such as Al-Jikeeka in the Nile State and Bar Al-Walideen in the Karri locality of Khartoum state.

In collaboration with the International Organisation for Migration (IOM), the QC also launched an emergency response project to address the devastating impacts of floods and extreme heat in eastern Sudan.



Doha Institute for Graduate Studies celebrates 10th anniversary

The Doha Institute for Graduate Studies (DI) celebrated its 10th anniversary with events attended by leaders, deans, faculty members, and administrative staff of the institute.

The DI held its first activities on the occasion, with the participation of a group of its graduates who shared their success stories with their fellow students, with the aim of shedding light on their experiences and the extent to which they benefited from the academic programmes provided by the institute.

DI president Dr Abdelwahab El Affendi noted that the institute's 10th anniversary celebrations began by highlighting the success stories of its graduates.

The dean of Student Affairs at the DI, Dr Ibrahim Fraihat, stressed that the 10th anniversary of the DI is an important milestone that reflects its successes since its launch.

The Doha Institute for Graduate Studies, which was established in Qatar in 2015 as an independent academic institution, seeks to qualify a generation of researchers and professionals capable of contributing to the production of knowledge, achieving sustainable development, and advancing Arab societies. – ***QNA***



PHCC promotes community engagement and wellness

The Primary Health Care Corporation (PHCC) took part in the Qatar National Sport Day (NSD) activities through collaboration and partnerships with various ministries, institutions, and public and private entities across the country.

Awareness booths were set up, staffed by medical professionals, nurses, and nutrition specialists, offering vital health screenings and measuring key health indicators.

Additionally, specialised staff provided guidance on the importance of exercise and maintaining a balanced lifestyle to prevent chronic diseases.

The PHCC activities included collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Higher Education at the Old Doha Port, where the PHCC deployed a nursing team to conduct vital health screenings, alongside a nutrition specialist offering health advice.

The PHCC also partnered with Al Gharafa Sports Club, providing nursing staff for health assessments, further promoting health awareness among athletes.



The PHCC's participation extended to Al Khor Primary School for Girls, where a health educator delivered a lecture on the importance of a healthy lifestyle.

The corporation was also present at Qatar National Library (QNL)'s activities, where wellness management staff, a fitness specialist, and a health coach provided guidance on enhancing physical activity.

Additionally, the PHCC participated in events organised by the Qatar Sports for All Federation at Aspire Academy, where nursing and nutrition specialists conducted health screenings and assessments for attendees.

The corporation also collaborated with Al Ahli Sports Club to provide specialised nursing staff for vital health checks for athletes and participants.

All 31 PHCC-affiliated health centres celebrated the NSD by organising various sports, educational, and awareness activities for medical and administrative staff as well as visitors.

Qur'an learning centre sports contest winners honoured



The Ministry of Endowments (Awqaf) and Islamic Affairs' Department of Religious Call and Guidance has honoured the winners of the annual sport tournament that was held for students of the Holy Qur'an learning centres.

The event was held at the ministry's playgrounds in the Abu Hamour on December 22-31, with the participation of 16 teams in the 13-15 age category.

The tournament culminated in the team of Aisha bint Abi Bakr clinching the championship title after defeating Al Kisai team in the final face-off.



The department highlighted that the event was intended to enhance awareness, promote Islamic values, hone students' skills and dedicate a competitive environment to "turbocharge" them with beneficial sporting energies. – ***QNA***



Asma al-Thani (third from right), Ooredoo Qatar's latest official Brand Ambassador, is joined by Ooredoo Qatar CEO Sheikh Ali bin Jabor bin Mohammad al-Thani, Ooredoo Qatar senior director of Marketing Communications Sabah Rabiah al-Kuwari, and other dignitaries during a press conference yesterday.
PICTURE: Thajudheen

Ooredoo Qatar names Asma al-Thani as brand ambassador

Ooredoo announced yesterday that Asma al-Thani is the company's official Brand Ambassador as part of its enduring commitment to connecting the community to inspirational voices and stories.

The announcement was made in the presence of Sheikh Ali bin Jabor bin Mohammad al-Thani, CEO of Ooredoo Qatar, along with industry leaders.

Asma al-Thani, a pioneer in global exploration, is on a historic mission to become the first Arab — male or female — to conquer both the Explorers Grand Slam and all 14 of the world's 8,000m peaks. Her ambitious journey, 'Beyond Boundaries', is metaphorically similar to Ooredoo's vision of pushing limits, embracing challenges, and connecting people.

Sheikh Ali, said: "At Ooredoo, we proudly champion ambition, resilience, and leaders in our community. Asma al-Thani's extraordinary journey is a testament to the power of perseverance and an inspiration to both Qatar and the wider Arab World. Just as we empower people through digital transformation and innovation, we are honoured to support Asma and women everywhere in reaching new heights. Her success will undoubtedly pave the way for future generations, and we look forward to celebrating her achievements as a role model for aspiring female leaders worldwide."

As a brand ambassador, Asma al-Thani will collaborate with Ooredoo to engage audiences through a series of storytelling initiatives, digital activations, and community-driven programmes. Her journey will be closely followed through Ooredoo's platforms, bringing followers exclusive behind-the-scenes insights into her expeditions, training, and the mindset required to achieve such remarkable feats of endurance.

Asma al-Thani, said: "Beyond Boundaries is more than just climbing mountains — it's about proving that no dream is too big if you have the courage to pursue it. Ooredoo has always been a brand that pushes boundaries in connectivity and innovation, and I'm thrilled to partner with them on this journey. Together, we can inspire the next generation to believe in their potential, embrace challenges, and become the best they can be."

Sabah Rabiah al-Kuwari, senior director of Marketing Communications at Ooredoo Qatar, added: "Asma al-Thani's journey is a powerful reminder that no goal is too ambitious and no challenge too great when met with courage and perseverance. At Ooredoo, we are committed to supporting those who lead by example. Through this partnership, we aim to fuel the spirit of ambition, connectivity, and empowerment — values that define both Asma's expedition and Ooredoo's mission to improve lives."

