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# Kahramaa inks contracts worth QR3.1bn to boost electricity infrastructure

**QNA**  
Doha

**Q**atar General Electricity and Water Corp (Kahramaa) has signed contracts worth about QR3.1bn with four companies to boost Qatar's electricity infrastructure.

HE the Minister of State for Energy Affairs Saad bin Sherida al-Kaabi attended the signing of four strategic contracts with Elsewedy Cables Qatar Company (Qatar), Voltage Engineering Ltd Co WLL (Qatar), Best and Betash Consortium (Turkiye), and Taihan Cable & Solution (South Korea).

Under the new deals, seven high-voltage substations will be set up and 212km-long underground cables and overhead lines will be provided to connect the substations.

Senior Kahramaa executives

and representatives of the participating companies were also present.

HE al-Kaabi hailed Kahramaa's efforts in meeting the growing electricity requirements saying: "Today's signings are a reflection of our commitment to implement effective and comprehensive plans for our strategic projects that would ensure our network's continued and sustainable ability to accommodate the unprecedented growth of the power sector and meet the increasing electricity demand".

Kahramaa President Abdulla bin Ali al-Theyab affirmed that the signing of these contracts is an important move towards further developing Qatar's electricity networks infrastructure.

"We are proud to collaborate with highly qualified national and international companies, and to stress our commitment to

strengthening strategic partnerships and supporting the local economy. The awarding of the largest share of these contracts to Qatari companies reflects our great confidence in the capabilities of the local private sector and its pivotal role in achieving our development vision and achieving Qatar National Vision 2030," he said.

Under these contracts, these companies will undertake the construction of electrical substations and the connection of cables and overhead lines, as well as the development of some existing substations to increase their capacity.

In line with Kahramaa's policy of encouraging Qatari companies and in accordance with the state's strategies to promote the private sector, the share of Qatari companies accounts for 58.4% (QR1.8bn) of the total value of these strategic contracts.



## Qatar Airways adds more services to Toronto, São Paulo

Qatar Airways expanded its services to and from the Americas with its upcoming increase in flights to Toronto and São Paulo. The airline will serve Toronto Pearson Airport (YYZ) with five weekly flights from June 19, 2025, and São Paulo/Guarulhos International Airport (GRU) with 17 weekly flights from June 25, 2025. **Page 13**

## US, Israel bomb Houthi targets

Yemen's Houthis said the United States and Israel struck the port of Hodeida yesterday, hours after a reported US air raid on Sanaa and a day after the Iran-backed rebels targeted Israel's main airport. The Houthi-run Al-Masirah television said that "US-Israeli aggression targets with six strikes the port of Hodeida" on Yemen's western coast, also reporting "US-Israeli aggression on the Bajil district" in the same province. An Israeli official confirmed that Israeli warplanes struck Yemen. **Page 16**

## Syria state TV relaunched

Syrian state television officially relaunched yesterday with a trial broadcast almost five months after the ouster of longtime ruler Bashar al-Assad and following delays blamed on sanctions and dilapidated equipment. At 5pm on Monday, a presenter appeared on television screens, welcoming viewers and announcing the start of a test broadcast of Syria's Alekhabriah television channel from Damascus via two satellite providers. The channel showcased its new branding and broadcast images of Damascus.

# Gazans struggling to survive as Israel plans for 'conquest'

**AFP**  
Gaza City

**I**srael's plan for the "conquest" of Gaza has sparked renewed fears, but for many of the territory's residents, the most immediate threat to their lives remains the spectre of famine amid a months-long Israeli blockade.

The plan to expand military operations, approved by Israel's security cabinet overnight, includes holding territories in the besieged Gaza Strip and moving the population south "for their protection", an Israeli official said.

But Gaza residents said that they did not expect the new offensive would make any significant changes to the already dire humanitarian situation in the small coastal territory.

"Israel has not stopped the war, the killing, the bombing, the destruction, the siege, and the starvation - every day - so how can they talk about expanding military operations?" Awni Awad, 39, told AFP.

Awad, who lives in a tent in the southern Gaza city of Khan Younis after being displaced by Israeli evacuation orders, said that his situation was already "catastrophic and tragic".

"I call on the world to witness the famine that grows and spreads every day," he said.

The UN's World Food Programme (WFP) in late April said it had depleted all its food stocks in Gaza due to Israel's blockade



Palestinians queue for a portion of food distributed by a charity kitchen at the Nuseirat refugee camp in the central Gaza Strip yesterday.

## US will help on food: Trump

President Donald Trump repeated a US pledge to help get food to Palestinians in Gaza when he was asked at the White House yesterday about Israeli plans for an expanded offensive in the territory. Trump did not offer his views on Israel's operations. **(Reuters)**

on all supplies since March 2.

Aya al-Skafy, a resident of Gaza City, told AFP her baby died because of malnutrition and medicine shortages last week.

Umm Hashem al-Saqqa, another Gaza City resident, fears her five-year-old son might face

a similar fate, but is powerless to do anything about it.

"There is no food, no medicine, and no nutritional supplements. The markets are empty of food, and the government clinics and pharmacies have nothing."

Gaza City resident Mohammed al-Shawa, 65, said that Israel's new military roadmap changes little as it already controls most of Gaza.

The UN's Office for the Co-ordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) estimates that 69% of Gaza has now been either incorporated into one of Israel's buffer zones, or is subject to evacuation orders.

That number rises to 100% in the southern governorate of Rafah, where over 230,000 people lived before the war but which has now been entirely declared a no-go zone.

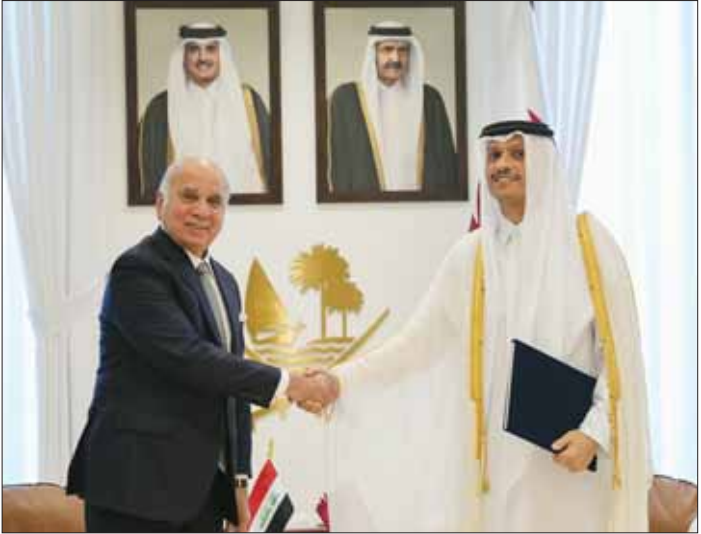
## Deputy Amir chairs QU Board meeting



His Highness the Deputy Amir Sheikh Abdullah bin Hamad al-Thani, the Chairman of the Board of Trustees of Qatar University (QU), chaired the third meeting of QU Board of Trustees for the academic year 2024-2025, held at the Amiri Diwan yesterday. The Board of Trustees reviewed the accomplished decisions and recommendations taken in the second meeting of the academic year 2024/2025. Afterward, the board discussed the topics listed on the meeting agenda and took appropriate decisions thereon. The board also approved the academic planning of Qatar University. **(QNA)**

## Amir invited to attend Arab Summit in Iraq

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani received a written message from President of the sisterly Republic of Iraq Dr Abdul Latif Jamal Rashid, inviting His Highness to participate in the 34th regular session of the Arab Summit and the 5th Arab Economic and Social Development Summit, hosted by Iraq this month. The message was handed to HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani, during his meeting yesterday with Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of the Republic of Iraq, Fuad Hussein. **(QNA)**



# Israel dragging US into disaster in region: Iran

**AFP**  
Tehran

**I**ran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi yesterday accused Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of attempting to drag the United States into "disaster" in the Middle East, warning against any attempt to attack Iran. "Netanyahu is directly MEDDLING within the US Government to drag it into another DISASTER in our region," Araghchi said on X, warning against "ANY mistake against Iran".

Araghchi also accused Netanyahu of "attempting to brazenly DICTATE what President (Donald) Trump can and cannot do in his diplomacy with Iran".

Iran's top diplomat cited US support for Israel in its war in Gaza against Palestinian resistance group Hamas.

It also referred to the US retaliatory strikes against the Tehran-backed Houthi rebels in Yemen, who have been targeting Israel and Red Sea shipping throughout the Gaza war.

"LETHAL support for Netanyahu's Genocide in Gaza and waging WAR on behalf of Netanyahu in Yemen have achieved NOTHING for the American people," he said.

On Sunday, Netanyahu blamed Iran and vowed retaliation after the Houthis launched a missile which struck in the area of Israel's Ben Gurion International Airport.

Iran denied any role in the attack.

Araghchi's remarks also came after the postponement of the latest round of nuclear talks with the

US, which were scheduled for Saturday, with mediator Oman citing "logistical reasons".

The two countries have held three rounds of discussions since April 12, their highest-level contact since Washington withdrew from a landmark deal with Tehran in 2018, during Trump's first term as US president.

Netanyahu has called for dismantling Iran's nuclear programme, saying a credible deal must "remove Iran's capacity to enrich uranium for nuclear weapons" and prevent the development of ballistic missiles.

On Sunday, Trump said he would only accept "the total dismantlement" of Iran's nuclear programme, but also signalled openness to discussing one for civilian use.

"Now, there's a new theory going out there that Iran would be allowed to have civilian - meaning to make electricity," he told NBC News, adding that he "would be open to hearing" the argument.

Yesterday, Araghchi urged the US to move away from "unrealistic and illogical" positions in order to reach a deal.

In a phone call with EU foreign policy chief Kaja Kallas, Araghchi said Tehran is capable of addressing concerns "related to the possibility of Iran acquiring nuclear weapons", noting that "reaching an agreement is fully within reach".

The Iranian foreign minister also expressed Tehran's willingness to resume diplomatic talks with Britain, France, and Germany, all parties to the collapsed 2015 nuclear deal.



### Al-Misnad meets Swedish official



HE the Minister of State for International Co-operation Maryam bint Ali bin Nasser al-Misnad met yesterday with the visiting Director-General for Global Affairs at the Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs Mikael Lindvall. The meeting discussed co-operation relations between the two countries. In addition, they discussed the developments in the Gaza Strip, the occupied Palestinian territories, and Sudan. **(QNA)**

### Qatar, Sweden hold political consultations



The fourth round of political consultations between the foreign ministries of Qatar and Sweden was held in Doha yesterday. The Qatari side was chaired by HE the Secretary-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Dr Ahmed bin Hassan al-Hammadi, while the Swedish side was chaired by Director-General for Global Affairs at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Mikael Lindvall. The consultations discussed bilateral relations and ways to enhance and develop them. **(QNA)**

### Al-Ansari meets Swedish official



Adviser to the Prime Minister and Official Spokesperson for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, HE Dr Majed bin Mohammed al-Ansari, met yesterday with Director-General for Global Affairs at Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mikael Lindvall, on the sidelines of the fourth round of political consultations between the foreign ministries of the two countries. The meeting discussed co-operation relations between the two countries and ways to support and develop them. They also discussed the latest developments in the Gaza Strip, the occupied Palestinian territories, Syria, and Afghanistan, in addition to several topics of mutual interest. **(QNA)**



## QC promotes sustainable development in Senegal

**Q**atar Charity (QC) inaugurated several development projects and signed a framework co-operation agreement with the Senegalese Ministry of Family and Solidarity. The initiatives were launched during an official visit by a high-level QC delegation led by CEO Yousuf bin Ahmed al-Kuwari. This move underscores the deep fraternal and humanitarian ties between Qatar and Senegal, a statement said.

During the visit, a mosque and well — both dedicated as a reward for Dr Rabia bin Sabah al-Kuwari — were inaugurated in Seo village, located in Ngogom, Bambey. The ceremony was attended by members of the local community and the QC delegation, which included Dr al-Kuwari's son, Sabah bin Rabia al-Kuwari.



The mosque, covering 400sq m and accommodating over 460 worshippers, serves as a centre for worship, education, and community cohesion. The well, equipped with a pump and water tank, provides clean drinking water to approximately 5,000 residents, improving health and daily living conditions. Al-Kuwari emphasised the project as a symbol of friendship between Qatar and

Senegal and thanked all contributors to these initiatives. The QC delegation also participated in signing a framework agreement with the Senegalese Ministry of Family and Solidarity. Al-Kuwari and Maimouna Dieye, Minister of Family and Solidarity, signed the agreement, which aims to establish a framework for humanitarian and developmental co-operation.

### Interior minister meets Pakistani counterpart



HE the Minister of Interior and Commander of the Internal Security Force (Lekhwiya), Sheikh Khalifa bin Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani, met yesterday with Pakistan's Minister of Interior and Narcotics Control, Mohsin Raza Naqvi. Discussion during the meeting dealt with co-operation relations between the two countries in the security field and ways to bolster them. The two ministers also discussed topics of common interest. **(QNA)**

### NCSA president meets Pakistan's minister



HE the President of the National Cyber Security Agency (NCSA), Engineer Abdulrahman bin Ali al-Farahid al-Maliki, met yesterday with Pakistan's Minister of Interior and Narcotics Control, Mohsin Raza Naqvi. The meeting reviewed bilateral relations in cybersecurity and discussed ways to develop and strengthen the partnership in this field. **(QNA)**

# Shura Council clears draft law on combating doping in sports

**QNA**  
Doha

**T**he Shura Council held its weekly meeting yesterday, under the chairmanship of its Speaker HE Hassan bin Abdulla al-Ghanem. During the session, the Council approved a draft law on combating doping in sports and referred it to the esteemed government after having reviewed the report of the Education, Culture, Sports, and Information Affairs Committee and discussing its details with the members. The Council also reviewed the esteemed government's statement regarding the Shura Council's proposals on reorganising and monitoring domestic worker recruitment offices. The Council decided to refer it to the Social Affairs, Labour, and Housing Committee for study and to report back on its findings. The Shura Council had discussed the aforementioned topic in previous sessions and con-

cluded by submitting a proposal to the esteemed government, which included the Council's views on the matter. Moreover, the council reviewed two reports on its participation in two parliamentary events: the meeting of the Coalition of Women Parliamentarians from Arab Countries to Combat Violence against Women, held via videoconferencing in November 2024, and the 37th meeting of the Executive Committee of the Arab Inter-Parliamentary Union (AIPU), held in Cairo last February. At the end of the session, HE al-Ghanem briefed the members on his participation, leading the Council's delegation to the 38th Conference of the AIPU, which concluded yesterday in Algeria under the theme "The Role of the AIPU in Light of Regional and International Changes". He explained that the conference discussed the challenges facing the region, as well as a number of issues and challenges facing the Arab nation, foremost among

them the Palestinian cause and the tragic developments it is witnessing in light of the ongoing attacks against the brotherly Palestinian people in the Gaza Strip and the rest of the occupied Palestinian territories. HE al-Ghanem also noted that the conference issued a final statement praising the prominent role played by Qatar in supporting the Palestinian cause, appreciating its efforts to continue delivering humanitarian and relief aid to the Gaza Strip. HE the Speaker said that the Union, in his statement, also welcomed the memorandum submitted by Qatar to the International Court of Justice regarding its request for an advisory opinion on Israel's obligations regarding the presence and activities of the UN, other international organisations, and third states. He emphasised the importance of this memorandum in supporting relief and humanitarian organisations and ensuring a decent living for the Palestinian people.

### UDST hosts training initiative in tie-up with Shafallah Center

**T**he University of Doha for Science and Technology (UDST) received a group of members from the Shafallah Center for Persons with Disabilities as part of the Is'ham initiative, which aims to empower individuals with intellectual disabilities and autism and prepare them for employment through real-life educational experiences in a professional work environment. As part of this inclusive collaboration, members from the Shafallah Center, accompanied by job coaches, participated in both training sessions and hands-on job shadowing across key UDST locations, including the University Library and Archives. The initiative offered members valuable exposure to professional work environments, encouraging the development of self-confidence, independence, and essential workplace skills. President of UDST Dr Salem Al-Naemi said: "This initiative demonstrates the power of inclusive education and the strength



of community partnerships. We were honoured to host these bright and determined members from the Shafallah Center and to provide them with a meaningful, hands-on work experience within the university. By opening our doors and engaging in initiatives like this, we reinforce our commitment to accessibility, diversity, and equal opportunity. These experiences not only benefit the students, but also enrich our campus culture and broaden the perspectives of our staff and faculty." Executive Director of Shafallah Center Mariam Saif al-Suwaidi

said: "Such partnerships are essential in paving comprehensive career paths for our members. We are grateful to UDST for its continued support, and for providing an environment that leverages growth, engagement, and constructive evaluation." This initiative serves as a model for collaboration between educational and community institutions, and reaffirms a strong commitment to building a culture of support for programs that promote growth, dignity, and equal opportunities for all.



