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**Amir sends
condolences
to Kuwait Amir**

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani and His Highness the Deputy Amir Sheikh Abdullah bin Hamad al-Thani sent cables of condolences to Amir of the State of Kuwait Sheikh Mishal al-Ahmad al-Jaber al-Sabah, on the death of Sheikhha Jana Emad Abdulaziz Salem al-Malek al-Sabah. (QNA)

**Qatar Boat Show
2025 to be held in Nov**

Under the Patronage of HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani, the second edition of the Qatar Boat Show 2025 will kick off from November 5-8, 2025 with the participation of government entities and global maritime companies. At a press conference yesterday, the Organising Committee unveiled its roster of official partners for its second edition, which will take place at Old Doha Port. At the signing ceremony, organisers reaffirmed the show's role in positioning Qatar as a global hub for maritime luxury, innovation, and trade. Page 12

**S'hail 2025 to kick
off tomorrow**

The 9th Katara International Hunting and Falcons Exhibition - S'hail 2025 is set to kick off tomorrow at the Katara Cultural Village Foundation. Vice-Chairman of the Organising Committee Mohammed bin Abdullah al-Misnad said that the event, which runs through September 14, will welcome participation from over 200 companies and specialised entities representing 17 countries. The growing international interest underscores the event's stature as one of the world's leading showcases in the fields of hunting, falconry, camping, and outdoor adventures. Page 12

**Heathrow Terminal 4
shut over 'incident'**

One of the four terminals at London's Heathrow Airport was evacuated yesterday while firefighters responded to what the emergency services called a "possible hazardous materials incident". Heathrow, said on social media its Terminal 4 was closed as emergency services responded to an incident, and that all other terminals were operating as normal. "Specialist crews have been deployed to carry out an assessment of the scene, and Terminal 4 has been evacuated as a precaution whilst firefighters respond," a London Fire Brigade spokesperson said.

**French parliament
ousts prime minister**

France's parliament brought down the government yesterday over its plans to tame the ballooning national debt, deepening a political crisis that is weakening the eurozone's second-largest economy. Lawmakers voted to oust Prime Minister Francois Bayrou and his minority government with 364 votes against the veteran centrist politician and 194 in his favour. President Emmanuel Macron, who is facing calls from the opposition to dissolve parliament and resign, will instead hunt for his fifth prime minister in less than two years. His office said he would appoint one in the next few days. Page 11

**MoECC, MCIT launch
Hazardous Materials
Management project**

QNA
Doha

The Chemical Safety Symposium kicked off in Doha yesterday under the theme "Towards the Effective and Safe Management of Chemicals".

The two-day event was attended by HE the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Dr Abdullah bin Abdulaziz bin Turki al-Subaie; HE the Minister of Transport, Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdullah bin Mohammed al-Thani; HE the Minister of Communications and Information Technology, Mohammed bin Ali al-Mannai; HE the Undersecretary of the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change, Engineer Abdulaziz bin Ahmed al-Mahmoud; alongside representatives from the UN Environment Programme, the Arab League, and the Gulf Co-operation Council (GCC) countries.

The symposium focused on key challenges related to chemicals management across a variety of sectors, in addition to sharing expertise and reinforcing co-operation among national and international entities in surveillance, inspection, and chemical safety legislation.

Throughout the symposium,



HE Dr Abdullah bin Abdulaziz bin Turki al-Subaie speaking at the event yesterday.

the launch of the first phase of the Hazardous Materials Management System in Qatar was announced. The initiative, a collaboration between the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change (MoECC) and Ministry of Communications and Information Technology (MCIT), aims to bolster the oversight of hazardous materials and waste and streamline procedures for the relevant authorities.

In his opening remarks, HE the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Dr Abdullah bin Abdulaziz bin Turki al-Subaie, underscored Qatar's commitment

to strengthening the safe and effective management of chemicals. He stressed that chemical safety represents one of the foremost national priorities, directly linked to public health protection and environmental conservation.

Qatar seeks to be an effective partner in international agreements on chemical safety and hazardous materials management, as addressing environmental challenges and risks associated with the growing use of chemicals in industrial, agricultural, and consumer sectors requires a holistic system to ensure safe and sustainable management, His Excellency underlined.

He added that the ministry has taken critical steps in this field, including operating online systems to manage and monitor chemical licenses and advancing electronic inspection systems for depots and hazardous waste.

The ministry has also forged co-operation with the Qatar Research, Development and Innovation Council to develop devices that detect hazardous materials at the nation's ports of entry, in co-ordination with the General Authority of Customs and the Ministry of Public Health, to ensure effective oversight of chemicals, HE al-Subaie highlighted.