Philippines embassy takes part in Agriteq 2025



Mardomel Celo D Melicor and Cassandra B Sawadjaan at Agriteq 2025.

The Philippine embassy in Doha took part in the 12th Qatar International Agricultural Exhibition (AgriteQ), held earlier this month at Katara Cultural Village.

Ambassador Mardomel Celo D Melicor, along with consul general and first secretary Cassandra B Sawadjaan, led the opening of the Philippine booth.

According to the embassy, the booth featured premium agricultural products, innovative farming solutions, and top travel destinations, providing visitors a glimpse of the rich trade and tourism opportunities in the Philippines.

Through its participation in AgriteQ, the embassy said it aims to strengthen bilateral trade, promote investment opportunities, and enhance economic cooperation with Qatar.

Qatar Boat Show second edition from Nov 5-8

Building on the success of the inaugural edition in 2024, Old Doha Port announced that the Qatar Boat Show 2025 will take place from November 5-8.

"We are immensely proud of what we achieved with the inaugural Qatar Boat Show 2024. This year, we are raising the bar further," Organising Committee chairman and Old Doha Port CEO Mohamed Abdulla al-Mulla said in a press statement.

The Qatar Boat Show 2024 attracted more than 23,500 visitors from more than 90 countries and featured 495 brands.

Spread across more than 250,000sq m at Old Doha Port, the show brought together exhibitors from 11 countries.

A total of 74 boats were showcased, with Qatar's pristine waters hosting the world launches of 20 boats and welcoming 22 boats for their first appearance in the country.

Based on the surveys conducted during the exhibition and after the inaugural edition, 64% of trade visitors and maritime specialists and 82.3% of all visitors expressed intent to return this November. The exhibition cemented Qatar's status as a global leader in maritime innovation and luxury.

With yacht sales exceeding expectations, Old Doha Port noted that the show's growing significance to the global maritime industry was clear, as it provided exceptional opportunities for business networking and building relationships.


The Qatar Boat Show 2024 attracted over 23,500 visitors from more than 90 countries and featured 495 brands.

Attendees of the second edition of Qatar Boat Show can look forward to an unparalleled experience at Qatar's premier marina, which boasts over 450 berths, Qatar's largest superyacht dock, and state-of-the-art marine facilities.



Abu Sidra Mall, LuLu Hypermarket announce Ramadan Souq

Abu Sidra Mall, in collaboration with LuLu Hypermarket, has launched the Ramadan Souq, a special shopping event designed to cater to customers preparing for the holy month.

Taking place until March 10, this exclusive market will offer incredible deals on a wide range of Ramadan essentials — from groceries to home décor and electronics, a statement said yesterday.

"As families across Qatar prepare for the holy month, the Ramadan Souq at Abu Sidra Mall will serve as a one-stop shopping destination, ensuring customers find everything they need at unbeatable prices.

"Shoppers can look forward to groceries and pantry staples, elegant crockery and home décor, exclusive deals on electronics and special promotions and discounts across multiple other categories."

"We are delighted to host the Ramadan Souq in partnership with LuLu Hypermarket, offering customers a convenient and rewarding shopping experience for all their Ramadan needs," said Harun Kadri, leasing & mall manager at Abu Sidra Mall.

"With a variety of essential products and exciting deals, we aim to make Ramadan shopping easier, more affordable, and more enjoyable for everyone."

The Ramadan Souq will be located at the main atrium of Abu Sidra Mall, providing a welcoming and festive atmosphere for shoppers throughout the event. Customers are encouraged to visit early and take advantage of the exclusive discounts before stocks run out.

For more information, follow @abusidramall on social media or visit abusidramall.com





Msheireb Properties announces Innovation in Design Awards

Msheireb Properties has announced the 2025 Innovation in Design Awards, recognising innovative work in architecture, sustainability, and urban development, in partnership with Fast Company Middle East.

"By expanding the award categories for our second season, we want to inspire even more trailblazers who are redefining the future of urban living," Msheireb Properties CEO, Eng Ali Mohammed al-Kuwari, said in a press statement.

This year's winners will once again be crowned during the official awards ceremony on the sidelines of the Innovation by Design Summit on May 21 at Msheireb Downtown Doha.

"By expanding the award categories for our second season, we want to inspire even more trailblazers who are redefining the future of urban living"

Last year's winners included global brand consultancy Landor for human-centric design, cardiac diagnostic technology innovator Dr Mario Garcia for technology-powered design, MAD Architects for sustainable design, and Pandora for luxury and lifestyle design.

Entries for the 2025 awards are now open to designers, architects, and innovators from around the world. Winners will be selected based on criteria such as replicability, design thinking, and audience impact at individual, community, and global levels.