## UDST, Qatar Cancer Society join hands to promote academic partnership

QNA  
Doha

University of Doha for Science and Technology (UDST) and Qatar Cancer Society (QCS) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to establish a collaborative framework that promotes education, community engagement, and research in cancer awareness, prevention, and healthcare development.

The partnership will support a variety of initiatives, including the co-design of academic and continuing education programmes, joint research aligned with Qatar's national health priorities, the integration of healthcare experts into teaching roles, and community outreach efforts targeting cancer awareness and early detection.

President of UDST Dr Salem bin Nasser Al-Naemi stated: "This partnership reflects our strong commitment to applied education that directly impacts society. By working closely with Qatar Cancer Society, we aim to empower our students and faculty to contribute meaningfully to cancer education, research,



**The partnership will support a variety of initiatives, including the co-design of academic and continuing education programmes, joint research aligned with Qatar's national health priorities, the integration of healthcare experts into teaching roles, and community outreach efforts targeting cancer awareness and early detection**

and advocacy in Qatar." Sheikh Dr Khalid bin Jabor al-Thani, Chairman of Qatar Cancer Society, commented: "The signing of this MoU with University of Doha for Science and Technology reflects our vision of building strategic partnerships with academic institutions that support our mission in awareness, research, and empowering the community in the fight against cancer. It is a

strategic step toward realising our goal of making Qatar a regional leader in cancer prevention and control."

The agreement underscores the importance of multi-sectoral partnerships in advancing public health and highlights the critical role of education and research institutions in shaping a more resilient, health-conscious society.

## MoI, Cisco sign agreement for strategic co-operation

QNA  
Doha

HE the Minister of Interior and Commander of the Internal Security Force (Lekhwiya), Sheikh Khalifa bin Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani witnessed the signing of a Letter of Intent for strategic co-operation between the Ministry of Interior (MoI) and Cisco Systems.

The signing ceremony was also attended by Chairman and CEO of Cisco Systems, Chuck Robbins and a number of senior officials from both sides. The Letter of Intent was signed for the MoI by Director General of Communications and Information Systems, Brigadier Jassim al-Buhashim al-Sayed and for Cisco by Vice-President for the Middle East, Africa, Romania, and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), David Meads.

The signing of the Letter of Intent comes within the framework of strengthening partnerships with leading global companies in the fields of technology, artificial intelligence, and digital infrastructure, contributing to supporting the MoI's efforts to develop a smart security system and comprehensive digital transformation.



HE the Minister of Interior and Commander of the Internal Security Force (Lekhwiya) also discussed with the Chairman and CEO of Cisco Systems the co-operation between the Ministry of

Interior and the company, particularly in the areas of digital transformation, artificial intelligence, digital infrastructure development, and cybersecurity. They also discussed prospects for partnership in future strategic projects.

## HMC highlights world-class dermatology services at campaign event

QNA  
Doha

As part of its ongoing "Your Health, Our Priority" campaign, Hamad Medical Corp (HMC) highlighted the exceptional services provided by its Dermatology Department, one of the region's leading centres for skin health.

HMC's Dermatology and Venereology Department provides high-quality medical care for patients of all ages with all skin conditions including eczemas, psoriasis, hair fall, vitiligo, skin

infections, immune and allergic processes, skin cancer, and other skin manifestations. As a regional hub for outstanding patient care, the department is also building a global reputation for innovation, multidisciplinary collaboration, and groundbreaking research in skin science.

"Our dermatology services reflect HMC's broader commitment to delivering specialised, world-class healthcare to the community of Qatar, whether treating common skin conditions or managing the most complex diseases, our goal is always to provide personalised, most updated high-quality

care tailored to the needs of each patient," said Chair of HMC's Dermatology and Venereology Department, Prof Martin Steinhoff, one of the top 2% ranked researchers worldwide by Stanford University.

Patients have the benefit of accessing cutting-edge treatments delivered by expert clinicians across a wide range of subspecialty clinics at HMC, including Biologic and immunomodulatory therapies for inflammatory skin diseases such as atopic dermatitis, psoriasis, vitiligo, autoimmune diseases; Hair and scalp clinics for complex disorders such as alopecia areata

and scarring alopecia; State-of-the-art light-based treatments for conditions such as vitiligo, atopic dermatitis, psoriasis, and cutaneous T-cell lymphoma; Dermatosurgery treatments including skin biopsies and excisions for benign and malignant lesions; Advanced laser therapy for scarring, pigmentation disorders, and rosacea; Sclerotherapy and foam sclerotherapy for the treatment of venous insufficiencies such as varicose veins, spider veins, and deep vein thrombosis; Skin cancer diagnostics and therapy of benign and malignant skin cancers; and Genetic dermatology and genodermatoses for

diagnostics and therapy of genetic skin diseases and haemangiomas.

According to HMC, specialised clinics also include services for paediatric dermatology, geriatric dermatology (one of the first globally), sexually transmitted infections, and complex autoimmune skin diseases.

The latest advanced technology at HMC allows for real-time skin imaging and non-invasive diagnostics, such as dermoscopy or ultrasound, enabling earlier and more accurate detection of conditions like melanoma and other skin cancers or scleroderma, improving outcomes and reducing the need

for unnecessary procedures.

HMC's dermatology specialists are expertly trained, playing a crucial role in emergency and inpatient care to manage severe, life-threatening skin conditions such as Stevens-Johnson-Syndrome, erythroderma, drug reactions, allergies, and autoimmune diseases.

Dr Ayda al-Hammadi, Senior Consultant at HMC's Dermatology and Venereology Department said: "our vision is to be more than just a centre for treatment. We aim to set new standards for dermatological care and to serve as a model for excellence globally."

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# IIFA discusses jurisprudence, economy, medicine



Under the patronage of HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani, the 26th Council of the International Islamic Fiqh Academy (IIFA), a subsidiary of the Organisation of Islamic Co-operation (OIC), kicked off Sunday in Doha.



The five-day event will debate contemporary jurisprudential, economic, and medical issues of concern to Muslim countries and communities. In his opening remarks, HE the Minister of Endowments (Awqaf) and Islamic Affairs Ghanem bin Shaheen bin Ghanem al-Ghanem said Islamic Shariah gives

comprehensive solutions to all questions concerning humanity and that the Muslim scholars gathering in Doha would exchange views on the most pressing issues and developments to formulate a vision that is accepted by the Muslim nation. His Excellency added that the IIFA Council, along with

all Muslim scholarly and legal bodies, must be further empowered to counter the dangers facing Muslims, including the destruction of the family structure, the negative impact on the young, the degradation of virtues, the disregard for values and morals, and the promotion of atheism, homosexuality, perversion, among others.

He noted that all the topics on the agenda would be extensively scrutinised to come out with a jurisprudential vision that all Muslim individuals and jurists are proud of.

His Excellency added that the IIFA's focus on jurisprudential issues and emerging issues has made it a leading jurisprudential platform for the Islamic world, leading to greater Islamic solidarity.

He highlighted the widely varied papers presented in the conference enriches the debate and boosts the public benefit for Islam and Muslims.

Meanwhile, OIC Secretary-General Hissein Brahim Taha said the current international events, primarily the Israeli aggression on the Gaza Strip and the rest of the occupied Palestinian territories, including Al-Quds Al-Sharif, calls for greater solidarity with the victims of these attacks.

He praised IIFA's efforts to expose Israeli occupation crimes and to strengthen international solidarity with the Palestinian people.

Extending thanks to Qatar for its support to all OIC institutions and firm commitment to joint Islamic action, Taha called on OIC Member States to provide financial and academic support to the IIFA so that it can continue its successful journey in serving Muslims. (QNA)

## Genesis, Mercedes-Benz, Toyota models recalled

The Ministry of Commerce and Industry, in co-operation with Skyline Automotive, has announced the recall of Genesis GV80, GV70 and G80, 2023-24 models, as some vehicles may encounter issues with the cluster failing to boot up.

The ministry, in co-operation with Nasser Bin Khaled and Sons Automobiles, has announced the recall of Mercedes S-Class, GLC, SL Class, and GT, 2023-24 models, as processor in the high voltage starter alternator's control unit for vehicles with hybrid drive may suffer from sporadic overload causing function deactivation which could result in the loss of propulsive power without notice. The ministry, in co-operation with Al Abdulghani Motors, also announced the recall of Toyota Camry HEV, 2019 model, over the possibility of a fuel pump malfunction that may cause it to stop functioning.

The ministry said the recall campaign comes within the framework of its ongoing efforts to protect consumers and ensure that car dealers follow up on vehicle defects and repairs.

The ministry said that it will co-ordinate with the dealer to follow up on the maintenance and repair works and will communicate with customers to ensure that the necessary repairs are carried out. The ministry has urged all consumers to report any violations or breaches by contacting the Consumer Protection and Combatting Commercial Fraud Department, which receives complaints, suggestions, and inquiries through the following communication channels: Call Centre: 16001, e-mail: info@moci.gov.qa, ministry's accounts on social media: @mociqatar, ministry's Mobile App: MOCIQATAR (available on iOS and Android devices)

## Childcare, AI, finance in spotlight at session

On its second day yesterday, the 26th session of the International Islamic Fiqh Academy (IIFA) discussed several scientific sessions on contemporary topics and developments related to childcare, technology, economics, and Islamic jurisprudence. During the first scientific session, members and experts discussed emerging issues in childcare, as Islamic law imposes a shared responsibility on both the family and society to care for children and protect their rights. In the second session, the topic of Istishab as a jurisprudential evidence, its impact and applications in contemporary new developments and incidents, was discussed. It is considered a legal evidence to guide new developments and incidents and ensure the stability of rulings.


In the third session, the IIFA council addressed the topic of artificial intelligence: its rules, regulations, and ethics. The distinguished scholars discussed the many benefits and harms resulting from the use of artificial intelligence, and outlined numerous recommendations and regulations that will be taken into consideration in the IIFA council's decisions. The fourth session also addressed new developments in the Islamic finance industry, including the Shariah ruling on paying a third party an increase in a loan, and the ruling on charging fees for letters of guarantee and documentary credit. The IIFA council will issue its decisions and recommendations on these contemporary issues at its final session, which will be held at the end of the session next Thursday. (QNA)



## QFFD announces the following Public Tender:

SN	TENDER NO.	TENDER NAME	TENDER FEE (USD)	TENDER BOND (USD)	CLOSING DATE
1	QFFD/PPF-O/PDS/0075/01-2025	Provision of Consultancy Services for the Design & Construction of Cricket Stadium in Guyana	\$ 500	\$ 22,500	22-June-2025

- ❖ Tender Document of the above Tender is available for collection via email from **date of Advertisement until Bid closing date**.
- ❖ Interested parties shall first deposit the appropriate Tender Fee (non-refundable) as mentioned above; payable to:  
**Bank Name:** Masraf Al-Rayan Bank  
**Account Name:** Qatar Fund for Development  
**Account Number:** 0003-102031-202  
**IBAN:** QA14MAFR00000000003102031202  
(Company Name, Tender Name & Tender Number must be mentioned in the deposit slip)
- ❖ The Tender document will be issued upon receiving a copy of the Commercial Registration, Classification Certificate (if any) and proof of payment via email: [overseas.tender@qatarfund.org.qa](mailto:overseas.tender@qatarfund.org.qa).
- ❖ Tender document submitted should be accompanied with a Tender Bond in accordance with the tender document shall be issued by a local Qatari Bank or by an international Bank confirmed and endorsed by any local Qatari Banks valid for 180 days from date of closing date.
- ❖ The Closing time will be no later than 12:00 noon, on the closing date mentioned above; any offer arriving thereafter will not be considered.
- ❖ Tender document to be submitted at:  
**SECRETARY, TENDER COMMITTEE**  
Qatar Fund for Development  
L9 Floor, Laffan Tower  
P.O. Box 23366  
Doha, Qatar



**QAPCO**  
شركة قطر البتروكيماويات  
QATAR PETROCHEMICAL COMPANY

**QAPCO invites qualified suppliers / service providers to participate in the following tender:**

Effective from 01<sup>st</sup> 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>).


SI No.	Tender Reference and Description	(i) Deadline for Submission of Information & Interest for Bidding	(ii) Tender Fee & Payment date	(iii) Tender Publication on ARIBA	(iv) Tender Bond	Bid Closing Date
1	RFP - P10-01-337 Implementation of Electronic Permit to Work System (E-PTW System)	08 <sup>th</sup> May 2025	QAR. 750.00 11 <sup>th</sup> May 2025	12 <sup>th</sup> May 2025	QAR. 100,000	2 <sup>nd</sup> June 2025, 12:00 Noon

- i. Interested bidders to communicate their willingness to bid and contact details to QAPCO Procurement ([procurement@qapco.com.qa](mailto: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 11<sup>th</sup> May 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. QAPCO shall reply with the access to "ARIBA eSourcing RFP event" along with necessary instructions and guidelines for the bid submission.
- v. **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
- vi. 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](mailto: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](http://www.qapco.com))*

**For more information about QAPCO please visit our website: [www.qapco.com](http://www.qapco.com)**



**The Transport Company**  
**MOWASALAT (KARWA)**

**Mowasalat (Karwa) announces the following tender:**



Tender Ref. No.	Tender Title	Tender Fee	Electronic Tender Fee Payment Dates	Tender Bond	Bid Closing Date
TC-029-MTS-2025	Supply of Female Bus Attendants on-call off basis	QAR 1000	6 May 2025 to 12 May 2025	QAR 49,050	25 May 2025

**CONDITIONS:**






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


<b>Beneficiary Name</b>	MOWASALAT-KARWA COMPANY
<b>A/C No.</b>	0013 - 011272 - 060
<b>IBAN</b>	QA07 QNBA 0000 0000 0013 0112 7206 0
<b>Swift Code No.</b>	QNBQAQAA
<b>Branch Address</b>	Corporate Branch, P.O Box 1000, Doha - Qatar
<b>Currency</b>	QAR
<b>CR No.</b>	26887
- ▶ Bidder must submit proof of tender fee payment (Bank Deposit Slip + a Signed & Stamped Expression of Interest (indicating Tender Ref. No. and Title / Company Name and details of nominated contact person i.e., Tel. No., Fax No., and Email address) + Copy of valid Commercial Registration to Mowasalat Secretary - Tender Committee at email: [tenders@mowasalat.com](mailto:tenders@mowasalat.com)
- ▶ Tender documents will be released via email on the next working day after the tender fee payment due dates to all bidders who have submitted the bank deposit slip and other documents requested (i.e., **23rd October 2024**).
- ▶ **Bonds: Tender Bond & Performance Bond:** Bids must be accompanied by Bonds issued by a local bank operating in the State of Qatar as per the Qatar Central Bank template. Further details of bonds can be found in the tender documents. *Bids without Tender Bond shall not be considered.*
- ▶ **Tender validity:** Bid validity period shall be 180 days from the bid closing date.
- ▶ **Tender documents submission:** Bids must be submitted in 3 separate sealed (**IN RED WAX**) envelopes addressed to **Secretary - Tender Committee** clearly highlighting the Tender Ref. No. & Tender Title:
  - **Envelope 1#** must include the Technical Bid submission (1 Original + 1 non-Editable copy in a USB)
  - **Envelope 2#** must include Commercial Bid submission (1 Original + 1 Editable MS Excel spreadsheet copied in a USB)
  - **Envelope 3#** must include the Tender Bond (1 Original)
- ▶ **Bid Closing Date:** Bid submission deadline is **12.00 noon Doha Local Time** as on the Bid closing date shown above. The 3 envelopes must be handed over to the Office of The Secretary - Tender Committee, located at Mowasalat Head Office, Industrial Area, Any tender submitted after the deadline will not be considered.