**Qatar-Swiss pact for
synergy in mediation**

QNA
Bern

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs signed a letter of intent in the field of mediation and facilitation in Bern, Switzerland, yesterday. The letter was co-signed by HE the Minister of State at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Dr Mohammed bin Abdulaziz bin Saleh al-Khulaifi, and State Secretary of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs of the Swiss Confederation Alexandre Fasel. The move is part of Qatar's commitment to reinforcing bilateral co-operation with the Swiss Confederation and supporting joint efforts in the field of mediation and facilitation, thereby contributing to resolving conflicts through peaceful means and bolstering

global peace and security. The letter aims to boost co-operation in mediation, exchange expertise and information, advance the partnership between the two countries in the field of facilitation and preventive diplomacy, and open new prospects for technical co-operation among the relevant institutions to align with best international practices. The signing of this letter represents a new step in Qatar-Switzerland close co-operation, underscoring the two nations' keenness to leverage their expertise in supporting dispute resolution efforts both regionally and globally, HE Dr al-Khulaifi underlined. For his part, Alexandre Fasel praised the level of relations between the two countries, as well as Qatar's preeminent standing and accumulated expertise in the domain of international mediation.

**Arab FMs condemn
Israeli threat to
displace Palestinians**

QNA
Doha

Foreign ministers from the Arab-Islamic Committee on Gaza have strongly condemned Israeli statements suggesting the displacement of Palestinians from territories occupied since 1967, calling such actions unacceptable under any pretext. In a joint statement, the ministers denounced Israel's ongoing military operations in Gaza, its use of siege and starvation as tools of war, and repeated attacks on civilians and infrastructure. They warned these actions would expand the scope of the conflict, threatening both regional and global stability.

The statement also criticised Israel's continued settlement expansion, land confiscation, home demolitions and settler violence in the West Bank, labelling them as serious violations of international law, the fundamental principles enshrined in the UN Charter and the rules-based international order. The ministers demanded an immediate and permanent ceasefire in Gaza, unrestricted humanitarian access, and international support to help the Palestinian Authority resume governance in the Strip. They emphasised the urgent need to hold Israeli officials accountable for potential war crimes, including forced displacement and ethnic cleansing.

Reaffirming their support for a two-state solution, the ministers stressed that a sovereign Palestinian state based on pre-1967 borders with East Jerusalem as its capital remains essential for lasting peace. They urged the international community and the UN Security Council to act decisively to protect Palestinians to remain on their land and end the illegal occupation.

**Five dead in Israeli strikes on
Bekaa and Hermel in Lebanon**

Lebanon's health ministry said Israeli strikes on the country's east yesterday killed at least five people, after the Israeli military said it targeted positions belonging to the Hezbollah group. Yesterday's attacks came after Lebanon's government said last week that its military would begin implementing a plan to disarm Hezbollah, without disclosing the plan's details. "The Israeli enemy strikes on the Bekaa and the outskirts of Hermel led to a preliminary toll of five dead and five others wounded," the health ministry said.

**Israel ramps up assault, tells
Gaza City residents to leave**



A displaced Palestinian stands next to packed belongings amid an Israeli military operation, in Gaza City, yesterday.

AFP
Jerusalem

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu told residents of Gaza City yesterday to evacuate, as the military ramped up its deadly assault on the Palestinian territory's largest urban centre.

Israel has been intensifying its bombardment of the city in preparation for an operation to conquer it, despite repeated entreaties from Western nations and aid agencies to stop.

Gaza's civil defence agency meanwhile said at least 39 people had been killed by Israel, including 25 in Gaza City, yesterday.

The premier's warning came hours after one of the deadliest attacks on civilians in Jerusalem since the start of the war, in which two Palestinian gunmen opened fire on a bus, killing six people, according to Foreign Minister Gideon Saar.

The two gunmen were killed by a security officer and an armed civilian, police said.

Israel's defence minister, Israel

Katz, had told Hamas earlier yesterday to lay down its arms or face annihilation.

Yesterday, Israeli forces targeted a fourth high-rise building - the Al-Ruya tower - in Gaza City in as many days.

Israel has faced mounting international pressure to halt its campaign in Gaza, with United Nations rights chief Volker Turk saying he was "horrified by the open use of genocidal rhetoric... by senior Israeli officials".

US news outlet Axios reported that White House envoy Steve Witkoff sent a new proposal for a Gaza hostage and ceasefire deal to Hamas last week.

Palestinian fighters killed four Israeli soldiers yesterday after lobbing an explosive device into their tank, the Israeli military said.

A Reuters report said Spain yesterday banned ships and aircraft carrying weapons to Israel from calling at Spanish ports or entering its airspace due to Israel's military offensive in Gaza, measures the Israeli foreign minister denounced as antisemitic.

Spain, which recognised a Palestinian state in May 2024 and has been a vocal critic of Israel's actions in the Gaza Strip, responded to Gideon Saar's comments by summoning its ambassador in Tel Aviv back for consultations.