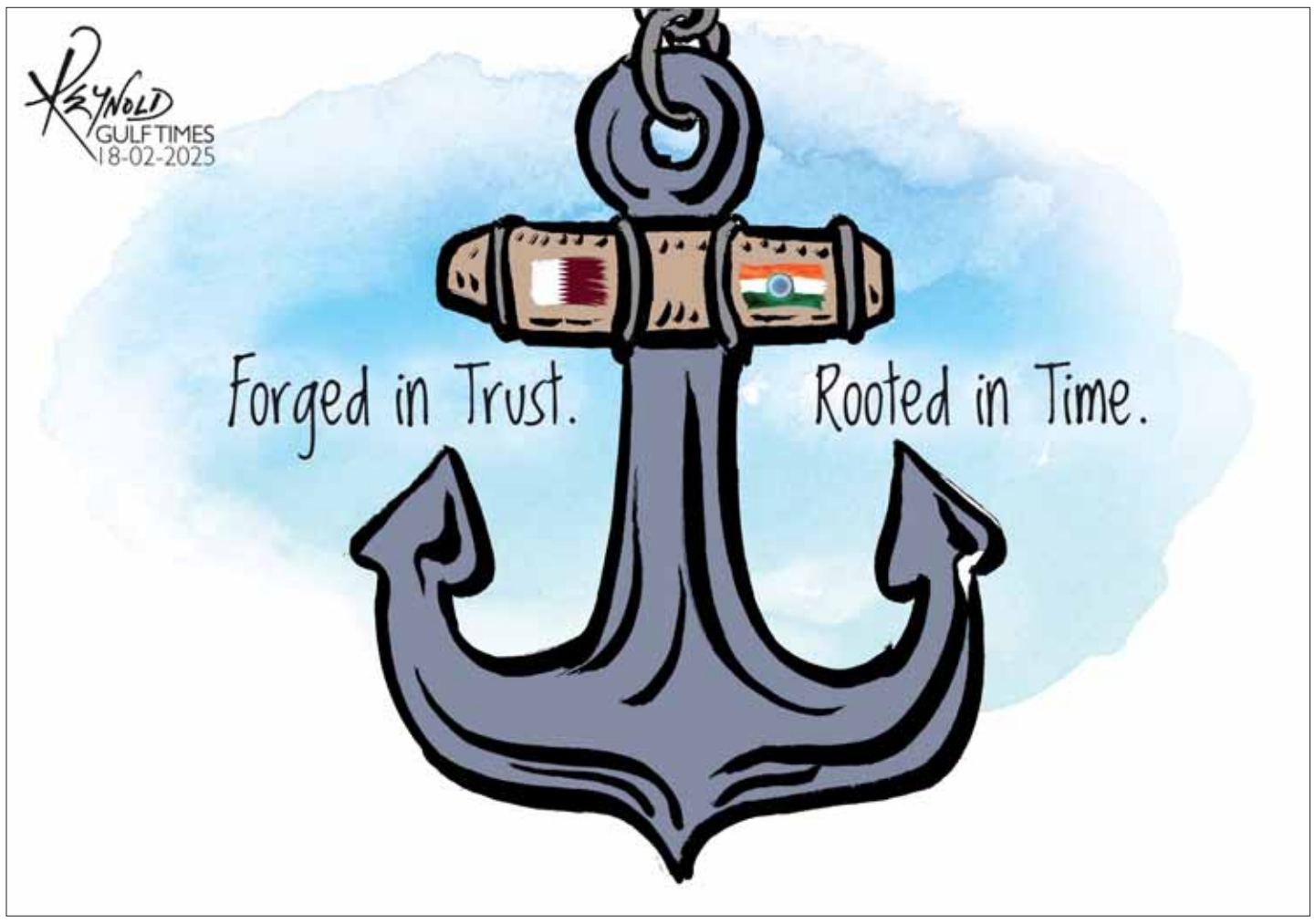
The expanded award categories for 2025 include: Architecture and Urban Planning, Product and Packaging, Retail and Experiential, Sustainable Design, Technology-Driven Design, Travel and Hospitality, and Emerging Designer Middle East.

COMMENT

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GULF TIMES



Trump's moves shock Europe

They should not have been surprised. Yet European officials have been left shocked and flat-footed by the Trump administration's moves on Ukraine, Russia and European defence in recent days.

At a major security conference in Munich at the weekend, there was a sense of dismay and disbelief — and a whiff of panic — among European delegates even as some tried to put a brave face on a dizzying few days of declarations and diplomacy.

Chief among their fears: that they can no longer be sure of US military protection and that US President Donald Trump will do a Ukraine peace deal with Russian President Vladimir Putin that undermines Kyiv and broader European security.

That concern was stoked by US Vice-President J D Vance's conference speech, which mentioned Ukraine and European defence only in passing and focused on accusing Europe of stifling free speech and failing to manage migration.

European leaders declared they would have to take more responsibility for their own defence, ramping up military spending and arms production. But after years of such statements during Trump's first term in 2017-21, and after Russia's 2022 invasion of Ukraine, they have yet to agree on how to organise such an effort or how to pay for it. They are also under US pressure to come up with plans for security guarantees for Ukraine, which a group of leaders discussed at a hastily arranged summit in Paris yesterday.

The Europeans' fears of being sidelined were heightened by Trump's Ukraine envoy, retired Lieutenant General Keith Kellogg, who declared on Saturday they would not be at the table for peace talks - although their views would be taken into account.

Later in the day, it emerged that US and Russian officials will meet in Saudi Arabia in the coming days to start talks aimed at ending the war. US officials have insisted they will only settle for a "durable" peace deal and Ukraine will be at the table. But, meeting in Munich, a city synonymous with the 1938 pact to let Nazi Germany annex the Sudetenland region of Czechoslovakia, some European leaders at the security conference said openly they feared appeasement was once again on the agenda.

Trump's action upended years of Western policy of trying to isolate Putin and insisting peace talks should only begin when Ukraine was in a stronger position

"As I stand here in Munich tonight, I cannot help but ask: Have we been here before?" European foreign policy chief Kaja Kallas said on Saturday evening.

Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk chimed in remotely on Sunday via X: "As a historian and politician the only thing I can say today is: MUNICH. NEVER AGAIN."

Europeans are reeling from a blizzard of Trump administration moves in recent days, even as Washington has said it remains committed to the Nato transatlantic alliance that has been the bedrock of European security for 75 years.

On Wednesday, new US Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth declared at Nato headquarters that a peace deal would not include Nato membership and it was unrealistic for Ukraine to return to its borders pre-2014, when Russia annexed Crimea.

Hegseth also said "stark strategic realities" prevented the US "from being primarily focused on the security of Europe".

Later that day, Trump said he had called Putin, gave an upbeat assessment of the conversation and said peace talks would start immediately. Trump's action upended years of Western policy, pursued by the Biden administration and European powers, of trying to isolate Putin and insisting peace talks should only begin when Ukraine was in a stronger position on the battlefield.

Many of these steps had been telegraphed by Trump in his presidential election campaign and had strong echoes from his first term, when he frequently criticised Nato and accused Europeans of failing to spend enough on defence. But they have left European leaders frantically playing catch-up. Having spent months debating possible European security guarantees for Ukraine, they have been pushed to act by an American diplomatic demand to detail what they could provide. Two European leaders also called on Sunday for the European Union to designate a special envoy for Ukraine peace talks - several months after Trump named his own.