Tel.: 4458 8724 Fax: 4458 8850



Supplier RegistrationMowasalat Location





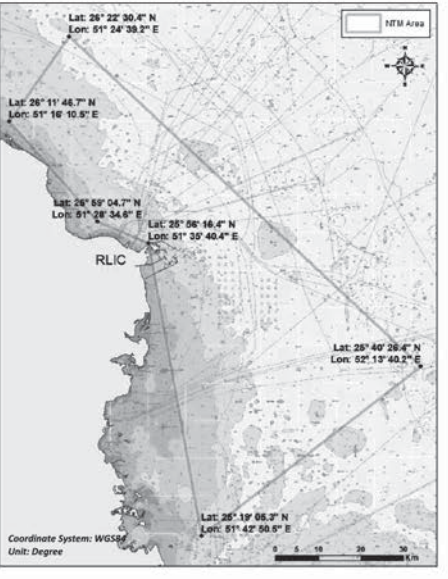
**Public Announcement**  
**To all Ships, Fishermen and Mariners**  
Seismic Survey Acquisition by Vessels AOS Glory, Stanford Hawk, GMS Apollo, Voyager Explorer, BGP Innovator and Safa Searcher  
Seismic Survey Works Offshore Qatar from 27<sup>th</sup> November 2024 – 27<sup>th</sup> November 2025

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 Innovator 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



# The Maze: new novel to be launched by Qatari Abdulrahim al-Siddiqi

By Tawfik Lamari  
Staff Reporter

The Maze a new fiction from the Qatari Novel Library is to be launched by the Qatari author Abdulrahim al-Siddiqi at the Doha International Book Fair (DIBF).

The author of *The Maze*, which is scheduled to be signed and officially released on the sidelines of the upcoming DIBF, spoke about its humanistic philosophy, the challenges of writing it, and his future projects.

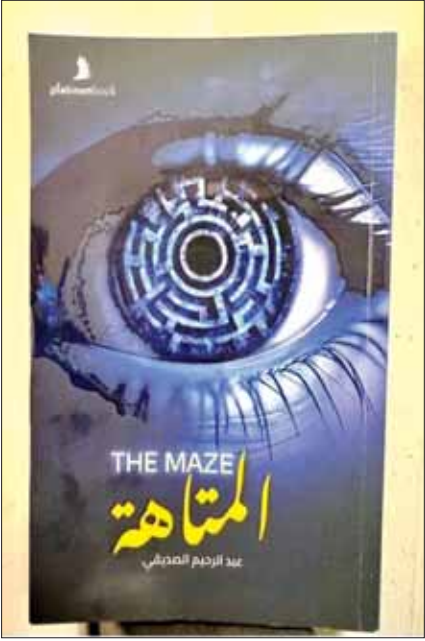
Regarding the reason for choosing *The Maze* as the title for his latest book, Al-Siddiqi said that the Maze is not just a place, but rather a mental and emotional state experienced by the hero, which is reflected in everyone around him.

Al-Siddiqi explained that the novel represents a person's journey within themselves, lost between memory and reality, love and betrayal, truth and doubt.

He continued: "The novel tells the story of Talal, who experiences a psychological struggle with his fragmented past and a mind filled with gaps."

He pointed to the interweaving of scenes of love, betrayal, murder, and Alzheimer's disease in a circular narrative that raises questions about who is the victim. Who is the killer? And is the Maze located outside or inside? Regarding the novel's broad outlines, al-Siddiqi emphasised that his new novel is built on two axes: memory and identity. He noted that it poses an existential question: What if it's your memory that has betrayed you, not your feelings?

He emphasised that the novel's message is



that nothing is as it seems; the Maze may be more within us than it is on the city streets.

Al-Siddiqi explained that there are personal motivations behind this novel, indicating that the first is artistic, represented by the desire to break with the traditional pattern of narrative fiction. The second is human, represented by writing about those we judge without understanding them. He pointed to the character of Talal, which he described as a character charged with connotations, belonging to the "gray area."

# Katara Publishing House to join 34th DIBF

Katara Publishing House is participating with a dedicated pavilion in the 34th edition of the Doha International Book Fair (DIBF), being held at the Doha Exhibition and Convention Centre from May 8-17, under the theme 'From Engraving to Writing.'

The DIBF will host 522 local, Arab, and international publishing houses. Katara pavilion will showcase the latest cultural and scientific publications, in addition to some historical and heritage works. Daily book signing events are scheduled, featuring the most prominent titles published by the house in 2025.

Notable titles include *Tweirat Al-Falah in the Qatari Environment* by Sheikh Hassan bin Abdulrahman al-Thani, *The Comprehensive Encyclopedia of Purebred Arabian Horses* by General Mubarak al-Khiyarain, *Famous Camel Breeds in the Gulf* compiled by Khaled Mohsen Hazam Andeila, *Speaking About Family Reform* by researcher Fatima al-Mohamed, and *Al-Zardaqah in the Knowledge of Horses, Their Breeds, Diseases, and Remedies*, a critically edited manuscript by an anonymous author.

The pavilion will also feature a number of novels, including *After the Volcano's Calm* by Ghalia Hassan al-Mansouri and *Al Mufair* by Kholoud



Hamad al-Naimi, alongside a selection of award-winning Arabic novels from previous Katara Prize editions.

The pavilion will also feature Katara's major publications from 2024, such as nine new volumes (Volumes 13 to 22) of the *Qatar Cultural Encyclopedia*, *The Children of Falcons Never Fail* by Hessa Abdullah al-Sulaiti, *Behind the Curtain* by Mohamed Abu Jassoum, *The Journey of the Ship 'Seffran'* from the Arabian Sea to the Arabian Gulf by Prof Mohamad Harb Farzat, and *The Qatari Envi-*

*ronment: Reality and Aspiration*.

Also on display will be several books from the "Short Introductions" series on literary criticism and the latest issue of *Sardiyyat*, the publishing house's periodical.

Amira Ahmed al-Muhannadi, director of Katara Publishing House, said that the pavilion features over 350 book titles spanning all fields of knowledge, including literature, heritage, science, research, and critically edited manuscripts.


## Alaraby 2 signs historic pact with ARTE network

Alaraby 2 has announced the signing of a major agreement with the renowned Franco-German television network ARTE, marking the largest collaboration of its kind in the Arab region. This partnership will allow nearly 100 hours of high-quality international documentaries to be broadcast on Alaraby 2 and the Alaraby+ app. As part of the agreement, Alaraby 2 will showcase a selection of acclaimed documentaries that have won prestigious awards and captured the attention of critics and audiences alike. These documentaries align with the channel's leading vision in the fields of cultural entertainment and reflect its commitment to providing high-quality content for viewers in the Middle East and North Africa.



"We are thrilled to partner with ARTE, a network synonymous with quality and innovation in documentary storytelling," said Joseph Hussein Head of Acquisition of Alaraby TV Network. "This collaboration aligns perfectly with our mission to inspire our audience with content that fosters understanding and cultural exchange." Elias Khoury, CEO of Alaraby 2, affirmed that "the agreement reflects Alaraby 2's

commitment to delivering rich cultural and entertainment programming that meets the expectations of its diverse audience. The curated selection from ARTE includes award-winning documentaries covering a wide range of topics – from history and science to the arts and global issues." The documentaries will be aired on Alaraby 2 and will also be available on demand through the "Alaraby+" app for the duration of the agreement, ensuring easy access to this premium content. This move represents a significant boost toward future strategic partnerships, reinforcing Alaraby 2's position as a leading platform for cultural and entertainment content in the Arab world.



المستشفى الأهلي  
AL-AHLI HOSPITAL  
A Division of  
MediCare Group p.s.c.

### ANNOUNCES THE ISSUE OF THE FOLLOWING TENDER:

Tender No.	Subject	Tender Bond (Q.R.S.)	Closing Date
AAH/TC/09/2025	Supply, Installation & Commissioning of Pulmonary Equipment	Qar. 15,000/-	22 <sup>nd</sup> May 2025

- The full documents for the above mentioned tender can be obtained from the PURCHASING DEPARTMENT of Al-Ahli Hospital from Sunday to Thursday, between 9:00AM to 1:00PM upon payment of non-refundable fee of QAR 1,500.00 to Accounts Receivables, Finance department Al-Ahli Hospital.
- The tender should be accompanied by a Tender Bond issued by a Qatar Accredited Bank and acceptable to Al-Ahli Hospital. The bond should be valid for 120 days from the submission date of the tender.
- The successful tenderer should submit a performance bond equivalent to 10% of the contract value, which should be valid for 180 days beyond the warranty period.
- The tenders should submit in three (3) sealed envelopes: one (1) envelope for Technical Offer, one (1) envelope for Commercial Offer, and one (1) envelope for Tender Bond.
- Tenders must be addressed to the Chairman of the Tender Committee, clearly indicating the Tender Number and Subject.
- The Last date to purchase the tender documents will be on 12th May 2025.
- The closing time for the submission of bid Tenders should be no later than 2:00PM of the Closing Date.

For further information please contact: **Purchasing Department**  
Phone: **+974 4489 8663** – Fax: **+974 4489 8768**  
Email : **mohiddens@ahlihospital.com**

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هليكوبتر الخليج  
GULF HELICOPTERS

## GULF HELICOPTERS COMPANY (GHC) Q.P.S.C.

Invites prospective landlords/service providers to participate in the following tender

Tender Reference and Description	Submission of information & willingness for bidding	Tender fee (non-refundable)	Tender publication	Tender Bond	Bid Closing Date
Tender No. RFQ-GHC/SCO/008/2025 Provision of Accommodation Service for GHC Employees for 5 Years	Until 7 May 2025	QAR 1000/- Until 11 May 2025 10:00 am	12 May 2025	QAR 250,000. 00	10 <sup>th</sup> June 2025, 12:00 PM

**Brief Scope:** GHC is seeking to lease a minimum of 146 rooms in fully furnished and maintained one, two- or three-bedrooms apartments or in three (3) star/four (4) star certified hotels for its employees, along with other detailed services to be provided by the Service Provider.

i. Interested bidders to communicate their willingness to bid and send contact details to GHC email (tender@gulfhelicopters.com) indicating company name, address, telephone, official email, authorized company representative, etc. latest by 7 May 2025.

GHC tender reference numbers and description must be mentioned in the email.

ii. Non-refundable tender fee of QAR 1000/- is payable to GHC, only through QNB account # 0013-036531-001 at any QNB branch. Interested bidders shall attach the evidence of the tender fee payment and send to GHC email: [tender@gulfhelicopters.com](mailto:tender@gulfhelicopters.com), latest by 11 May 2025, 10:00 am for GHC approval.

iii. Tender package will be sent via email to the confirmed participants by 12 May 2025. GHC shall provide the necessary instructions and guidelines for the bid submission.

iv. Original of the Tender Bond (Bank Guarantee) must be submitted by hand to the following address:

Gulf Helicopters Company,  
P O Box: 811, Al Areeesh Street,  
Ras Abu Abboud, Doha, Qatar  
Tel: +974 44 333 888  
Attention: Supply Chain Manager

Attach a copy of tender bond to the technical offer. Offer without Tender Bond will not be considered.

V. For any clarifications on the above, please send your queries with tender reference and description addressed to Supply Chain Mail to email [tender@gulfhelicopters.com](mailto:tender@gulfhelicopters.com).

**Note:** Bidders who are not registered in GHC will be requested to complete the supplier registration process during the tendering period.

## FREE VEHICLE RECALL

وزارة التجارة والصناعة  
Ministry of Commerce and Industry  
دولة قطر  
State of Qatar



## GENESIS GV80, GV70, G80

Manufacturing Year: 2023 - 2024

**DETECT** Some vehicles may encounter issues with the cluster failing to boot up.

**PROCESS** Contact the dealer for the free required repair

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Phone: 8008899  
info@skyline-qatar.com

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وزارة التجارة والصناعة  
Ministry of Commerce and Industry  
دولة قطر  
State of Qatar





Qatar Central Bank Governor HE Sheikh Bandar bin Mohammed bin Saoud al-Thani was presented with the CSR Person of the Year in Qatar award by HE the Minister of Education and Higher Education Lolwah bint Rashid bin Mohammed AlKhater and QU president Dr Omar al-Ansari.



Dignitaries at the inauguration of the Qatar CSR Summit 2025 yesterday.

# Qatar CSR Summit 2025 inaugurated

Qatar CSR Summit 2025, being held under the patronage of HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani, was inaugurated yesterday by HE the Minister of Education and Higher Education Lolwah bint Rashid bin Mohammed AlKhater.

The opening of the three-day event under the theme ‘Sustainability in the Digital Age’ at Qatar University (QU)’s Student Affairs Building, was attended by a large number of attendees, including representatives from ministries, government agencies, international organisations, businessmen, diplomats, academics and sponsors.

In her opening remarks, HE AlKhater stated that as part of its comprehensive educational policy, the Ministry of Education and Higher Education is committed to promoting social responsibility within the public sector through a range of initiatives aimed at empowering Qatari youth, encouraging their active participation in the community, and fostering the values of good citizenship.

“We believe that social responsibility is not limited to individuals alone, but also extends to government institutions, which serve as a model in effectively utilising resources and capabilities for the benefit of society,” she said while reaffirming the ministry’s dedica-

tion to advancing this approach through sustained collaboration with relevant stakeholders, with the ultimate goal of enhancing the quality of life and reinforcing Qatar’s global leadership in social responsibility.

In his welcoming speech, QU president Dr Omar al-Ansari, stressed that Qatar University’s hosting of the Qatar CSR National Programme has enabled students to apply their academic knowledge to address real-world challenges, while fostering concepts of volunteering, community involvement, and environmental and social awareness. It has also contributed to the development of their leadership skills and empowered them to play an active role in improving their communities.

Hamad Mohammed al-Nasr, director of Trade Development and Investment Promotion at Ministry of Commerce and Industry, said: “The ministry is dedicated to encouraging companies to actively contribute to community development by motivating them to adopt sustainable business practices that benefit all segments of society and ultimately contribute to the nation’s prosperity.

“Today, the success of companies is no longer solely defined by profitability; it now extends to their role in advancing social growth and development through their commitment to social responsibility. Qatar

## Municipality ministry receives award for Best Social Responsibility Initiative

The Ministry of Municipality, represented by the Public Parks Department, received a commendation award in the ‘Best Social Responsibility Initiative in the Agricultural Sector’ category at the Qatar CSR Awards, which recognised the department’s pioneering initiative ‘Home Garden Design.’

The award was granted in appreciation of the Public Parks Department’s efforts to promote environmental sustainability, encourage community members to contribute to expanding green spaces, and raise agricultural awareness by offering a free service for designing home gardens according to the highest standards. In this context, Director of the Public Parks Department at the Ministry of Municipality Mohammed Ibrahim al-Sada af-



firmed the department’s commitment to supporting all efforts aimed at designing home gardens, as part of its dedication to building a more conscious and innovative community that values ornamental agriculture and horticulture, aligned with environmental sustainability goals.

He noted that this recognition is the result of the efforts of the Public Services Affairs at the Min-

istry of Municipality in serving the community and enhancing quality of life. The Ministry of Municipality recently launched the most beautiful home and school garden competition, aimed at encouraging individuals and educational institutions to participate in green efforts and fostering community engagement, positively impacting the environment, quality of life, and mental well-being. (QNA)

sustainable development in the local communities where we operate, and ensure that corporate social responsibility practices are at the core of our strategic framework.” This was followed by the recognition of the CSR Person of the Year in Qatar, as the judging committee at QU named HE Sheikh Bandar bin Mohammed bin Saoud al-Thani, Governor of Qatar Central Bank (QCB), for the honour, in appreciation of his outstanding efforts and distinguished contributions to the field. HE AlKhater, accompanied by Dr al-Ansari, presented the honorary shield.

The conference and exhibition will see a wide participation of governmental and semi-governmental agencies and private sector companies that come together to highlight the importance of corporate social responsibility for the future of society and business alike. The conference features a series of interventions, panel discussions, and workshops featuring more than 75 speakers across 16 panel discussions, 14 presentations, and four workshops.

Commenting on the conference agenda, Prof Rana Sobh, dean of the College of Business and Economics at QU, said this year’s edition explores a range of key topics that play a vital role in advancing CSR practices by examining the strong links between digital innovation and sustainability.