On top of the ban on ships and aircraft delivering weapons or military-grade jet fuel to Israel, Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez's government said it would not allow anyone who has participated directly in "genocide" in Gaza to enter Spain.

Israel has strongly denied that its actions in Gaza amount to genocide, and it is fighting a case at the International Court of Justice in the Hague that accuses it of genocide.

Environment minister meets executive secretary of Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions



HE the Minister of Environment and Climate Change Dr Abdullah bin Abdulaziz bin Turki al-Subaie met with Executive Secretary of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions, Dr Rolph Payet, on the sidelines of the Chemical Safety Symposium that was held yesterday under the theme "Towards the Effective and Safe Management of Chemicals and runs for two days. The meeting discussed aspects of co-operation between the two sides and ways to strengthen international partnerships in the fields of chemical safety, waste management, and monitoring of hazardous pollutants, in addition to the exchange of technical expertise. (QNA)

Labour minister meets Djibouti counterpart



HE the Minister of Labour Dr Ali bin Smaikh al-Marri met yesterday with the visiting Djibouti Minister of Labour in charge of Formalisation and Social Protection Omar Abdi Said. The meeting addressed avenues for bilateral co-operation in the labour sector and discussed ways to enhance and further develop joint initiatives. (QNA)

Awqaf launches 'Live Fatwas' service on Islamweb

The Ministry of Endowments (Awqaf) and Islamic Affairs launched yesterday a "Live Fatwas AI" service on the Islamic network "Islamweb", affiliated with the Department of Call and Religious Guidance.

The launch was attended by HE the Minister of Endowments and Islamic Affairs Ghanem bin Shaheen al-Ghanem, and HE the Undersecretary of the Ministry Sheikh Dr Khalid bin Mohammed bin Ghanem al-Thani. The launch of the service comes as part of the ministry's alignment with Qatar National Vision 2030 and the Third National Development Strategy, and in response to the growing public demand for im-



mediate and accurate religious answers, benefiting from integration with the network's archive, which includes hundreds of thousands of diverse fatwas. The Ministry of Awqaf and Is-

lamic Affairs said that the service allows direct communication with a specialised team of Islamic scholars.

This service relies on artificial intelligence technologies to provide a seamless experience, allowing users immediate interaction and highly accurate results, while adhering to Islamic Shariah regulations and strict scientific oversight of the new service's output.

Director of the Department of Da'wah and Religious Guidance, Jassim bin Abdullah al-Ali, explained that this event represents a qualitative shift in the history of fatwas. He said that the new service constitutes a modern bridge between Islamweb's audi-



ence and the scholars and fatwa experts working there, achieving a qualitative leap in immediate interaction and scientific accuracy. (QNA)

Amir congratulates Prince of Andorra

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani and His Highness the Deputy Amir Sheikh Abdullah bin Hamad al-Thani sent cables of congratulations to Prince of the Principality of Andorra and Archbishop-Bishop of Urgell Joan Enric Vives Sicilia, on the anniversary of his country's Independence Day. HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani also sent a similar cable of congratulations to Prime Minister Xavier Espot Zamora. (QNA)

Amir greets North Macedonia president

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani and His Highness the Deputy Amir Sheikh Abdullah bin Hamad al-Thani sent cables of congratulations to President of North Macedonia Gordana Siljanovska-Davkova on the anniversary of her country's Independence Day. HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani also sent a similar cable of congratulations to Prime Minister Dr Hristijan Mickoski. (QNA)

MCIT launches Technology Radar Initiative

The Ministry of Communications and Information Technology (MCIT), through its TASMU Innovation Lab, launched the Technology Radar Initiative as part of a series of workshops aimed at identifying, assessing, prioritising, and adopting the latest emerging technologies in key sectors, in alignment with the Digital Agenda 2030 and the goals of Qatar National Vision 2030.

The initiative was inaugurated with a workshop dedicated to the healthcare sector, bringing together Qatar's leaders and experts from the sector to explore emerging digital innovations that contribute to improving service quality, enhancing the efficiency of digital transformation in healthcare delivery, and guiding technology adoption decisions based on community needs. This initiative is a strategic tool

that enables government agencies to evaluate technologies for adoption, testing, or monitoring. Through this classification, the Technology Radar Initiative provides a clearer view of national priorities and enables government entities to direct their technology investments to achieve tangible performance improvements, enhance digital trust, and ensure the resilience of operational systems. (QNA)



Al Dana Medical and EIPICO-Egypt Sign a Pharmaceutical Cooperation Agreement



Doha witnessed yesterday the signing of a strategic partnership agreement between Al Dana Medical in Qatar and EIPICO - Egypt for Pharmaceutical Industries, with the aim of marketing and distributing medicines and pharmaceutical products in the Qatari market.