Still, many European officials expressed puzzlement as they tried to discern whether the Trump administration had a detailed plan for Ukraine and who the key players were.

Some drew hope from discussions with US officials behind the scenes, which they said were more sober and constructive than the blunt public remarks from Vance, Hegseth and others.

But others said they feared for the transatlantic alliance as a whole, arguing the Trump administration was not just pursuing different policies from Europe but was actively opposed to the European political mainstream. — Reuters

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Elon Musk's tactics frustrate White House senior officials

By Alexandra Ulmer, Gram Slattery and Nandita Bose

As tech billionaire Elon Musk expands his influence over more than a dozen US federal agencies, frustration is growing among some top aides to President Donald Trump, who want more co-ordination from Musk's team as he slashes the US government, according to four people aware of the tensions.

Trump's chief of staff, Susie Wiles, and her team have at times felt out of the loop as Musk's so-called Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) seeks to fire thousands of federal workers while accessing sensitive data and disrupting operations, the four people said. Wiles and some of her top aides spoke to Musk recently about the issues, according to one of the sources.

Speaking to reporters at the White House on Tuesday, Musk projected alignment between himself, his tight-knit group of DOGE staffers and Trump. But underlying tensions with some White House officials highlight potential difficulties for Trump in balancing his core team with Musk's DOGE staff as they upend agencies in a sweeping restructuring that has challenged congressional authority and faced a series of lawsuits. In the recent conversation, Wiles and her staff delivered a message to Musk: "We need to message all this. We need to be looped in," according to the source familiar with the encounter. Reuters was not able to determine the specific date they spoke or what, if any, changes Musk made after that conversation.

The source added that Trump himself continued to speak positively about Musk to donors and others. Musk did not respond to a request for comment.

The White House declined to comment. An official with knowledge of the matter pushed back at the sources' description of tensions, saying initial "operational hiccups" had been smoothed out.

Musk sends reports to Wiles at the end of each day and they speak by phone almost every day, the official said. The official added that it was Musk's idea to speak with reporters on Tuesday at the Oval Office with his four-year-old son by his side. "He showed up with his kid. We rolled with it," the official said.

On Tuesday, Trump issued an executive order that expanded Musk's power over the federal bureaucracy, requiring federal agencies to work with DOGE to make large workforce reductions and limit hiring. The order calls for DOGE to station a "team lead" at every government agency who will oversee all hiring decisions. "This is a unified team," White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt told reporters on Wednesday. "Elon Musk is serving at the pleasure of the president, just like everybody else on this team. He takes directives directly from the president of the United States."

In a subsequent statement to Reuters on Friday after this story was published, Leavitt said: "This story is complete BS from unknown sources who have no idea what they are talking about." At the Oval Office news conference, with Trump beside him, Musk defended his role as an unelected official who has been granted unprecedented authority by the Republican president to dismantle parts of the US government. He told reporters he speaks to Trump nearly every day, saying his work is in the interest of the public and democracy.

"The people voted for major government reform, and that's what people are going to get," said Musk. "All of our actions are maximally transparent."

DOGE, however, has operated in deep secrecy. It has provided almost no information on whom it employs, where it is operating or what actions it is taking inside government agencies. It posts little information about its work, providing only dollar figures for purported cuts in specific agencies and little concrete detail. It has stunned federal employees, sending its members into at least 15 agencies and gaining access to sensitive data.

As a "special government employee", Musk's financial disclosure filings will not be made public, the White House has said. One of the four sources said that Wiles was not upset with Musk's efforts to dismantle government agencies and downsize the federal workforce, but rather with his approach. Wiles, one of the two managers of Trump's 2024 election campaign, wants Musk and DOGE to keep her team informed and work in a more orderly fashion, said the source, who has direct knowledge of the matter. "There is some frustration, but it's overblown to say it's a rift," the source said.

The fourth source, an associate of high-ranking White House officials, described the friction as more serious and said Wiles' subordinates had expressed discomfort over information that Musk released on his social media platform X before it had been vetted by senior White House staff. "They're definitely finding things out on Twitter."

Concern over e-mails

One point of contention is a series of e-mails that Musk associates began sending out to federal employees, including a January 28 message offering two million federal workers financial incentives to quit. Wiles and her team did not sign off on some of those emails, according to one of the four sources and a separate, fifth, source close to Trump. To be sure, many of Trump's close allies and White House aides appear to revel in Musk's uncompromising style of governance. But his backing is far from unanimous, according to Reuters interviews. Musk, the world's richest person, spent over a quarter of a billion dollars to help Trump win last year's presidential election.

After Trump's November victory, Musk began to spend extended periods of time with Trump, who has called Musk "fantastic" and praised DOGE staffers as a group of "super geniuses." As chief of staff, Wiles is one of Washington's top power brokers.

Under her management, Trump's latest presidential campaign was widely praised as his most disciplined to date. She has a reputation for being self-effacing, turning down an invitation from Trump to speak to the crowd on the night he won the election. Multiple White House officials said they've never heard her raise her voice. She is often spotted by Trump's side while travelling on Air Force One.

On a recent trip to California, when the cameras turned in her direction, she moved away. Musk, meanwhile, is known for his intense, freewheeling approach to work and his enthusiasm for the limelight. He often posts dozens of times a day on his social media platform X, takes suggestions from site users and touts his propensity to work through the weekend. - Reuters


US President Donald Trump speaks as Elon Musk carries his son on his shoulders in the Oval Office of the White House last week. (**Reuters**)

Europe battles for unity at Paris emergency talks

AFP
Paris


French President Emmanuel Macron welcomes British Prime Minister Keir Starmer before the summit at The Elysee Presidential Palace in Paris yesterday. (**AFP**)

European leaders yesterday sought to overcome differences at emergency Paris talks on responding to a shock policy shift on the war in Ukraine by the new US administration of Donald Trump, as Germany bristled at suggestions troops could be deployed.

With European policymakers still reeling from US Vice-President J D Vance's withering attack on the European Union at the annual Munich Security Forum, key leaders attended the meeting at the Elysee Palace called at the last minute by President Emmanuel Macron.