## ‘Little Employee’ initiative at Investment and Trade Court

The Investment and Trade Court recently welcomed more than 40 children of its employees as part of the fifth edition of the ‘Little Employee’ initiative, organised annually by Qatar Career Development Center (QCDC), founded by Qatar Foundation (QF).

The event featured a series of interactive workshops led by QCDC’s career guidance experts, focusing on career awareness and planning. The workshops were followed with job-shadowing sessions, where children accompanied their parents through real workplace routines, from administrative work to case preparation and real court proceedings.

Participants also had the exceptional opportunity to attend a live sentencing hearing, offering them a first-hand view into judicial decision-making processes and courtroom protocol.



“This partnership underscores our shared commitment to instilling early career awareness and equipping future generations with the essential skills needed for a future-ready national workforce – one capable of driving Qatar’s progress and prosperity,” QCDC

acting director Saad Abdulla al-Kharji said.

“We extend our sincere gratitude to the President of the Investment and Trade Court, HE Judge Khaled bin Ali al-Obaidly, and the court’s esteemed panel for their support in realising this vision. We



encourage families, institutions, and stakeholders to join the Little Employee family and help guide Qatar’s youth toward a thriving, knowledge-based economy,” al-Kharji concluded.

HE Judge al-Obaidly, noted that the initiative reflects the court’s ongoing commitment to strengthening family ties and instilling the

values of work and responsibility across generations. “By inviting our youngest community members to experience the day-to-day of judicial work, we build their awareness of legal careers while celebrating the important roles their parents play.”

The ‘Little Employee’ invites children aged 7–15 to step into real

work environments alongside parental role models to spark their career curiosity and instil early-age career awareness. It also aims to emphasise the important role of parents as essential career guidance and development first-liners, empowering Qatar’s youth to make informed career choices down the line.

## Sidra study pioneers genome assembly approach for rare disease research

QNA  
Doha

Researchers at Sidra Medicine, a member of Qatar Foundation, have led a landmark study, published in Nature Genetics, unlocking the genetic causes of difficult-to-resolve rare diseases from diverse Middle Eastern populations.

The study entitled “Near-complete Middle Eastern genomes refine autozygosity and enhance disease-causing and population-specific variant discovery” leverages state-of-the-art de novo genome assembly and long-read sequencing. It also provides a crucial reference resource for precision medicine and population genetics, seeking to address critical gaps in global genomic studies.

De novo genome assembly is a sophisticated computational

technique that constructs entire genetic sequences from scratch rather than relying on pre-existing genome references. By using cutting-edge long-read sequencing technology, which reads large sections of DNA without fragmentation, Sidra Medicine’s study delivers the first genome maps with unprecedented completeness and accuracy from the region. The approach enhances the identification of both disease-causing mutations and natural genetic variation.

Head of Medical and Population Genomics and Director of the Neuroscience Research Program at Sidra Medicine, Prof Younes Mokrab, who led the study said: “We used long-read sequencing to gain deep insights into the genomes of Middle Eastern families affected by rare diseases, proving that de novo assembly can uncover pathogenic variants that have remained elusive for years. We also



provide a valuable genome reference for the region. This is a game-changer for precision medicine in the region, ensuring that our populations are no longer overlooked in genomic research.”

The study characterised six Middle Eastern families from Qatar, Sudan, Jordan, Syria and Afghanistan, affected by previously unresolved neurodevelopmental disorders. This resulted in one of the region’s most refined genomic datasets to date. The high-quality,

phased genome assemblies obtained, involving fully mapped maternal and paternal DNA sequences, serve as a critical resource for improving clinical diagnostics and advancing rare disease research.

For his part, Prof Evan Eichler, Professor of Genome Sciences at the University of Washington, USA and co-author of the study, added: “The study is exciting because it works toward understanding the full spectrum of genetic variants

underlying disease which will be important for both pathogenic variant discovery and understanding patient phenotypic variability. The approach represents the future of clinical research. Every family with an unsolved case of developmental delay deserves this type of workup.” Despite advances in human genetics, many populations are still under-represented in existing genome references.

Sidra Medicine’s study highlights the effectiveness of long-read sequencing in creating accurate genome assemblies, which can improve the identification of disease-causing mutations and enhance ancestry-informed analyses. Chief Research Officer at Sidra Medicine and co-author, Prof Khalid Fakhro said: “Sidra Medicine has led regional advancements in genomic research for over a decade. Our latest findings demonstrate that cutting-edge

long-read sequencing technologies are becoming an essential tool for genetic discovery and precision medicine. The ability to identify disease-causing variants previously missed in standard genome references is a major breakthrough for clinical genomics.”

The study’s novel genetic sequences will also contribute to understanding human migration and Middle Eastern population structure, offering insights into evolutionary and anthropological research. In turn, Director of Research and Partnerships at Qatar Precision Health Institute, Dr Hamdi Mbarak said: “As we release a new cohort of over 25,000 whole genomes from Qatar, the arrival of high-quality genome references tailored to Middle Eastern ancestries is both timely and critical. This will help us elucidate population-specific genetic variation and its impact on health and disease.”



# Congratulations!



## *Congratulations*

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# Congratulations Awardees

Asianet News, in collaboration with Momentum Media organized the second season of **Qatar Business Excellence Awards on April 30 2025**, acknowledging successful enterprises that triumphed over challenges. Winners received the awards from **H.E Mr. Vipul** Ambassador of India to the State of Qatar, **Shri. Adoor Prakash** Member of Parliament (Attingal) Lok Sabha & Ex Minister Govt. of Kerala and **Dr.P. Mohamed Ali** Founder, MFAR Holdings Private Limited.

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Mr Salem Saeed Al Mohannadi, Chairman - Seashore Group



**SME Excellence Award - Pharmicare Group**  
Mr Noufal Kattayat, Co founder and Managing Director - Pharmicare Group



**Trading Excellence Awards-Intertec Group W.L.L**  
Mr Asraf NK, Senior COO - Intertec Group W.L.L



**Healthcare Excellence Award-Aster DM Healthcare Qatar**  
Aster DM Healthcare Team



**Education Excellence Award-QISH**  
Mr Niyas Kavungal, Founder & CEO - QISH Group of Institutions



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مبروك دفعة ٢٠٢٥





# Alfardan Sports Motors launches all-new Fiat 500e, Abarth 500e

Alfardan Sports Motors, the official importer of Alfa Romeo, Fiat, Abarth, and Fiat Professional in Qatar, hosted an exclusive media event to mark the official Qatar premiere of both the fully electric Fiat 500e and Abarth 500e. The unveiling highlighted the brands' bold shift toward sustainable, connected mobility solutions, a statement said. The reveal took place at the state-of-the-art Alfardan Sports Motors service facility in Jery Al Samur, purpose-built to support the Italian Stellantis brands and their growing electric vehicle lineup. A cultural icon reimagined for the electric age, the Fiat 500e blends unmistakable Italian charm with cutting-edge electric vehicle technology. Its exterior retains the instantly recognisable silhouette that has defined the model for generations, now refined with chrome detailing, full LED "infinity" lighting, sculpted bumpers, and an ingenious third rear-hinged door exclusive to the 3+1 version—offering enhanced accessibility while preserving its classic proportions. Inside, the 500e delivers a refined and minimalist atmosphere. Eco-leather seating, a soft-touch wrapped dashboard, and intuitive design elements are seamlessly integrated with advanced digital features, including a 10.25" high-definition touchscreen and wireless Apple CarPlay and Android Auto, ensuring both comfort and connectivity. Beneath its stylish exterior, the Fiat 500e is powered by an 87kW (118hp) electric motor paired with a 42kWh battery. This configuration allows it to travel up to 320km on a single charge, accelerate from 0 to 100km/h in nine seconds, and benefit from fast-



charging capabilities of up to 85kW. The Abarth 500e's aggressive styling includes dynamic bumpers, a prominent rear diffuser, and distinctive 17" or 18" alloy wheels accented by Acid Green Scorpion hubcaps. The cabin reflects Abarth's motorsport pedigree with a driver-centric layout available in TecnoPrene or Alcantara. A three-spoke sporty steering wheel, premium double-stitched seats embossed with the iconic Scorpion emblem, and digital interfaces with exclusive Abarth graphics create a cockpit designed to thrill. Under the hood, the Abarth 500e houses a potent 114kW (153hp) electric motor. It accelerates from 0 to 100km/h in under seven seconds and is equipped with the brand's unique AVAS acoustic system, simulating the engine note to preserve the emotional connection of performance driving in the electric era.

Designed to resonate with a new generation of enthusiasts, the Abarth 500e delivers raw excitement with zero emissions. Both models are equipped with advanced driver assistance systems, including adaptive cruise control, urban blind spot monitoring, and emergency braking — delivering safety, confidence, and innovation in every drive. "The launch of the Fiat 500e and Abarth 500e underscore our mission to lead Qatar's transition toward clean, connected, and emotionally engaging mobility," said Charly Dagher, general manager of Alfardan Sports Motors. "We are proud to offer products that not only capture the essence of Italian design and performance but also align with Qatar's Vision 2030. At Alfardan Sports Motors, we stand at the intersection of heritage and innovation — delivering experiences that reflect our enduring



commitment to excellence and the ultimate ownership experience," he added. Since 2019, Alfardan Sports Motors has showcased Alfa Romeo, Fiat, Abarth, and Fiat Professional through its flagship

showroom at Medina Centrale, The Pearl Island. The introduction of the Fiat 500e and Abarth 500e marks a bold new chapter in this ongoing legacy, blending heritage with electric innovation, the statement added.



## MoPH organises second Public Health Sector Football Tournament

The Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) recently hosted the Second Public Health Sector Football Tournament. A friendly match between the health sector leadership team and the former football stars of Qatar took place during the opening ceremony. The former Qatar national football team players included Sultan al-Sufiani, Al-Mirghani Zain, Masad al-Hamad, Saad Sat-tam al-Shammari, Naif al-Anzi, Ahmed Khalifa, Faisal al-Dosari, and Hussein al-Rumaihi. The tournament matches, held on the outdoor Aspire fields, saw fierce competition between the participating teams vying for the trophy, a statement said.

Ghanim Ibrahim al-Mohan-nadi, director of the Human Resources Department at the MoPH, said: "The success of the first edition of the Public Health Sector Football Tournament was a driving force behind the organisation of the second edition, which is one of the initiatives of the Employee Well-being and Wellness Programme at the Ministry." The number of participating teams rose to 36 from the MoPH, Hamad Medical Corporation and Primary Health Care Corporation. The training sessions for the teams took place at the Ministry of Youth and Sports fields in Al-Thumama throughout March, in addition to seeking a specialist coach and fitness trainer from Al-

Waab Club to ensure the players' safety and readiness. "Such tournaments and sports competitions motivate health sector employees, enhance their readiness to work, and improve their creative abilities. Practising sport improves mood and helps alleviate the negative pressures that individuals experience due to the stresses of daily life," he said. The MoPH continues to intensify its awareness of the importance of sport and physical activity in promoting health and quality of life. The ministry and its partners implement many programmes and projects to promote physical activity within the community, the statement added.

## Katara Library of Arabic Novel hosts cultural symposium

The Katara Library of Arabic Novel, located in Building 48 of the Katara Cultural Village Foundation, hosted a distinguished cultural symposium titled "Arab Culture in Hindi Translation: Creative Models from Qatar." The symposium brought together a group of translators and researchers from leading Indian universities, along with a number of intellectuals and those interested in translation and Arabic literature. The symposium discussed the role of translation as an effective cultural bridge between peoples and an important tool for conveying Arabic creativity into international languages. With a focus on Hindi as one of the most widely spoken languages in South Asia. Participants highlighted examples of Qatari literature translated into Hindi. Emphasising that these works reflect the depth of Qatar's cultural experience and contribute to strengthening the Arab literary presence on the global stage.



Part of the audience during the symposium.

A number of academics and professionals specialising in translation spoke during the session, emphasising the importance of strengthening co-operation between cultural institutions in the Arab world and their counterparts in India. They also presented successful experiences in translating Qatari narrative and poetic texts into Hindi.

## Eight films supported by DFI selected for 2025 Cannes Film Festival

The Doha Film Institute (DFI) yesterday announced that eight films supported through its grants programme have been selected for the 78th Cannes Film Festival, reaffirming the Institute's enduring commitment to nurturing bold, original voices in world cinema. Spanning a wide spectrum of genres, styles, and cultural narratives, this year's selected films reflect the richness of global storytelling and underscore DFI's mission to champion compelling, underrepresented perspectives from the Arab world and beyond. The selected projects will be unveiled to global audiences across various sections of the festival, including the official programme with one in Official Selection Competition and three in Un Certain Regard. Four additional titles will screen across the parallel sections of Critics' Week (La Semaine de la Critique), Director's Fortnight (La Quinzaine des Cinéastes), and ACID, highlighting the artistic excellence and global relevance of the filmmakers.



Fatma Hassan Alremaihi, Chief Executive Officer of DFI, said: "We are incredibly proud to attend the 78th edition of Cannes with another selection of outstanding films supported by the Institute. This recognition speaks to the power of authentic storytelling and the importance of amplifying diverse voices. Most importantly,

they exemplify cinema's profound power to connect us while revealing the beauty and complexity of our varied experiences. "By empowering visionary filmmakers, we nurture creativity and promote compelling stories that have the potential to shape world cinema." The Official Selection Competition will feature *Renoir* (Japan,

France, Singapore, The Philippines, Indonesia, Qatar) by Chie Hayakawa, while Official Selection Un Certain Regard will feature *Aisha Can't Fly Away* (Egypt, Tunisia, KSA, Sudan, Germany, France, Qatar) by Morad Mostafa; *Promised Sky* (Tunisia, France, Qatar) by Erige Sehiri; and *Once Upon a Time in Gaza* (Palestine, France, Germany, Portugal, Qatar) by Tarzan and Arab Nasser. Critics' Week (Semaine de la Critique) will feature *Sleepless City* (Spain, France, Qatar) by Guillermo Garcia Lopez; and *L'Mina* (Morocco, France, Italy, Qatar) by Randa Maroufi. Director's Fortnight (Quinzaine des cinéastes) will feature *The President's Cake* (Iraq, USA, Qatar) by Hasan Hadi, while ACID will feature *Life After Siham* (Egypt, France, Qatar) by Namir Abdel Messeeh. DFI's strong presence at Cannes 2025 builds on its legacy of empowering emerging talent and contributing meaningfully to the global film landscape. (QNA)

## Qatar Airways to increase frequencies to Toronto, São Paulo

Qatar Airways has announced more frequencies to Toronto and São Paulo from June. The airline will serve Toronto Pearson Airport with five weekly flights from June 19, and São Paulo/Guarulhos International Airport with 17 weekly flights from June 25. Qatar Airways Chief Commercial Officer, Thierry Antinori, said: "We launched our services to Toronto Pearson Airport less than six months ago and have seen a strong response in the market. "At the same time, we are expanding in South America with additional flights to São Paulo, a key gateway and strategic hub for business and leisure travel. These expansions underscore our commitment to providing seamless global connectivity through Hamad International Airport - voted World's Best Airport Shopping by Skytrax in 2025" Qatar Airways inaugurated its

flights to Toronto in December 2024 ahead of the festive season. The proposed daily flights to the city this coming winter will provide passengers across Canada enhanced connectivity to Doha and beyond. "These expansions underscore our commitment to providing seamless global connectivity through Hamad International Airport - voted World's Best Airport Shopping by Skytrax in 2025" The national airline is also increasing flights to São Paulo from 14 to 17 weekly flights. Passengers will continue to benefit from Qatar Airways' "seamless connections" to 55 destinations in Latin America through LATAM Airlines, including Rio de Janeiro, Buenos Aires, Lima and Santiago de Chile.



QF Convocation Ceremony tonight, exactly 17 years after the first



Qatar Foundation (QF), which marks its 30th anniversary, is hosting this year's Convocation Ceremony tonight, exactly 17 years after its inaugural Convocation on May 6, 2008. The milestone annual ceremony celebrated the graduates of universities within QF's unique ecosystem of education. "On that night 17 years ago, at the Ceremonial Court in Education City, 122 students from four QF partner universities took the spotlight (pictured). At tonight's ceremony, almost nine times that number will be celebrated for their academic successes and personal journeys within QF's Hamad Bin Khalifa University and its seven partner universities," a statement added.

NU-Q celebrates Class of 2025 graduation

Northwestern University in Qatar (NU-Q) celebrated the graduation of the Class of 2025 at its 14th annual ceremony at the Qatar National Convention Centre.