In the most concrete sign yet of the US policy shift, Washington and Moscow's top diplomats yesterday were due to have the first such face-to-face meeting since Russia invaded Ukraine in February 2022, a clear sign that Trump wants to bring Russian President Vladimir Putin in from the cold.

Facing one of their biggest challenges in years, European leaders fear that Trump wants to make peace with Russia in talks that will not even involve Kyiv, let alone the European Union.

They now need to weigh measures including ramping up defence spending to be less dependent on the US, to sending troops to Ukraine as peacekeepers when a ceasefire is agreed. Macron held telephone talks with Trump just before the summit, the French presidency said. There was no joint statement after the meeting or major announcements, which participants said needed to be left for forums like the EU or Nato.

"Everyone at this meeting is aware that transatlantic relations, the Nato alliance and our friendship with the United States have entered a new phase. We all see that," Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk said. EU commission chief Ursula von der Leyen said "Ukraine deserves peace through strength" and this should be "respectful of its independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity, with strong security guarantees."

"Ready and willing," was how Nato chief Mark Rutte described Europe's position after the meeting. "The details will need to be decided but the commitment is clear." UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer, aware of the importance of London showing commitment to European security after Brexit, said he was "prepared to consider committing British forces on the ground alongside others if there is a lasting peace agreement".

But he insisted Washington had to be involved, saying: "There must be a US backstop, because a US security guarantee is the only way to effectively deter Russia from attacking Ukraine again."

But after the talks German Chancellor Olaf Scholz said that any debate now on sending peacekeepers to Ukraine was "completely premature" and "highly inappropriate" while the war is ongoing.

Scholz said he was "a little irritated" about the debate "at the wrong time and on the wrong topic".

Danish Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen said her government was "open-minded" on the issue of troops but warned a key question was if the United States was "going to back up on Europe" if troops were sent. Russia is "threatening all Europe now", she added, warning the US against attempts to agree a "fast" ceasefire that would give Russia the chance to "to mobilise again, attack Ukraine or another country in Europe".

Macron has described Trump's return for a second term in the White House as an "electroshock" but also warned against any peace deal that could amount to "capitulation". French newspaper *Le Monde* said the rupture between Europe and the United States was "historic", but added that Europe had to show its capacity to ensure its own defence.

"European blindness came to an abrupt end in Munich. From now on, the security of the continent depends essentially on the Europeans themselves, and on their ability to maintain their unity," it added.

The Paris talks come as Washington said that Secretary of State Marco Rubio, National Security Advisor Mike Waltz and Special Envoy Steve Witkoff today would meet a Russian delegation including Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov in Riyadh, ahead of a future meeting between Trump and Putin in the Saudi capital.

"There must be no division of security and responsibility between Europe and the United States," Scholz said in Paris.

"Nato is based on us always acting together and sharing the risk, thereby guaranteeing our security. This must not be called into question."

Delta plane flips on landing at Toronto airport, injuring 8

Reuters
Toronto

A plane crashed at Toronto Pearson International Airport yesterday and injured eight people, officials said, with CBC television reporting the plane flipped on landing.

Video posted by News Channel3 Now showed a Delta Air Lines plane belly up on a snow-covered tarmac, with people walking away from the plane.

Of the eight injuries, one was critical and the rest were mild to moderate, Peel Regional Paramedic Services Supervisor Lawrence Saindon said.

Toronto's Pearson Airport said it was aware of an incident involving a Delta plane arriving from Minneapolis and that emergency teams were responding.

All passengers and crew were accounted for, the airport said in a statement on X.

Representatives for Delta did not immediately respond to a request for comment. "There is a plane crash. However, we don't know the circumstances surrounding it at this point," said Constable Sarah Patten of the Peel Regional Police in Ontario.

"It is my understanding that most of the passengers are out and unharmed, but we're still trying to make sure so we're still on scene investigating," Patten said.

Toronto Pearson Airport's website showed more than four dozen delayed flights leaving and arriving at the airport. The US Federal Aviation Administration said there was a ground stop at the airport.

The Transportation Safety Board of Canada, the independent agency that investigates plane crashes, did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Indian court jails man for life in rape, killing of Irish woman

An Indian court jailed a 31-year-old man for life yesterday following the rape and murder of a young Irish woman in the tourist resort state of Goa, nearly eight years after the crime.

The victim, whose name cannot be disclosed under Indian law, was 28 when she visited Goa in March 2017 and befriended Vikat Bhagat, the man convicted of the crime.

"Today, the court has given the final verdict, life imprisonment to the accused," investigating officer Filomeno Costa told the ANI news agency, in which Reuters has a minority stake.

Her lawyer, Vikram Varma, said the body was discovered in a forested area of Goa's Palolem beach, bearing multiple injuries, including some on her face.

"Nothing can compensate the loss of a child, but the sentence has diluted the grief of the family," Varma said in a statement to Reuters. "It was a long battle of nearly eight years but justice has been done."

Forensic reports confirmed the woman was raped and her face smashed in with a beer bottle to frustrate efforts to identify her, the lawyer said.

Bhagat's lawyers asked the court to take a lenient view in handing down the sentence, media reported. Reuters could not immediately contact them.

India tightened laws on rape and set up fast-track special courts after the brutal 2012 gang-rape of a young woman in a Delhi bus and her murder shocked the country. But more than a decade later, the picture is still grim.

Reuters investigations last year showed India had slashed its targeted number of such courts to 790 by 2026, from 2,600 projected earlier.

Last month, a court handed a life sentence to a police volunteer convicted of the rape and murder of a junior doctor at a hospital in the eastern city of Kolkata.

Ukraine talks: Top Russia, US officials to meet in Saudi today

AFP
Riyadh

Top US and Russian diplomats will meet in Saudi Arabia today for talks on resetting the countries' fractured relations and making a tentative start on trying to end the Ukraine war.

Both sides played down the chances that the first high-level meeting between the countries since Moscow invaded Ukraine in 2022 would result in a breakthrough.