The event brought together university leadership, faculty, staff, families, and guests to honour the achievements of this year's graduates, who now join a growing global network of NU-Q alumni.

The Class of 2025 comprises 118 graduates, hailing from more than 18 countries. They have studied journalism, communication, and liberal arts while also contributing to award-winning student projects, groundbreaking research, and community initiatives in Qatar and beyond.

In his address to the graduates, NU-Q dean and CEO Marwan M Kraidy, reflected on the symbolic power of light – or *nur* – as a guiding principle for the journey ahead. "A flame is not only burning heat; it is also light and warmth," said Kraidy. "As you leave here, take that habit of critical reflection with you. Use the flame to build a hearth. Start from a place of openness. Pause. Consider all sides. Then decide where your light should shine."

Encouraging graduates to lead with purpose and integrity, he reminded them that "one small flame can ignite a thousand candles."

In a unique, full-circle moment, HE Sheikha Najwa bint Abdulrahman al-Thani, undersecretary at the Ministry of Labour in Qatar



and Class of 2015 alumna, returned to the stage as this year's graduation speaker, a decade after delivering the student address at her own graduation.

Reflecting on the transformation from student to professional, she said, "The Najwa that went to Northwestern feels like a different person from a different life."

Her speech balanced humour with heartfelt advice, encouraging the Class of 2025 to "trust the process, play the long game, and change the way you see yourself."

She also recounted her journey since graduating, from navigating postgraduate studies in Oxford to building a career shaped by rejection, resilience, and perseverance that defined them.

"While many before me have carved out the space for those of us from the region, we remain under-represented," she said. "We have a value to bring to the table, a voice that cannot be substituted by those who write about us."

Drawing from Arabic philosophy, she urged the graduates to embrace *wasilah* – the means by which we pursue our goals – as the true measure of character.

Joining Dean Kraidy and Sheikha Najwa on the stage, Class of 2025 speaker Fairuz Yosef Issa addressed her fellow graduates, congratulating them on their achievements and reflecting on the spirit of resilience and perseverance that defined them.

"We arrived here as individuals," she noted, "but today, we leave as a collective, bonded by shared challenges, late-night deadlines, and the belief that stories matter."

A journalism student known for her advocacy and commitment to amplifying under-represented voices, she reflected on the unique journey of her class: from entering university at the height of the global Covid-19 pandemic to graduating at a time of a rapidly shifting world.

"Northwestern didn't just teach us how to write headlines," she said. "It taught us how to listen closely, speak honestly, and show up – especially when it's uncomfortable."

Drawing on moments of uncertainty and growth, she reminded her classmates that "our stories are not just ours – they belong to the people we seek to serve." She went on to urge her peers to carry forward the values of courage, curiosity, and compassion: "We may not know what's next, but we know who we are – and that that will always be enough."

Another highlight of this year's ceremony was the attendance of a senior delegation from Northwestern University's home campus, underscoring Northwestern's support for the campus and community in Qatar. The group included members of the Northwestern University Board of Trustees, Peter J Barris, chair of the Board, and Provost Kathleen Hagerty.

Alongside dean Kraidy, they participated in the graduation processions and engaged with students, faculty, and staff during the visit.

The ceremony concluded with graduates processing out beneath the Weber Arch, a powerful reversal of their symbolic entry into university life.

With their degrees in hand and their next chapters just beginning, the Class of 2025 leaves NU-Q as alumni, poised to lead with impact after graduation and make a lasting impact across the globe, the statement added.

WCM-Q hosts Doctors of the Future Conference



More than 200 pre-university students with ambitions to pursue careers in medicine participated in Weill Cornell Medicine – Qatar's (WCM-Q) two-day Doctors of the Future Conference, a statement said.

The annual event gives pre-university students the chance to explore WCM-Q's state-of-the-art campus, learn about the college's world-class educational programmes, and discover the wide range of opportunities that can be accessed by studying for a Doctor of Medicine (MD) degree.

Organised by WCM-Q's Office of Student Outreach and Development, the conference also serves to develop partnerships between WCM-Q and local secondary and high schools, stimulate interest in careers in science and medicine among pre-university students, and help enhance college readiness skills.

Noha Saleh, director of pre-medical administration, student outreach and educational development, said: "We were delighted to welcome so many enthusiastic and highly accomplished students to the conference once again this year."

The second day of the conference featured the final round of the research contest, with first prize going to the team from GEMS Wellington International School Qatar for their poster, titled The Effect of Gaming on Promoting Knowledge, Attitude and Awareness of Diabetes. The Second place was shared by teams from Doha College and Swiss International School Qatar. The competition began with a preliminary round in January with an initial field of 54 teams.

Dr Rachid Bendriss, associate dean for foundation, student outreach and educational development programmes, said: "Our Doctors of the Future Conference continues to offer pre-university students a highly effective way to engage with the worlds of science, medicine, and higher education, while simultaneously helping them to develop skills that will enhance their readiness to apply to college."

UCQ to celebrate final convocation on May 11

The University of Calgary in Qatar (UCQ) has announced the conclusion of its operations in Doha after almost two decades of academic excellence.

The Qatar Foundation member revealed in a statement yesterday that it was preparing to graduate its final cohort on May 11.

Since its inception in 2006, UCQ has educated over 1,100 skilled nurses from over 40 nationalities, including more than 120 Qatari alumni.

"For almost two decades, the University of Calgary in Qatar (UCQ) has been more than an academic institution – it has been a home for aspiring nurses and a driving force in Qatar's evolving healthcare system," the statement read.

The statement boasted the university's comprehensive academic offerings, including the Nursing Foundations Program which helped students successfully transition into the Bachelor of Nursing program, providing the foundational knowledge and skills needed for their nursing studies.

In 2013, UCQ expanded its academic offerings with the launch of the Master of Nursing programme, further contributing to the development of highly skilled healthcare professionals.

In partnership with the National Cancer



Care and Research Hospital (Al Amal Hospital), the master's degree prepared nurses for advanced practice in oncology nursing. In 2014, in collaboration with Hamad Medical Corporation and Primary Health Care Corporation, a leadership stream was opened, building capacity for patient care leadership in highly specialised settings and developing nurses' skills, with over 80 graduates.

A key milestone in UCQ's history was the introduction of the Best Practice Spotlight Organisation (BPSO) initiative, which made UCQ the first institution in the Middle East to receive this prestigious designation.

In addition, UCQ has been a leader in Continuing Professional Development (CPD), offering a range of educational opportunities for healthcare professionals to enhance their skills and stay current with advancements in the field.

UCQ's Interim Dean Dr Janet Rankin said: "As we prepare for our final convocation, we celebrate the partnerships and support that have allowed us to fulfil our mission of delivering world-class nursing education. The success of UCQ over the past two decades has been driven by our dedicated faculty, who brought both academic rigour and practical expertise to the classroom.

"Our graduates have consistently elevated the standards of healthcare practice in Qatar, and we take immense pride in the legacy they have built."

Meanwhile, President and CEO of UCQ, Professor Hala Sultan Saif al-Easa, said: "UCQ has contributed significantly to nursing education and the healthcare sector in Qatar. Our alumni have become leaders in patient care, research, and education, and their impact will continue to shape the future of healthcare in the region."

Chair of UCQ's Board of Trustees Dr Khalid bin Jabor al-Thani hailed "UCQ's commitment to excellence in nursing education played a vital role in advancing the Qatar National Vision 2030, particularly in the development of a highly trained and competent healthcare workforce. "We are very proud of the lasting impact that UCQ has made."

This year's convocation ceremony will see 120 graduates join UCQ's esteemed alumni, furthering the institution's legacy of excellence and its impact on Qatar's healthcare landscape. (QNA)



# QNL’s Libraries Lead Forum renews commitment to collaboration

Qatar National Library (QNL) has concluded its annual Libraries Lead Forum 2025, which brought together industry professionals, scholars and cultural leaders from across the region and beyond.

Held in partnership with the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) Mena Regional Office, the forum showcased the power of collaboration, innovation and openness in transforming the future of libraries.

Themed “Libraries Thriving Together in an Open Ecosystem”, the event placed a strong emphasis on creating resilient and inclusive library communities through global partnerships, emerging technologies and shared knowledge networks.

The event which began on May 4 with dedicated pre-forum workshops, gave attendees the opportunity to engage in hands-on sessions focused on strategic collaboration and innovation in open library environments.

The forum’s second day opened with remarks by HE the Minister of State and President of QNL Dr Hamad bin Abdulaziz al-Kuwari. His Excellency said: “The accelerating challenges facing our world today demand more integrated and collaborative knowledge ecosystems. We believe that investing in knowledge, especially through global partnerships and emerging technologies, is the most effective way to foster sustainable societies and create a more just and

inclusive future. “In this context, we have organised the Libraries Lead Forum as a strategic platform to shape the future of libraries both in our region and globally, reflecting our mission at Qatar National Library. This year, leading experts have come together to combine efforts to advance the library and information landscape around the world. “The theme of this year’s forum reflects our deep belief that the strength of libraries lies in building bridges of co-operation and expanding the horizons of partnership. To this end, we are committed to adopting innovative strategies to develop an integrated library system capable of meeting the needs of our diverse communities”.

Executive Director of QNL Tan Huism remarked: “Libraries have long served as guardians of knowledge. Today, however, they are also expected to act as dynamic platforms for intellectual exchange, digital innovation and global partnerships. At Qatar National Library, we recognise this evolving role and are committed to ensuring that our resources, collections and digital platforms contribute to the development of accessible and open knowledge ecosystems.

“No library can thrive in isolation; We are all stronger when we work together. As we advance digital transformation, we must also safeguard the cultural identity and historical legacy of communities for future generations, while championing policies that

ensure research and knowledge remain accessible to all.” For her part, QNL’s Director of Research and Learning Services Aber al-Kuwari confirmed in exclusive statements to Qatar News Agency (QNA) that the Library continues to implement numerous pioneering initiatives and projects at the Arab and international levels, aiming to provide free access to knowledge and enhance the library’s vital role in developing society.

Al-Kuwari emphasised the need to strengthen partnerships with Arab and international libraries to combine efforts to promote knowledge management and libraries, noting the significant role of the event in strengthening partnerships within the library sector, sharing existing resources, exploring new horizons in this field, and allowing participants to share successful experiences and learn from each other.

There was also a speech from Secretary-General of IFLA Sharon Memis, and a message from IFLA Mena Regional Office Director Eiman al-Shammeri. A standout panel discussion, moderated by Director of Majlis Oman Library Dr Waleed Albadi explored the development of shared digital ecosystems and strategies for advancing open access. The panel emphasised the role of libraries in fostering knowledge equity and highlighted how regional and global collaboration can overcome technological, social and environmental challenges. (QNA)



Engineer Mohammed Abdullah al-Mulla (centre) at the opening of the first Mina Pre-Owned Boat Show at Old Doha Port yesterday. PICTURES: Shaji Kayamkulam

# Mina Corniche hosts Qatar’s inaugural pre-owned boat show

By Joey Aguilar  
Staff Reporter

Qatar’s maritime industry received a huge boost yesterday with the launch of the first-ever Mina Pre-Owned Boat Show at Old Doha Port’s Mina Corniche.

The event will run until tomorrow (May 7), bringing together marine enthusiasts, first-time buyers, and seasoned boaters eager to explore a curated selection of second-hand vessels. It is open daily from 5pm-9pm.

According to the organisers, this boat show offers boat owners a unique opportunity to display their vessels, ranging from jet skis and fishing boats to yachts, superyachts, and traditional dhows, for free. Public entry is also free, making it accessible to a wide audience.

“We at Old Doha Port have set objectives and goals that we want to achieve, one of which is definitely enhancing the maritime experience locally, regionally and then globally.

“This pre-owned boat show is considered as the first-of-its-kind in Qatar, and the aim is to provide a safe platform for sellers and buyers, whether individuals or companies,” Old Doha Port CEO, engineer Mohammed Abdullah al-Mulla, told reporters.

He noted that the event facilitates smoother transactions by providing dedicated spaces for inspection companies and service providers. This, he pointed out, allows potential buyers to obtain initial inspection reports on the vessels, aiding in informed decision-making.

He added that stringent criteria



The three-day event displays an array of sea vessels, including yachts and traditional dhows.



are in place to ensure the quality of boats offered, including a requirement of at least one year of valid inspection reports and a registration year of 2007 or beyond. More than 40 marine vessels are participating in this maiden edition, highlighting the strong momentum in Qatar’s pre-owned boat market.

The show has transformed the Mina Corniche into a vibrant open-air marketplace, organisers said. It also offers on-site maintenance workshops and inspection services at competitive prices, fostering a supportive environment for both buyers and sellers.

Al-Mulla said this latest edition of the show joins other recent initiatives at Old Doha Port, including the first Qatar boat show and

a fishing exhibition. He said the combination of events caters to local, regional, and international markets, and provides the right infrastructure for yacht owners to safely and easily berth their vessels in Qatar.

In addition to the diverse range of boats on display, organisers noted that visitors can also enjoy a unique hospitality experience in a welcoming maritime atmosphere, overlooking Doha’s skyline and the West Bay towers. It also features music and various activities.

Organisers stressed that this boat show is poised to become a key event in Qatar’s maritime calendar, underscoring Old Doha Port’s commitment to nurturing and strengthening the local industry.

# QNL hosts IFLA Mena committee meeting



The Qatar National Library (QNL) hosted the IFLA Mena Regional Division Committee meeting with the participation of 18 experts from across the region.

The meeting aimed to strengthen the role of libraries in preserving cultural heritage, empowering communities and embracing digital transformation in the Arab world.

It also underscores the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA)’s growing focus on localised collaboration and regional engagement to address global challenges, leveraging regionally driven solutions.

The committee brought together representatives from 18 countries for strategic discussions about setting future regional priorities, fostering cross-border collaboration, and advancing key initiatives such as the QNL and the IFLA’s Libraries Lead Forum and the development of sustainable projects.

The QNL was represented at the committee by National Collection and Special Initiatives director Aber al-Kuwari, who serves as a mentor within the committee, and IFLA Mena (Middle East and North Africa) Regional Office manager Eiman Alshamari, who serves as an observer.

“The IFLA meeting underscores our shared vision to position libraries as cultural hubs that empower our communities today and preserve our heritage for future generations,” said al-Kuwari. “The latest meeting reflects the QNL’s commitment to supporting IFLA in its mission to bolster the capacity of libraries across the Arab world and to foster regional collaboration.”

The meeting, held at the QNL, which was chosen in August 2023 as the IFLA Mena Regional Office, is the second in-person meeting since its establishment, following an inaugural session in November 2023. (QNA)

# Ashghal celebrates third training batch graduation

The Public Works Authority (Ashghal) celebrated the graduation of the third batch of its employees who completed the Authority’s training programmes, in the presence of Ashghal President engineer Mohammed bin Abdulaziz al-Meer, and a number of senior officials in the Authority.

The ceremony witnessed the graduation of 163 employees and engineers from accredited training programmes, organised by the Human Resources Department, with the aim of developing and preparing national cadres.

The programmes include the Project Management Development Programme (PMDP) to prepare newly graduated Qatari engineers and develop their professional capabilities, the Gradu-



ate Development Programme (GDP), directed at non-engineer fresh graduates, to enable them to perform their job roles efficiently and the Administrative Development Programme (ADP), which is dedicated to developing employees who hold a high school degree

and diploma in all supporting administrative fields.

The Authority stressed its keenness to prepare and provide various training programmes and projects in line with various occupational levels, ensuring sustainable professional development and

employees’ career advancement since joining.

The duration of these programmes ranges from 12-36 months, as they are designed to meet practical needs and enhance the technical, administrative, and behavioural skills required in the

work environment. Al-Meer expressed his pride in graduating this distinguished group of the Authority’s employees, noting that developing the human cadre constitutes the cornerstone of achieving the Authority’s ambitions in the fields of infrastructure and engineering.

“We pay great attention to training and developing our employees and engineers, as we believe that investing in people is the basis of success, and we seek, through various training programmes, to enable Qatari cadres and increase their efficiency in a way that reflects positively on their performance,” he said.