Nevertheless, the very fact of the talks has triggered concern in Kyiv and Europe — left reeling by Washington's dramatic diplomatic moves towards the Kremlin.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky yesterday accused Washington of wanting "to please" Russian President Vladimir Putin by "now saying things that are very favourable" to him.

He previously revealed that Kyiv had not been invited to the discussions in Riyadh.

Meanwhile, European leaders were gathering in Paris for emergency talks on how to respond to the radical pivot by the new US administration.

Preparations for a possible summit between presidents Donald Trump and Putin are also set to be on the agenda.

Trump is pushing for a swift resolution to the three-year conflict in Ukraine, while Moscow sees his outreach as a chance to gain concessions on some of its long-standing gripes about Washington's military presence in Europe.

Zelensky said Kyiv "did not know anything about" the talks in Riyadh, according to Ukrainian news agencies, and that it "cannot recognise any things or any agreements about us without us".

Moscow said ahead of the meeting that Putin and Trump wanted to move on from "abnormal relations" and that it saw no place for Europeans to be at any negotiating table.

Russia's Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov and senior Putin aide Yuri Ushakov, who arrived in Riyadh late yesterday according to images shown by the Rossiya 24 news channel, will meet with US Secretary of State Marco Rubio, National Security Advisor Mike Waltz and Special Envoy Steve Witkoff.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters that the talks would be "primarily devoted to restoring the whole complex of Russian-American relations", alongside discussions on "possible negotiations on a Ukrainian resolution, and organising a meeting between the two presidents".

Moscow, which for years has sought to roll back Nato's presence in Europe, has made clear it wants to hold bilateral talks with the United States on a plethora of broad security issues, not just a possible Ukraine ceasefire.

Before invading in February 2022, Putin was demanding the military alliance pull its troops, equipment and bases out of several eastern members that were under Moscow's sphere of influence during the Cold War.

The prospects of any talks leading to an agreement to halt the Ukraine fighting are unclear.

Both Moscow and Washington have cast the meeting as the beginning of a potentially lengthy process.

"I don't think that people should view this as something that is about details or moving forward in some kind of a negotiation," US State Department spokesperson Tammy Bruce said.

Russia's Ushakov told state media that the talks would discuss "how to start negotiations on Ukraine."

"The tasks are more or less clear to us," he added. Both Kyiv and Moscow have ruled out territorial concessions and Putin last year demanded Ukraine withdraw its troops from even more territory.

Zelensky will travel to Turkiye today to discuss the conflict with President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, and then Saudi Arabia a day later.

He does not plan to hold talks with either the US or Russian delegations, his spokesman said yesterday.

Zelensky said last week he was prepared to meet Putin, but only after Kyiv and its allies had a common position on ending the war.

As European leaders gathered in Paris for an emergency security summit, Russia's Lavrov yesterday said he saw no point in them taking part in any Ukraine talks.

"I don't know what they would do at the negotiating table... if they are going to sit at the negotiating table with the aim of continuing war, then why invite them there?," he told a press conference in Moscow.

Germany yesterday said "direct contact between the Americans and the Russians is not a bad thing if it is about finding a way to a durable and lasting peace."

Moscow heads into the Saudi talks boosted by recent gains on the battlefield.

Rubio, Saudi crown prince discuss Gaza

US Secretary of State Marco Rubio and Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman discussed plans for Gaza during a meeting yesterday, State Department spokesperson Tammy Bruce said.

Rubio is visiting the Middle East after President Donald Trump infuriated the Arab world with a proposal for the Palestinian residents of the war-torn strip to be resettled in other Arab nations and for the US to lead reconstruction of the enclave.

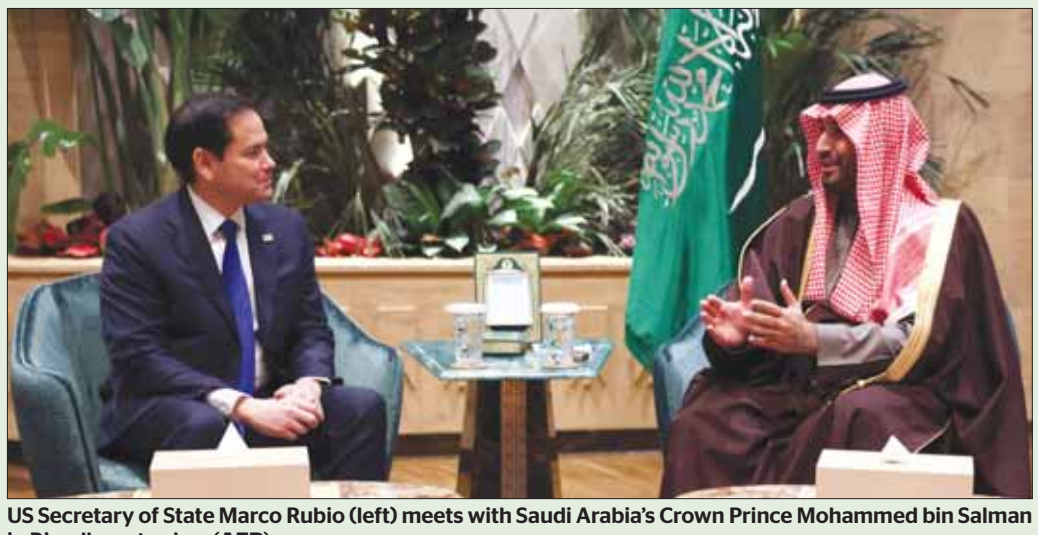
"The secretary underscored the importance of an arrangement for Gaza that contributes to regional security," State Department spokesperson Tammy Bruce said in a readout of the meeting between Rubio and the crown prince.

The two also reaffirmed their commitment to the ceasefire agreed last month between Israel and Hamas and discussed Syria, Lebanon and the Red Sea, Bruce said.

Saudi state news agency SPA said they discussed regional and global developments and efforts to achieve security and stability.

Rubio arrived in Saudi Arabia earlier in the day from Israel where he began his first visit to the region as the top US diplomat.

Rubio's previously planned visit comes ahead of an anticipated meeting between US officials with Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov that is set to focus on ending the war in Ukraine and restoring broader Russia-US ties. Neither side's statement mentioned discussions about Ukraine.