Manager of Human Resources Department at Ashghal Rashid al-Hajri said: “We are proud of the achievements of graduates of the training programmes. These programmes are designed to meet the actual needs of various jobs in the Authority, which include technical, administrative and behavioural aspects. “We believe in the

importance of continuous learning as a way of developing national competencies and achieving the Authority’s objectives in line with Qatar National Vision 2030 and the Third National Development Strategy 2024–2030”.

Head Of Training & Organisational Development Section at Ashghal Ghanem al-Kaabi said: “The Authority is proud of graduating a distinguished Qatari cadre, which stems from its belief of the importance of employees’ training, development and enablement.

“The Public Works Authority was keen to design and provide comprehensive training programmes which takes into account different occupational levels with the aim of supporting employees’ career development and enabling to achieve career advancement,” he added. During the ceremony, al-Meer honoured a number of partner entities who contributed to supporting training programmes, in addition to honouring the graduates. (QNA)

# Ministry organises ‘Naqda Embroidery’ workshop at MIA

The Ministry of Social Development and Family (MSDF), represented by the Family Empowerment Department, is organising a training workshop titled “Preserving Cultural Crafts – Naqda Embroidery” at the Museum of Islamic Art (MIA).

The workshop is part of the ministry’s ongoing efforts to support traditional crafts and aligns with its broader programmes aimed at empowering productive families and developing the skills of individuals working in the field of family empowerment. To this end, the ministry collaborates

with relevant institutions and implements training projects that preserve cultural heritage while providing support services that create new opportunities for participants. The workshop highlights Naqda, a traditional craft deeply rooted in Qatari heritage. It will cover the concept, history, and cultural importance of Naqda embroidery, in addition to introducing the traditional tools and fabrics used. Participants will also have the opportunity to view design samples and patterns associated with the craft.

Furthermore, the workshop



includes hands-on training in applying Naqda embroidery to garments such as the Milfa and Bukhnag. The goal is to equip participants – particularly women – with the skills to incorporate this heritage craft into contemporary

designs such as Abayas and souvenir items, thereby enhancing prospects for sustainable production and improved marketability.

In this context, Fatima al-Nuaimi, director of the Family Empowerment Department, stated that

the workshop aims to train and transform participants from consumers into skilled artisans. It also seeks to empower entrepreneurs by attracting and training new groups interested in learning the Naqda craft.

She noted that the ministry aspires for the workshop to achieve its objectives by enabling participants to launch new production projects that creatively merge Qatari heritage with modern design, with opportunities to promote their products through exhibitions and ministry-affiliated marketing platforms. The Family

Affairs Sector at the Ministry of Social Development and Family is committed to realising the Qatar National Vision 2030 by fostering a sustainable environment for productive national entrepreneurs. The ministry continues to support and encourage development initiatives in co-ordination with relevant stakeholders, while guiding and promoting the efforts of the private sector and civil society organisations to establish or fund development projects that contribute to the economic and social empowerment of individuals and families. (QNA)



# Norwegian NGO decries Israel plan to take over Gaza aid

**AFP**  
Oslo

An Israeli plan to take over the distribution of humanitarian aid to Gaza at hubs controlled by the military is “fundamentally against humanitarian principles”, the head of the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) said yesterday.

Israel’s security cabinet said there was “currently enough food” in the territory which has been under full Israeli blockade since March 2, and approved overnight the “possibility of humanitarian distribution” in Gaza.

“We cannot and will not do something which is fundamentally against humanitarian principles,” Jan Egeland said.

He said “the United Nations

agencies, all other international humanitarian groups and NGOs have said no to be part of this idea coming from the Israeli cabinet and from the Israeli military.”

Israel has accused Hamas of diverting humanitarian aid – which Hamas denies – and said its blockade was necessary to pressure the group to release Israeli hostages.

Egeland said the Israeli gov-

ernment wanted to “militarise, manipulate, politicise the aid by allowing only aid to a few concentration hubs in the south, a scheme where people will be screened, where it’s a completely inoperable system.”

“That would force people to move to get aid, and it would continue the starvation of the civilian population,” he said, adding: “We will have no part in that.”

“If one side in a bitter armed conflict tries to control, manipulate, ration aid among the civilians on the other side, it is against everything we stand for,” he stressed.

Meanwhile, the UN’s Office for the Co-ordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), said the Israeli scheme “will mean large parts of Gaza, including the less mobile and most vulner-

able people, will continue to go without supplies.” International aid organisations as well as Palestinians in Gaza have for weeks warned of a dire humanitarian situation on the ground.

The UN’s World Food Programme (WFP) has said it has depleted its food stocks and that the 25 bakeries it supports in Gaza have closed due to a lack of flour and fuel.

# Israeli strikes target Yemen’s Hodeidah

**Reuters**  
Aden/Cairo

The Israeli military said it carried out air strikes against Yemen’s Hodeidah Port yesterday, a day after the Houthis fired a missile that struck near Israel’s main airport.

The military said in a statement that it attacked what it called Houthi “fighter” targets in Hodeidah and its vicinity.

“The attack was carried out in response to repeated attacks carried out by the Houthi regime against the State of Israel in which surface-to-surface missiles and unmanned aircraft were launched at the territory of the state and its citizens,” it said.

More than 10 strikes targeted

Hodeidah Port and the Al Salakhana and Al Hawak neighbourhoods in Hodeidah City, five residents told Reuters. Four strikes also targeted a cement factory east of Hodeidah.

The port is the second-largest in the Red Sea after Aden and is the entry point for about 80% of Yemen’s food imports.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu vowed to retaliate for Sunday’s missile attack, which was the first known to have escaped interception by Israel’s air defences in a series of attacks since March. The Houthis, who control Yemen, have been firing at Israel and shipping in the Red Sea since the beginning of the war between Israel and Hamas in Gaza, in what they say is solidarity with the Palestinians. A US official speaking

on condition of anonymity said that US forces were not actively involved in yesterday’s strikes, but there is general co-ordination between the two allies.

Meanwhile, an oil company operated by the Houthis announced it has begun operating an emergency system with regards to supplying cars with fuel, owing to difficulties in unloading cargo at the oil port of Ras Isa.

The company, in a statement, attributed the decision to US strikes on the country, including the port. US President Donald Trump in March ordered large-scale strikes against the Houthis saying it was meant to reduce their capabilities and deter them from targeting commercial shipping in the Red Sea. The strikes have killed hundreds of people in Yemen.

# Francis’s popemobile converted into clinic for Gazan children

**AFP**  
Vatican City

Before his death, Pope Francis donated one of his popemobiles to be converted into a children’s clinic in war-torn Gaza, Catholic charity Caritas said yesterday.

The iconic open-sided vehicle, designed to allow the pontiff to greet crowds of well-wishers, has been transferred to Caritas Jerusalem and will head to Gaza if and when Israel opens a humanitarian corridor.

The car, a converted Mitsubishi, was used by the pope during a 2014 visit to Bethlehem and had since

been on display, gathering dust and rust. It has now been repaired and refurbished as a mobile clinic.

“With the vehicle, we will be able to reach children who today have no access to healthcare – children who are injured and malnourished,” said Peter Brune, secretary general of Caritas Sweden. Brune said that Sweden’s Cardinal Anders Arborelius had asked the late pope, who died on April 21 aged 88, that the spare vehicle be put to use providing essential frontline healthcare to Palestinian children. It will be fitted with medical equipment and a fridge for medicines and be assigned a driver and a team of doctors. “This vehicle represents the love, care and closeness

shown by His Holiness for the most vulnerable, which he expressed throughout the crisis,” said Anton Asfar, secretary-general of Caritas Jerusalem.

It was not clear, however, if or when the aid agency’s hoped-for humanitarian corridor would open.

Israel resumed major operations across Gaza on March 18 amid political deadlock over how to build on a two-month ceasefire in its war against Hamas, which was sparked by the fighters’ storming of Israel in October 2023. Yesterday, Israel’s security cabinet approved an expansion of military operations that would lead to what an official described as the “conquest” of the Palestinian territory.

# Missing Uganda opposition activist charged and remanded: lawyer

**Reuters**  
Nairobi

A missing Ugandan opposition activist whom the president’s son said he was holding in his basement was brought to court limping yesterday, charged with robbery and remanded to prison, opposition

leader Bobi Wine and his lawyer said.

Eddie Mutwe, whose real name is Edward Ssebuufu, and who also acts as the chief bodyguard for Bobi Wine, went missing on April 27 after being grabbed close to the capital Kampala by armed men, according to his party, the National Unity Platform.

In a series of posts on X last

week, Muhoozi Kainerugaba, Uganda’s military chief and son of Uganda’s long-serving President Yoweri Museveni, said he had captured Mutwe “like a grasshopper”, was holding him in his basement and threatened violence against him. Kainerugaba is widely seen as being groomed to succeed his 80-year-old father who has ruled Uganda since 1986.

# Kenya police officers plead not guilty over baby’s death in 2017 poll unrest



Baby Samantha Pendo’s parents, Joseph Oloo Abanja (right) and Lensa Achieng, follow proceedings at the Milimani High Court in Nairobi, yesterday, in a case in which four police officers were charged.

**AFP**  
Nairobi

Four Kenyan police officers pleaded not guilty yesterday to the killing of a six-month-old girl during bloody riots that erupted over a presidential election in 2017.

The death of Samantha Pendo became for many Kenyans a symbol of unchecked police brutality during the disputed election, the first in the country’s history to be annulled.

Murder, abuse and torture charges against civilians were read out to the four officers in a Nai-

robi court yesterday. They pleaded not guilty to all counts. The charges against seven others were dropped by the prosecutor at the last minute. “At least now I know that the justice I was crying for from the beginning, I am going to get it,” Samantha’s father Joseph Oloo Abanja told reporters outside the court. Samantha died after she was allegedly beaten by police officers during a raid on her house as protests flared in the western city of Kisumu.

On the day of the incident, police allegedly fired tear gas into their house and battered down the door before raining blows on the couple with batons while the

mother held Samantha in her arms. An autopsy showed that she suffered acute head injuries.

The case has dragged on, with repeated court delays and the disappearance of one of the main suspects nearly five years ago.

“Today I felt good,” Samantha’s mother Lensa Achieng said.

“It has not been an easy journey for us. Because each time this case comes up, we always feel traumatised,” she said.

Amnesty International’s Kenya director Irungu Houghton said the case was setting a precedent in the country that “elections should not come with death, trauma and injuries”. But Amnesty joined 29

other rights groups in condemning the last-minute reduction to just four accused, as well as the inclusion of the names of victims and witnesses in the charge sheet, which they say could jeopardise the case.

The officers, who remain on active duty, were ordered to return for a bail hearing on May 14.

The 2017 protests erupted after victory was declared for then-president Uhuru Kenyatta, angering supporters of veteran opposition leader Raila Odinga.

The result was annulled by the Supreme Court after a challenge by Odinga, but he boycotted the rerun that was won by Kenyatta.

# QPC honours Gaza journalists’ sacrifices

**By Tawfik Lamari**  
Staff Reporter

The Qatar Press Center (QPC) organised a symposium titled “Journalists in Gaza: Martyrs and Witnesses” as part of the Press Council sessions.

The session was held to commemorate World Press Freedom Day. Palestinian journalist Tamer al-Mashal, known for his investigative reports, spoke about the reality of journalistic work in Gaza and the conditions journalists face under the occupation and recurring wars. The session was moderated by journalist Abdullah al-Musalmami.

Tamer al-Mashal emphasised that what is happening in Gaza is a redefinition of the concept of press freedom, the journalist, and the ethics and standards of the profession. He pointed out that what has been happening in Gaza for more than 18 months is nothing short of a massacre. Some 216 Palestinian journalists have been killed and assassinated, and 409 Palestinian journalists have been injured.

He added: “The Israeli occupation has arrested 48 Palestinian journalists who remain missing in prisons, with nothing known about their conditions except for what leaks from some released prisoners.”

He said: “The Israeli occupation forces annihilated 28 families of journalists, in addition to directly targeting and completely destroying 44 homes of journalists.”

Regarding the issue of press and media institutions, Al-Mashal confirmed that 23 digital



Abdullah al-Musalmami (left) and Tamer al-Mashal

media outlets, 11 radio stations, 16 satellite channel headquarters, and 27 other media institutions were destroyed in Gaza.

Al-Mashal questioned the celebration of media freedom and the double standards in light of what is happening in Gaza. He said: “The occupation seeks to turn Gaza into a graveyard for journalists.”

Al-Mashal spoke about the Israeli forces’ sniper fire on all the surveillance cameras installed in front of the Al Jazeera office building in central Gaza, preventing any images from being released.

Al-Mashal recalled the targeting of colleagues Wael al-Dahdouh, Samer Abu Daqqa, Ahmed al-Louh, Hussam Shabat, and their families, emphasising that assassination is a crime, but the greater crime is justifying the assassination.

Al-Mashal explained that the world is witnessing complex crimes that justify the assassination of journalists who do not belong to armed groups, noting that the occupation’s fabrications reflect incitement and justification for its ongoing crimes.

He emphasised that Gaza’s

journalists are heroes who have redefined the concept of journalism, because the occupying power has been unable to prevent the spread of images, information, and truth.

Al-Mashal said: “Unfortunately, the United Nations has not protected the people in order to protect journalists in Gaza.” He emphasised that Gaza is a very serious wound. People are being killed in tents and on live television, with no support.

Al-Mashal said: “The targeting of journalists, people, and stones did not begin on October 7, but rather began with the occupation. People in Gaza have been without food or drink for weeks. Elderly people are being killed right in front of their tents.” He emphasised that this is not humane. “Now, in this war, we are facing a test of conscience, humanity, morals, journalism, and freedom of the press.”

He said: “We realise that the pulse of the people, the pulse of the street, and the pulse of the free people of the world is with Palestine. Al Jazeera has done a tremendous job in conveying the truth to the world, despite the great sacrifices.”

## Amnesty appeals for serious steps to stop genocide in Gaza

Amnesty International called on all international actors, particularly the European Union, to take serious steps to stop Israel’s genocide against Palestinians in the Gaza Strip, whether through the use of military weapons or starvation policies that have rendered the Strip “completely foodless.”

In a press statement, Amnesty International Secretary-General Agnes Callamard called on all relevant parties to pressure Israel to allow the entry of food,

water, and medicine into the Gaza Strip, and to work to hold accountable those responsible for genocide and war crimes.

She spoke about the deteriorating humanitarian situation in Gaza, based on her observations and field monitoring of the ongoing 19-month war of extermination, which has intensified with Israel’s imposition of a comprehensive blockade on the Palestinian Strip since March 2. In this context, Callamard noted

the “alarm bells” in the Gaza Strip due to the depletion of food and all essentials of life, especially after Israel resumed its war of extermination last March.

She said, “We know that people are suffering from severe shortages of food, water, and medicine. The World Food Organisation, the World Health Organisation, and all other UN and humanitarian organisations are sounding the alarm: There is no more food in Gaza.”

## Armed bandits kill 19, rustle livestock in northeast Nigeria

At least 19 people were killed in a suspected bandit ambush and livestock rustling operation in Bauchi state, northeast Nigeria, the police and residents said yesterday.

Bauchi police command said in a statement that the attack took place early on Sunday morning when a local security patrol in Gwana district was ambushed. The police said civilians from a nearby village were also killed while attempting to flee the attack. “A team of operational tactical teams was dispatched to the scene, where they recovered bodies of casualties,” Bauchi police commissioner

Sani-Omolori Aliyu said in the statement.

Gangs of heavily armed men, have wreaked havoc across northwest Nigeria in recent years, kidnapping thousands, killing hundreds and making it unsafe to travel by road or farm in some areas. Ibrahim Hussaini, an eyewitness, said a gun battle ensued between the security team and the bandits which caused multiple fatalities among the vigilante team and some residents. The attackers rustled a large number of cattle and sheep from the district after overpowering the local security team, said Mohammed Umar, a vigilante. **(Reuters)**



# Samsung fights \$520mn India tax demand

Reuters  
New Delhi

Samsung has asked an Indian tribunal to quash a \$520mn tax demand for allegedly misclassifying imports of networking gear, arguing officials were aware of the practice as India's Reliance

imported the same component in a similar manner for years, documents show.  
Samsung becomes the second major foreign company in recent months to challenge an Indian tax demand. Volkswagen has sued the government in court for a record demand of \$1.4bn for misclassifying its component imports.

In the Samsung case, tax authorities in January asked Samsung to pay \$520mn for evading the 10-20% tariffs by misclassifying imports of a key mobile tower equipment, which it then sold to billionaire Mukesh Ambani's telecom giant, Reliance Jio, from 2018-2021.  
In its 281-page challenge at the Customs Excise and Service Tax

Appellate Tribunal in Mumbai, Samsung said Indian authorities for being "fully aware" of the business model as Reliance had a "long-established practice" of importing the same equipment without any tariff payments for three years until 2017.  
Samsung's India unit says it discovered during an Indian tax investigation that Reliance had been

warned about the practice way back in 2017, but Reliance did not inform the South Korean company about it and tax officials never questioned Samsung. "The classification adopted by the appellant (Samsung) was known to the authorities, however the same was never questioned... The department was fully aware," Samsung said in its April

17 filing. "Reliance Jio officials did not inform" Samsung about the tax warning of 2017, it added.  
Samsung and India's tax authority did not respond to queries.  
Further details of Reliance's 2017 warning from tax authorities are not public and were not disclosed in the Samsung filing. Reliance didn't respond to queries.

# India 'starts work on hydro projects after suspending treaty with Pakistan'

Reuters  
Srinagar

India has begun work to boost reservoir holding capacity at two hydroelectric projects in Kashmir, sources with knowledge of the matter said, after fresh tension with Pakistan led it to suspend a water-sharing pact.

The work represents the first tangible step by India to operate outside agreements covered by the Indus Waters Treaty, unbroken since 1960 despite three wars and several other conflicts between the two countries.

Last month, however, New Delhi suspended the pact that ensures supply to 80% of Pakistani farms after an attack in Kashmir killed 26, and it identified two of the three assailants as Pakistani.

Islamabad has threatened international legal action over the suspension and denied any role in the attack, warning, "any attempt to stop or divert the flow of water belonging to Pakistan... will be considered as an act of war".

A "reservoir flushing" process to remove sediment began on Thursday, carried out by India's biggest hydropower company, state-run NHPC Ltd, and authorities in the federal territory of Jammu and Kashmir, the three sources said.

The process initially results in sediment-laden waters being re-

leased downstream from the reservoirs, potentially causing sudden inundation, followed by a reduced flow of water as the reservoirs are refilled, one of the sources said.  
The work may not immediately threaten supply to Pakistan, which depends on rivers flowing through India for much of its irrigation and hydropower, but it could eventually be affected if other projects launch similar efforts.

There are more than half a dozen such projects in the region.

India did not inform Pakistan about the work at the Salal and Baglihar projects, which is being done for the first time since they were built in 1987 and 2008-09, respectively, as the treaty had blocked such work, the sources added.

They spoke on condition of anonymity as they were not authorised to talk to the media.

India's NHPC and the neighbouring governments did not reply to e-mails seeking comment.

The flushing operation ran for three days from May 1, the sources said. "This is the first time such an exercise has taken place and will help in more efficient power generation and prevent damage to turbines," one of the sources said. "We were also asked to open the adjustable gates for cleaning, which we did from May 1," the source said, adding that the effort aimed to free dam operation from any restrictions.  
People living on the banks of the

Chenab river in Kashmir said they noticed water had been released from both Salal and Baglihar dams from Thursday to Saturday. Videos shared by locals show some sections of the river in full flow while others were partly blocked by massive sediment deposits.

The flushing of hydropower projects requires nearly emptying a reservoir to force out sediments whose build-up is a major cause of decline in output.

For example, two of the sources said, power delivered by the 690-MegaWatt Salal project was far below its capacity, because Pakistan had prevented such flushing, while silting also hit output at the 900MW Baglihar project.

"Flushing is not a common thing because it leads to a lot of water wastage," said one of the sources. "Downstream countries are expected to be informed in case it leads to any inundation."

Building both projects had required extensive back and forth with Pakistan, which worries about losing out on its share of water.

Under the 1960 treaty, which split the Indus and its tributaries between the neighbours, India had also shared data such as hydrological flows at various spots on the rivers flowing through India and issued flood warnings.

India's water minister has vowed to "ensure no drop of the Indus river's water reaches Pakistan".



Indian Border Security Force (BSF) personnel stand guard near the India-Pakistan Wagah border post, about 35km from Amritsar yesterday.

# Putin accepts Modi's invitation to visit India

Reuters  
Moscow

Russian President Vladimir Putin has accepted an invitation from Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi to visit the country, the Kremlin said yesterday.

The Kremlin yesterday called for de-escalation between India and Pakistan.

"We hope that the parties will be able to take measures (...) that will reduce tensions," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters, adding that "we are following with

great concern the tense atmosphere that has developed on the border".

Putin told Modi during the phone call that the "particularly privileged partnership" between Moscow and Delhi was "not subject to external influence and continues to develop dynamically in all areas", the Kremlin said in a statement.

Moscow last week said it was ready to mediate after Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov held calls with both sides last week.

Russia has historically had close ties to India, dating back to the So-

viet Union, and is the country's biggest weapons supplier.

"India is our strategic partner. Pakistan is also our partner. We value our relations with both Delhi and Islamabad," Peskov said.

Meanwhile, Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi will visit India on Thursday, its embassy in New Delhi said, days after visiting Pakistan where he held talks with senior government officials.

Iran has offered to act as a mediator between India and Pakistan as tensions between the two neighbours surge after an attack in Kashmir.

## Fourteen children arrested in UK after boy dies in fire

British police have said 14 children aged between 11 and 14 were arrested in a northeastern English town after a teenage boy died in a fire at an industrial park. Eleven boys and three girls were arrested on suspicion of manslaughter, Northumbria police said.  
The victim was confirmed as 14-year-old Layton Carr whose body was found inside the building in Gateshead, near Newcastle, after he was reported missing on Friday.  
"Sadly, following searches... a body believed to be that of 14-year-old Layton Carr was located deceased inside the building," a police spokesman said.  
Police were alerted about the fire on Friday night, and said inquiries were still at an early stage.  
"This is an extremely tragic incident where a boy has sadly lost his life," said detective chief inspector Louise Jenkins.

## Japan's defence minister visits India



Japan's Defence Minister Gen Nakatani shakes hands with his Indian counterpart Rajnath Singh during his ceremonial reception in New Delhi yesterday.

## China ship conducting illegal survey within EEZ: Philippines

Reuters  
Manila

The Philippines has deployed a coast guard vessel and an aircraft to challenge and escort a Chinese research ship it said was conducting illegal marine scientific research activities within the country's exclusive economic zone.

The Chinese Research Vessel (CRV) Tan Suo 3 was detected entering the country's EEZ on May 1, 2025, around 92 nautical miles off the Philippines' northern Ilocos coast, the PCG said in a statement yesterday.

"Their irregular movements were deemed inconsistent with the freedom of navigation and indicative of marine scientific research activities, which violate the sovereign rights of the Philippines," the PCG said.

It said it launched a maritime law enforcement operation to challenge the Chinese vessel's

presence, and had prevented the vessel from continuing its "unlawful activities".

During the operation, the PCG reported spotting a manned deep-sea submersible, named the Shenhai Yongshi or Deep-Sea Warrior, which was retrieved by the Chinese vessel.

The submersible is capable of diving to 4,500 metres and is typically deployed for deep-sea exploration and scientific missions, the PCG said.

It said it also observed a Rigid Hull Inflatable Boat recovering a yellow-coloured, unidentified piece of equipment potentially linked to marine research.

"These actions of the CRV serves as clear evidence that the People's Republic of China are conducting illegal marine scientific research activities within the Philippines' exclusive economic zone, lacking the legal authority to undertake such activities in this area," the PCG said.

# UK celebrates 80th anniversary of end of World War II

AFP  
London

For history teacher Martin Rizcki, the emotion of UK celebrations marking 80 years since the end of World War II became too much when Winston Churchill's words boomed out of loudspeakers to thousands outside Buckingham Palace.

Rizcki was one of the many who defied chilly weather and flocked to central London's Union Jack-lined Mall for the start of four days of events marking VE Day.

"It's not often that we are reminded of the courage of an entire

generation," said the man in his 40s, whose parents fled Poland shortly before the war began.

"No matter where we come from we can all feel and understand the significance of this day."

Preparations began at dawn for some, including Patrick Beacon and his wife Catherine, both 76.

They travelled from Coventry in central England and had stationed themselves on the street leading to Buckingham Palace with camping chairs and a flask of coffee by 7am.

They wanted to get the "best view" of the military parade kick-starting celebrations, which will run until the official anniversary of Victory in Europe Day on Thursday,



Britain's Princess of Wales and Prince George join World War II veterans at a tea party in Buckingham Palace, central London, following the military procession to mark the 80th anniversary of VE Day yesterday.

and which are set to be the last major commemoration with a significant WWII veteran presence.

"It's so emotional to be here," said Patrick, who was born after the war but has vivid memories of Coventry devastated by Nazi air raids.

"Eighty years of peace and peace of mind, I don't know if we understand what an achievement it is. Where would we be without them?"

"For me, it's a moral imperative to be here especially at a time when war is raging," he said.

King Charles III, Prime Minister Keir Starmer and thousands of spectators watched as Nato personnel from the US, France and Germany, along with a small number of

Ukrainian troops, joined the procession.

The spectacle also intrigued tourists, including 52-year-old Ludivine Battelot from southern France.

"We came out of curiosity because it's the kind of celebration that the English do so well," she said. "It's folklore - we wanted to be in the mood and live the experience."

Yesterday's march of around 1,000 troops was followed by a fly-past featuring aerobatic team The Red Arrows as well as current and historic military aircraft, which the 76-year-old king watched alongside Queen Camilla and other royals from the balcony of Buckingham Palace.



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GULF TIMES

US, Ukraine face long road to minerals payoff

The financial payoff from a new minerals deal between Ukraine and the US is likely to take a decade or longer as investors face many hurdles to getting new mines into production in the war-ravaged country.

Developing mines that produce strategically important minerals in countries with established mining sectors such as Canada and Australia can take 10-20 years, mining consultants said on Thursday (May 1, 2025). But most mineral deposits in Ukraine have scant data to confirm they are economically viable. Investors may also balk at funnelling money into a country where infrastructure such as power and transport has been devastated by Russia's three-year-old full-scale invasion and future security is not guaranteed.

"If anyone's thinking suddenly all these minerals are going to be flying out of Ukraine, they're dreaming," said Adam Webb, head of minerals at consultancy Benchmark Minerals Intelligence.

"The reality is it's going to be difficult for people to justify investing money there when there are options to invest in critical minerals in countries that are not at war."

While the financial benefits from the deal are uncertain, officials in Ukraine hailed it as a political breakthrough: They believe it will help shore up US support for Kyiv that has faltered under President Donald Trump.

Ukraine needs US support - especially weapons and cash - to withstand Russia's military invasion. On the US side, Trump heavily promoted the deal, especially the access it provides to Ukraine's deposits of rare earth elements which are used in everything from cellphones to cars. So government policy could hasten investment.

The deal ties the US more closely into Ukraine in that now they've got a bit more of a vested interest in this war coming to an end

between the US International Development Finance Corp and Ukraine's State Organisation Agency on Support for Public-Private Partnership. The text details 55 minerals plus oil, natural gas and other hydrocarbons. According to Ukrainian data, the country has deposits of 22 of the 34 minerals identified by the European Union as critical, including rare earths, lithium and nickel.

"The transition from a discovered resource to an economically viable reserve requires significant time and investment, both of which have been constrained, not only since the onset of the war but even prior to it," said Willis Thomas at consultancy CRU.

Ukrainian finance ministry data showed that in 2024, the Ukrainian state earned 47.7bn hryvnias, or around \$1bn, in royalties and other fees related to natural resources exploitation.

But the joint fund created under the deal will only get revenue from new licences, permits and production-sharing agreements concluded after the accord comes into force.

Ukraine was slow to issue new natural resources licenses before Russia's 2022 full-scale invasion. From 2012-2020, about 20 licences were issued for oil and gas, one for graphite, one for gold, two for manganese and one for copper, according to the Ukrainian geological service. There are 3,482 existing licenses in total.

Since the agreement creates a limited partnership, the two countries may be looking at direct government investment in a mining company, analysts said. Chile, the world's biggest copper producer and owner of state mining company Codelco, could be an example they follow, Webb said. Another hurdle is that some potentially lucrative projects are on land occupied by Russia, and the agreement does not include any security guarantees. Washington has said the presence of US interests would deter aggressors.

Seven of 24 potential mining projects identified by Benchmark are in Russian-occupied parts of Ukraine and include lithium, graphite, rare earth elements, nickel and manganese.

An official of a small Ukrainian company that holds the licence for the Polokhivske lithium deposit, one of the largest in Europe, told Reuters in February it would be tough to develop without Western security guarantees.

"The deal ties the US more closely into Ukraine in that now they've got a bit more of a vested interest in this war coming to an end so that they can develop those assets," Webb said. - Reuters

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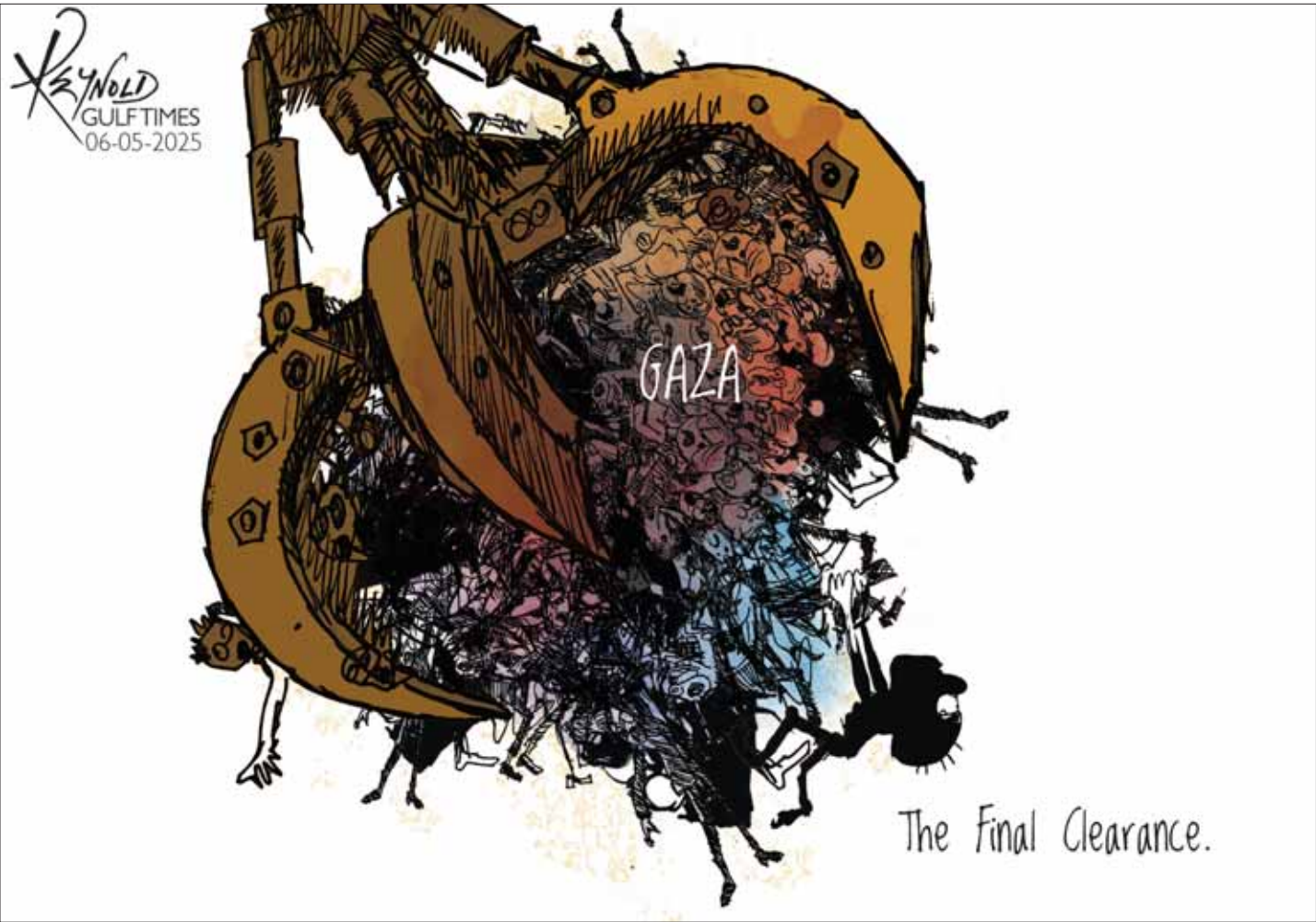
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Regionalism: The ogre threatening Sudan's stability and its search for a policy framework

By Mohamed Sulleman al-Shazly

Cautious is warranted in the use of the term "marginalisation". Today, it is not only Darfur, Eastern Sudan and the Nuba Mountains that speak of marginalisation; communities in Northern Sudan are increasingly voicing similar grievances, pushing back against narratives that portray them as historically privileged or disproportionately developed.