US Secretary of State Marco Rubio (left) meets with Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman in Riyadh yesterday. (**AFP**)

Israel says committed to Trump plan for Gaza displacement

AFP
Jerusalem

Israel expressed commitment yesterday to a US proposal to take over Gaza and displace its Palestinian residents. In a statement yesterday, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said he was "committed to US President Trump's plan for the creation of a different Gaza", also promising that after the war, "there will be neither Hamas nor the Palestinian Authority" ruling the territory.

The United States, Israel's top ally and weapons supplier, says it is open to alternative proposals from Arab governments, but US Secretary of State Marco Rubio has said for now, "the only plan is the Trump plan". The proposal lacked detail but Trump said Palestinians had "lived a miserable existence" in Gaza and suggested the coastal territory could become the "Riviera of the Middle East" following redevelopment after more than 15 months of war.

The United States has also been pushing for a historic deal in which Saudi Arabia would recognise Israel. In return, Riyadh demands the establishment of a Palestinian state — long opposed by Israeli leaders and potentially in contradiction to Trump's Gaza plan.

Since the truce took effect on January 19, a total of 19 Israeli hostages have been released in exchange for more than 1,000 Palestinian prisoners. Out of 251 people seized in Hamas's October 7, 2023 attack on Israel, which sparked the war, 70 remain in Gaza, including 35 the Israeli military says are dead.

Pope's condition 'complex', hospital stay extended

Pope Francis did some work during his fourth day in hospital yesterday, but the 88-year-old faces a "complex clinical picture" that will require a longer than expected stay, the Vatican said.

The head of the Catholic Church was admitted to Rome's Gemelli hospital on Friday with bronchitis, the latest of a series of health issues in recent years.

In a statement earlier yesterday, the Vatican said tests had confirmed "a polymicrobial infection of the respiratory tract that has led to a further change in treatment".

"All the tests carried out until now are indicative of a complex clinical picture that will require adequate hospitalisation," it said.

In an early evening update, it said his clinical condition was unchanged, he continued to be fever-free and was continuing the unspecified treatment.

"This morning he received the Eucharist and subsequently dedicated himself to some work and reading texts," the update said.

"Pope Francis is touched by the numerous messages of affection and closeness he continues to receive," it added.

After initially cancelling events through yesterday, the Vatican said the pope's weekly Wednesday audience would not go ahead either.

Vatican spokesman Matteo Bruni had earlier told reporters that the pope was in "good humour", had rested well overnight, had eaten breakfast and read the newspapers.

A source in the pope's entourage had also insisted there was no alarm within the Vatican.

Francis was admitted after a "very busy" two weeks, during which "he was weakened", the source told AFP, but added: "There is no alarmism."

A Vatican source told AFP the pope was receiving oxygen.

QATAR





Amir on state visit to India

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani arrived yesterday in New Delhi, on a state visit to India. His Highness the Amir was welcomed upon arrival at Palam Air Base by Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Minister of External Affairs Dr Subrahmanyam Jaishankar, Qatar's ambassador in New Delhi Mohammed bin Hassan al- Jaber, and Indian ambassador in Doha Vipul.
His Highness the Amir is accompanied by HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani and an official delegation.



Qatar Scientific Club taking part in 15th Middle East International Inventions Exhibition in Kuwait

The Qatar Scientific Club (QSC), affiliated with the Ministry of Sports and Youth, has announced its participation in the 15th Middle East International Inventions Exhibition, held in Kuwait on February 16-19.

QSC managing director and delegation head Sheikh Ali bin Salman al-Thani has stated that Qatar is keen to participate regularly in the exhibition and has a strong record of achievements.

He said that the exhibition is an important opportunity for Qatari inventors to showcase their innovations, being one of the most significant international invention exhibitions.

Sheikh Ali emphasised Qatar's commitment to presenting the best innovations and expressed optimism about winning top awards.

The QSC is showcasing three innovations: a highly efficient hybrid air conditioning system by Dr Youssef al-Horr, designed to cool hot and humid outdoor air and ventilate open and closed spaces, which has received patents and international awards; a device by inventors Saleh al-Saadi and Abdulrazzaq al-Fares, aimed at enhancing the efficiency and accuracy of sample distribution, with a barcode reader to verify sample matching and issue alerts in case of errors; and an artificial intelligence (AI)-powered security system by inventors Fatima, Amna, Dana Issa al-Kuwari, and Al-Zeina Ahmed al-Muhannadi, featuring a smart touch system designed to protect military equipment.

Additionally, the delegation from Qatar includes Rashid Ibrahim, representing the Secretariat General of the Gulf Cooperation Council, who is presenting the "safe evaporator" invention, consisting of two containers in the evaporator head, one inside the other, designed to prevent coal from falling out or escaping if tilted, with an automatic blower replacing traditional manual blowing.

This year's exhibition is notable for the first participation of the Arab League, which will present five cash prizes from the Arab League General Secretariat, the Arab Council for Scientific Research, the Arab Academy for Science, Technology, and Maritime Transport, the Arab Organisation for Agricultural Development, and the Arab Labour Organisation.



The total cash prizes offered by the exhibition for inventors amount to $60,000, and it is ranked as the top invention exhibition in the Middle East. – ***QNA***

Conference on well-being, workplace health ends



The conference drew professionals from across the healthcare sector to discuss the future of workplace health and employee well-being.

The Hamad Medical Corporation (HMC) has concluded its inaugural International Conference on Wellbeing and Workplace Health 2025 (ICEWWH), drawing professionals from across the healthcare sector to discuss the future of workplace health and employee well-being.

More than 1,100 participants participated in the three-day conference, themed *Enhancing Employee Wellbeing through Solution-Focused Approach*.

The ICEWWH 2025 featured global thought leaders, industry experts and practitioners who shared insight, research findings, and actionable strategies to create healthier, more resilient workplaces.

Speakers from around the world delivered keynote addresses, participated in panel discussions and led plenary sessions, offering innovative perspectives on employee well-being.