That perception began to erode following a visit to the region by the late John Garang, who observed first-hand the stark poverty of northern villages and towns, describing them as deprived and underprivileged.

Residents of Khartoum contend that if the term denotes a lack of access to hospitals and schools, unreliable electricity, the absence of running water, uncollected rubbish piling up in the streets, and soaring unemployment, then they, too, fall within its scope. Ironically, Khartoum - often regarded as "The Centre" against which regional grievances are directed - shares many of the same hardships. In today's political discourse, "marginalisation" is often used as a euphemism to avoid invoking "regionalism", a term weighed down by negative connotations and deemed politically incorrect. Yet increasingly, it is regionalism - rather than marginalisation per se - that lies at the heart of Sudan's fractured politics.

I find myself reflecting on Sudan's precarious strives for peace and stability. To me, one of its most significant challenges is today's rise of regionalism, which threatens to undermine any peace-building efforts. In Sudan, regionalism is not merely a push for local governance but a destabilising force that could further fracture an already fragile national framework.

Like many war-torn nations, Sudan is deeply divided, providing fertile ground for regionalist tensions. Driven by a desire for greater control over resources and political power, these tensions stem from an appalling legacy of absent statesmanship and the total collapse of a unifying national vision, compounded by the political class's unmatched governing fiasco.

We all agree that we are witnessing, as never before, a surge in strong regional sentiments that cannot be ignored. Rooted in historical tribalism, ethnicity and sectarianism, today's tensions are further exacerbated by entrenched political divisions. This growing wave of regionalism threatens Sudan's national identity, political stability and social cohesion, undermining prospects for long-term peace.

The most pressing concern is the fragmentation of the state. Long-standing divisions have led to violent regional movements, with groups - such as the semi-autonomous administration in the Nuba Mountains - creating

parallel power structures competing for control over territory and resources.

The economic consequences of regionalism are equally concerning. Sudan's recovery is heavily reliant on international aid and foreign investment. However, the movements that undermine the country's unity deter potential external partners. The instability they foster makes Sudan a risky proposition for international investors and aid agencies. This perception of instability risks becoming self-fulfilling prophecy, leaving Sudan without the financial support it so urgently needs to rebuild its economy.

I am reminded of how other war-torn nations have grappled with the resurgence of regionalism. In Somalia, the collapse of the central government in 1991 left the country deeply fragmented, with regional divisions - most notably in the autonomous region of Puntland and the self-declared republic of Somaliland - undermining efforts to restore stability. Libya, too, offers a cautionary example: since the fall of Muammar Qaddafi in 2011, the country has been riven by rival governments, militias and regional powerbrokers, each competing for influence and control over strategic and oil-rich territories. Iraq has similarly struggled, with Kurdish aspirations for autonomy straining relations with Baghdad and exacerbating tensions among the country's ethnic and

sectarian groups. In all three cases, regionalism has deepened existing fault lines, rendering the pursuit of peace and national cohesion ever more elusive.

Sudan can still avoid the worst effects of regionalism through comprehensive reconciliation, inclusive governance, and a real commitment to addressing its root causes. Power-sharing that includes all groups may ease tensions and prevent conflict, but it must be guided by merit to avoid weakening the civil service. A federal system granting regional autonomy could offer a balanced solution.

Sudan can still avoid the worst effects of regionalism through comprehensive reconciliation, inclusive governance, and a real commitment to addressing its root causes. Power-sharing that includes all groups may ease tensions and prevent conflict, but it must be guided by merit to avoid weakening the civil service. A federal system granting regional autonomy could offer a balanced solution. At the same time, tackling economic grievances through fair resource distribution and investment in neglected areas is key to addressing the drivers of discontent. I also recognise the importance of fostering a shared national identity. The challenge will not be solved by simply devolving power to the regions; Sudan must unite its diverse population under a common identity. National education programmes, media campaigns, and community-building initiatives could play a crucial role in transcending ethnic, regional, or sectarian divisions, fostering a sense of belonging and solidarity across the country.

I am convinced that international organisations can play a key role in mediating disputes between the central government and regional actors. Diplomatic support and the facilitation of negotiations can ensure that regional movements are addressed in a manner that promotes peace rather than exacerbating conflict. International engagement, when done thoughtfully, can help Sudan navigate the delicate balance between regional autonomy and national unity.

I close by affirming that Sudan's future depends on overcoming regionalism through inclusive governance, fair resource distribution, comprehensive reconciliation, and a strong national identity. Addressing the roots of regionalism is key to achieving lasting peace and stability.

(mohsulleman@gmail.com)



This picture shows the damaged Republican Palace in the Sudanese capital Khartoum last month. (AFP file photo)



# France, EU seek to lure US researchers

AFP  
Paris

French President Emmanuel Macron and European Commission head Ursula von der Leyen took aim at Donald Trump's policies on science yesterday, as the European Union seeks to encourage disgruntled US researchers to relocate to Europe.

Von der Leyen told a conference at Paris's Sorbonne university that the EU would launch a new incentives package worth €500mn (\$567mn) to make the 27-nation bloc "a magnet for researchers".

"We have to offer the right incentives," she said.

Without mentioning Trump directly, von der Leyen told the "Choose Europe for Science" conference that the role of science was being put in question "in today's world" and condemned such views as "a gigantic miscalculation".

Universities and research facilities in the United States have come under increasing political and financial pressure under Trump, including with threats of massive federal funding cuts.

"Nobody could have imagined

that this great global democracy, whose economic model depends so heavily on free science... was going to commit such an error," Macron said.

He added: "We refuse a diktat consisting of any government being able to say you cannot research this or that."

In the context of "threats" against independent research and "global apprehension", Macron said, "Europe must become a sanctuary."

In the United States, research programmes face closure, tens of thousands of federal workers have been fired and foreign students fear possible deportation for their political views.

European commissioners, scientists, academics and ministers for research from EU member countries took part in yesterday's conference, as did representatives from non-EU members Norway, Britain and Switzerland.

The French president has already appealed to foreign, notably US, researchers to "choose France".

Last month he unveiled plans for a funding programme to help universities and other research bodies cover the cost of bringing



French President Emmanuel Macron (left) and European Commission President Ursula Von der Leyen attend the 'Choose Europe for Science' conference in the amphitheatre of the Sorbonne University in Paris. (AFP)

foreign scientists to the country.

Aix Marseille University in the south of France announced in March it would open its doors to US scientists threatened by cuts.

It says its "Safe Place for Sci-

ence" scheme has already received a flood of applicants.

Last week, France's flagship scientific research centre, the CNRS, launched another initiative aimed at attracting foreign researchers

whose work is threatened. It is also seeking to tempt back French researchers working abroad, some of whom "don't want to live and raise their children in Trump's United States", according to CNRS

President Antoine Petit.

An official in Macron's office said yesterday's conference came "at a time when academic freedoms are retreating and under threat in a number of cases".

One obstacle, experts say, is the fact that while EU countries can offer competitive research infrastructure and a high quality of life, research funding and researchers' remuneration both lag far behind US levels.

But the CNRS's Petit said last week he hoped the pay gap would seem less significant once the lower cost of education and health, and more generous social benefits were taken into account.

Macron's office said France and the European Union were targeting researchers in a number of specific sectors, including health, climate, biodiversity, artificial intelligence and space.

Macron said his government would earmark "an additional" €100mn to help attract foreign talent.

The French government could finance up to 50% of selected research projects, an official in the presidential office said, while assistance could also be offered in the form of tax incentives.

## Pro-EU Romania PM resigns after vote fiasco

Romania's pro-EU Prime Minister Marcel Ciolacu yesterday announced his resignation, deepening political turmoil a day after a far-right candidate topped the first round of a tense presidential vote rerun. Far-right EU critic George Simion topped Sunday's election first round, while the ruling coalition's candidate narrowly lost out to Bucharest's mayor, Nicusor Dan, for the second spot.

With the ruling coalition's candidate Crin Antonescu knocked out of the running, Ciolacu would likely have been replaced by the new president, who appoints the premier. Ciolacu said his party would leave the ruling coalition but would probably hold on until after the election run-off, scheduled for May 18 and which is being closely watched by Brussels and Washington.

Romania, which borders war-torn Ukraine, is an EU and Nato member. His Social Democrats (PSD) party leaving the ruling coalition "implicitly leads to my resignation as prime minister", Ciolacu, 57, told reporters after a party meeting.

"We saw how Romanians voted Sunday, which means that the ruling coalition has no legitimacy, at least in this formula," he added. Once the PSD leaves the



Romanian Prime Minister Marcel Ciolacu talks to the media after resigning, a day after a far-right opposition leader George Simion won the first round of the presidential election re-run and his own candidate crashed out of the race, in Bucharest, yesterday. (Reuters)

governing coalition, it would no longer have a parliamentary majority. Ciolacu said that his party's ministers would discuss with their coalition partners whether or not they would remain in the government on an interim basis.

"The future president would have changed me anyway," Ciolacu said. Ciolacu's resignation "comes at the worst possible moment, adding political risks and fears" in a country already struggling with the highest deficit in the EU, 9.3% at the end of 2024, according to political analyst Radu Magdin. "The political system will re-stabilise after we have political clarity as regards the new president of Romania," Magdin told AFP, adding that

the resignation "gives a boost to Simion who is better than Dan at capitalising on political chaos". Ciolacu said his party would not publicly support either Simion or Dan, instead asking their party supporters to "vote as they wish, according to their own conscience". The Social Democrats' coalition partners said they were supporting Dan. In Sunday's first round, Simion, who leads the nationalist AUR party, gained almost 41% of votes, double the score of the pro-EU Dan, an independent. Dan narrowly edged out Antonescu. AUR and other far right parties hold around a third of the votes in parliament.

# Pakistan conducts second missile test

AFP  
Islamabad

Pakistan conducted a second missile test and India ordered civil defence drills in an escalating stand-off over contested Kashmir that the UN said on Monday has brought the two nations to the brink of war.

New Delhi blames Islamabad for backing an attack on tourists last month – the deadliest against civilians on the Indian-administered side of the Himalayan territory for years – sparking a series of heated threats and diplomatic tit-for-tat measures.

Pakistan rejects the accusations, and the two sides have exchanged nightly gunfire since April 24 along the de facto border in Kashmir, the militarised Line of Control, according to the Indian army.

UN chief Antonio Guterres yesterday said relations between Pakistan and India had reached a "boiling point", warning that "now is the time for maximum restraint and stepping back from the brink" of war.

The Pakistani military said yesterday it had tested a surface-to-surface missile with a range of 120km, a launch "aimed at ensuring the operational readiness of troops". The missile test comes as Iran's top diplomat Abbas Araghchi was in Islamabad for talks with Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif yesterday, ahead of a visit to India on Thursday.

Tehran has offered to mediate between the two nuclear-armed neighbours, and Araghchi will be the first senior foreign diplomat to visit both countries since the April 22 attack sent relations into a tailspin.

"We will spare no effort to help de-escalate the situation between the two countries," Iranian foreign ministry spokesperson Esmail Baqaei said. Pakistan announced a previous test on Saturday of a surface-to-surface missile with a

range of 450km – about the distance from the Pakistan border to New Delhi.

It has not said where either of the tests took place. Sharif, who cancelled a visit to Malaysia scheduled for Friday, said the launch "clearly shows that Pakistan's defence is in strong hands".

Indian information ministry officials said that several civil defence "mock drills" would take place tomorrow, preparing people to "protect themselves in the event of a hostile attack".

Muslim-majority Kashmir, a region of around 15mn people, is divided between Pakistan and India but claimed in full by both.

Rebels in the Indian-run area have waged an insurgency since 1989, seeking independence or a merger with Pakistan. India regularly blames its neighbour for backing gunmen behind the insurgency.

Hindu nationalist Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi has said India will "identify, track and punish every terrorist and their backer" who carried out the attack at Pahalgam last month, and will

"pursue them to the ends of the Earth".

Pakistan's government has denied any involvement in the shooting and vowed that "any act of aggression will be met with a decisive response".

No group has claimed responsibility for the April 22 killing of 26 mainly Hindu men in the tourist hotspot of Pahalgam, but Indian police are seeking at least two Pakistani citizens they allege are among the alleged gunmen.

International pressure has been piled on both New Delhi and Islamabad, who have fought several wars over the disputed Kashmir region.

Russia's Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov told reporters yesterday that Moscow was "following with great concern the atmosphere that has developed on the border", calling for both nations to "reduce tensions".

On the Pakistani side, emergency drills have been carried out on playing fields, residents have been told to stock up on food and medicine, and religious schools have closed.



Pakistan's Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif (right) shaking hands with Iranian foreign minister Abbas Araghchi at the Prime Minister House in Islamabad. Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi was in Islamabad yesterday for an official visit. (AFP)

# Russian reporter critical of Ukraine war escapes to France

A Russian reporter critical of Moscow's invasion of Ukraine said yesterday she had fled to France after Reporters Without Borders helped co-ordinate her escape.

Speaking in an interview with AFP at the media watchdog's headquarters in Paris, Ekaterina Barabash, 64, said she even considered suicide to avoid going to prison.

"I began looking for some poison," said Barabash, who faces up to 10 years in prison for criticising Moscow's army. "Russian prison, it's not a life. It is worse than death." Since Russia invaded Ukraine in February 2022, Moscow has launched an unprecedented crackdown on media freedoms, making it illegal to criticise the army and its war against Ukraine. Barabash was arrested in February on allegations of spreading "false information" about the Russian armed forces in several posts she made on social media. The journalist

was detained soon after attending the Berlinale film festival. She fled house arrest in April.

Speaking to a news conference earlier in the day, Barabash said her journey to France lasted around two-and-a-half weeks. "It was very difficult," she said. Reporters Without Borders, known by its French acronym RSF, helped bring her to safety. The journalist, whose only son lives in Ukraine, had written for several news outlets, including the Russian service of Radio France Internationale (RFI).

Her 96-year-old mother stayed behind in Moscow. Barabash said "many" people were involved in her escape, including Leonid Nevzlin, an ally of self-exiled Kremlin critic Mikhail Khodorkovsky, who "financed" her evacuation. "I crossed all borders by myself," said Barabash, who was born in the Ukrainian city of Kharkiv when it was still part of the Soviet Union.



SAFE: Ekaterina Barabash

RSF earlier helped the escape of former Russian state television journalist Marina Ovsyannikova, who protested against the Ukraine conflict during a live broadcast

in 2022. Barabash said she removed her electronic bracelet when she fled house arrest. "It's somewhere in the Russian forest," she said, smiling. She said she hid "for two weeks" during her escape and crossed the border on her birthday on April 26. RSF director Thibaut Bruttin praised her resilience. "It has been a long and exhausting journey that has come to an end in the last few days and hours," he said.

"Several times, we thought she had been arrested or was in danger of being arrested. Several times, the plan changed. Once, we thought she was dead." Bruttin said it had become more difficult to help journalists escape Russia after the media watchdog smuggled out Ovsyannikova. He also said Barabash's escape was a "message of hope" for Russian reporters.

"There are forces that are willing to help you in your difficult situation," he said.

"There is no despair, there is no inevitability and RSF stands with all those who embody independent journalism." Both RSF and Barabash said they could not disclose all the details of her escape. "I am going to ask for political asylum," she said, adding that she hoped to continue working for RFI. Barabash has been an outspoken critic of Moscow's military offensive against Ukraine. In 2022, she wrote on Facebook that Russia had "bombed the country" and "razed whole cities to the ground". Days before her arrest, she wrote of her "hatred, hatred, hatred for those who started all this". "So many lives have been destroyed, so many families torn apart," she said on Facebook. Barabash said yesterday she was optimistic, even though she would have to start a new life in a foreign country from scratch. "I don't know a single person who has died of starvation in exile," she said.





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