Participants also had the opportunity to attend 12 workshops, take part in the unique interactive "Wellbeing Journey", connect and network with global professionals, and gain firsthand knowledge of practical tools for enhancing workplace health.

A standout feature was the "Wellbeing Journey", where participants had the opportunity to assess their physical and mental health at specialised booths that then created a customised well-being journey.

In addition, attendees engaged in physical activities, relaxation experiences and VR (virtual reality) sessions, providing a holistic approach to workplace well-being.

This conference is a testament to the HMC's ongoing commitment, having been honoured with the Best Wellbeing Programme Award at the CIPD Middle East Awards 2024, reaffirming its position as a leader in workplace wellness.

The HMC's employee well-being and workplace health initiatives have expanded beyond the organisation, reaching the Ministry of Public Health and the Primary Health Care Corporation.

ICEWWH chair Mona al-Homaiddi, who is also the acting chief of business services and human resources at the HMC, said: "We are proud to have provided a global platform where professionals could share knowledge and collaborate on shaping the future of workplace health."

"The solutions and strategies shared during this event will undoubtedly inspire positive changes across workplaces worldwide," she said.

HMC human resources executive director Husameldin Mohamed Ali Rudwan, who is also the head of the conference, said: "At the HMC, we are committed to advancing this mission, and we are excited to continue our journey of empowering individuals and organisations alike to foster healthier and more resilient workplaces."

Ministry holds forum on protection and afforestation of coastal areas



The participants of the forum.

The Ministry of Environment and Climate Change (MoECC), in collaboration with the Qatar Foundation (QF)'s Earthna Centre and Qatar University's Environmental Science Centre (ESC), organised a forum yesterday (Monday) on *Protection and afforestation of coastal areas in Qatar with mangrove trees*.

This is the first in a series towards an action plan with the participation of the Thailand embassy, aimed at promoting environmental sustainability and biodiversity protection in Qatar.

Addressing the participants, Youssef Ibrahim al-Hamar, the director of the MoECC's Wildlife Development Department, stressed that Qatar is making significant efforts to protect and rehabilitate its coastal ecosystems, focusing on mangrove trees, which play a crucial role in supporting biodiversity, protecting coastlines, and enhancing environmental sustainability.

He said that the ministry, in collaboration with the ESC and Earthna, has launched a national joint programme to protect and rehabilitate coastal areas, including mangrove trees, seagrasses, and coral reefs, supported by the Mediterranean Shipping Company.

Al-Hamar explained that the MoECC has established a special nursery for mangrove propagation, where over 15,000 seedlings have been cultivated.

Scientific studies have been conducted in collaboration with research and academic institutions to monitor and assess optimal environments for replanting.

The ministry has also launched an awareness campaign, including field visits for school students to enhance environmental awareness on the importance of mangrove trees in preserving marine biodiversity.

Al-Hamar noted that the National Coastal Protection Programme is in line with Qatar National Vision 2030's third strategy and is consistent with the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, which supports international efforts to protect the environmental resources.

He further highlighted that the ministry is working with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)'s West Asia Office to develop a biodiversity database, including updated maps of mangrove distribution in Qatar, alongside a comprehensive protection plan.

Dr Radwan Ben Hammado, the director of the Research and Policy Section at Earthna, welcomed the participants, while Thai ambassador Sira Swangsilpa delivered a presentation on biodiversity in Thailand, including proposals for co-operation between the two countries in this field.

The forum featured a presentation by the director of the Mangrove Forest Protection Department at Thailand's ministry of natural resources and environment, who shared Thailand's experience in protecting mangrove forests and the role of public-private partnerships in supporting these efforts.

Working groups were formed to discuss key topics related to mangrove protection, education, and eco-tourism.

The final general session reviewed the working groups reports and discussed the importance of establishing a national and international network to support the project.

MCIT celebrates graduation of second cohort of Tasmu Accelerator



The Ministry of Communications and Information Technology (MCIT) organised the second Demo Day of the Tasmu Accelerator and recognised startups that developed innovative digital solutions, in pursuit of contributing to accelerating Qatar's digital transformation.

During the Demo Day, four startups were awarded financial prizes of QR200,000 each in recognition of their excellence in providing innovative digital solutions, to support the expansion of their business operations and the development of their projects in alignment with local market needs. Additionally, three honorary awards were presented to startups that demonstrated exceptional performance in innovation, entrepreneurship, and social impact.

Assistant Undersecretary for Digital Industry Affairs at MCIT, Reem al-Mansoori, emphasised that the Tasmu Accelerator aligns with the ministry's vision to build a comprehensive digital ecosystem that drives digital innovation and supports startups in achieving sustainable growth.

She noted that the second cohort of startups in the accelerator collectively generated sales exceeding QR72mn, with potential future opportunities estimated at QR137mn. Furthermore, these startups secured QR18mn in investments, including QR4mn from local investors, demonstrating the accelerators positive impact in empowering digital entrepreneurs and enhancing their contributions to the national economy.

The second cohort of the accelerator included 25 startups from 14 countries, selected based on their ability to deliver impactful technological solutions. Over a six-month intensive acceleration programme, these startups received tailored mentorship and support to refine their business models and enhance their readiness for expansion within Qatar and beyond. The cohort benefited from the expertise of over 200 strategic partners, mentors, and investors, equipping them with essential resources such as access to funding, advanced digital tools, and expert guidance while maintaining their business independence. This initiative strengthens Qatar's digital ecosystem and contributes to achieving the Digital Agenda 2030 and Qatar National Vision 2030.

Since its inception, the Tasmu Accelerator has supported 50 startups from 29 countries, delivering over 2,000 hours of mentorship and 270 hours of training. Additionally, each startup received in-kind support worth QR1.8mn and financial support valued at QR1.4mn. Collectively, these startups have secured QR228mn in investments and generated QR479mn in total sales, underscoring the accelerators role in fostering innovation and building a thriving digital ecosystem in Qatar.

The Tasmu Accelerator is now accepting applications for its 2025 cohort. Interested startups can apply through its website to benefit from extensive support and opportunities for growth in Qatar and beyond. **(QNA)**