Dr. Mohamed Afifi, General Manager of Al Dana Medical, and Dr. Atiya Hussein, General Manager for the Gulf and South Asia at EIPICO - Egypt, signed the agreement in the presence of Mr. Mohamed Yousef Al-Mannai, Chairman of Al Dana Medical, and Dr. Ahmed Kilani, Chairman and Managing Director of EIPICO.

Mr. Mohamed Yousef Al-Mannai said that this agreement represents a milestone in Al Dana's journey to strengthen its position in the pharmaceutical distribution and healthcare sector in Qatar.

He stressed the company's commitment to providing the latest high-quality pharmaceutical products to meet the needs of patients and hospitals and to using this partnership for wider cooperation that will positively affect the quality of healthcare services in the country.

Dr. Ahmed Kilani confirmed that the partnership meets the company's vision of expanding its regional and international presence, emphasizing that Qatar represents a promising market with a developed regulatory environment and a growing healthcare infrastructure.

He added: "We are delighted to have Al Dana Medical as our strategic partner in Qatar, given its vast expertise and strong network of relationships with hospitals and health institutions."

Dr. Mohamed Afifi, General Manager of Al Dana Medical, expressed his delight at this important step in the company's journey, stressing that Al Dana Medical is one of the leading and well-established companies in the field of medical equipment, healthcare products, and pharmaceutical distribution in Qatar.

He explained that over many years of work and achievement, the company succeeded in building strong partnerships with major public and private hospitals.

He added that the agreement represents a qualitative step that will contribute to enhancing

the availability of high-quality medicines in the Qatari market and will support the state's strategy in developing the healthcare system and expanding the pharmaceutical supply base in line with the latest global standards.

EIPICO is one of the largest pharmaceutical companies in Egypt and the region. It was established in 1980 in the 10th of Ramadan City with an initial capital of 7 million Egyptian pounds, later increased to 6 billion Egyptian pounds, becoming the first pharmaceutical company to apply Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP) in Egypt.

EIPICO owns three major factories covering an area of 130,500 square meters, including two currently operational plants (EIPICO 1 and EIPICO 2), considered among the most advanced in Egypt and the Middle East, producing all traditional and non-traditional pharmaceutical dosage forms.

The company is preparing to inaugurate its third plant, "EIPICO 3," the first of its kind in Egypt, the Middle East, and North Africa for the production of biosimilars and biologicals. The project, with an investment of USD 100 million, marks a qualitative leap in the pharmaceutical industry as it

manufactures biological products entirely from cell to final product. The plant is expected to produce advanced medicines for the treatment of cancer, anemia, and infertility.

EIPICO's activities extend beyond the Egyptian market to major strategic projects in cooperation with ACDim and the Suez Canal Economic Zone, through the "Arab Company for Pharmaceutical Raw Materials - ARAB API" project, with investments exceeding USD 150 million.

EIPICO produces more than 400 pharmaceutical products covering 25 therapeutic categories, with 310 million packs annually, making it the second largest in domestic sales and the leading Egyptian pharmaceutical exporter, holding a 26% share of total exports. Its products reach 66 countries.

The company, which employs more than 5,000 staff, received World Health Organization (WHO) approval in 2014 as a supplier of sterile antibiotics.

The UK's Medicines, Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency (MHRA), and the Romanian Ministry of Health also accredited it.

Need for journalists to stay ahead of invisible digital threats: expert

By Kamran Rehmat
Doha

Journalists and media professionals in Qatar are well advised to strengthen their digital safety practices in the face of increasingly sophisticated cyber threats. This was emphasised during the second day of Cybersecurity Awareness Workshop conducted by cybersecurity trainer Farhan Alsadi, who cautioned that the stakes have never been higher for those working in sectors such as the media.

The session organised at the Qatar Press Center referred to Qatar's Personal Data Protection Act (Law No 13 of 2016), highlighting the need to safeguard personal information and protect press freedom. The law, enacted in 2016, gives individuals the right to control their data, obliges organisations to adopt strong security measures, and promotes transparency in data usage.

Alsadi noted that journalists are at particular risk because of their access to sensitive sources and sensitive information. He cautioned participants against complacency, stressing that cybercriminals increasingly view the media as a prime target. "Journalists are not just reporting the story anymore — they are part of it," Alsadi said. "Protecting your data means protecting your sources and, ultimately, your credibility."

The Pegasus case

Attention was drawn to the infamous Pegasus spyware case, which exposed the extent of modern surveillance risks. Pegasus, developed by Israel's NSO Group, can infiltrate smartphones without any action from the user — so-called "zero-click" attacks. Once inside, it grants full access to calls, messages, photos, contacts, and even the ability to activate cameras and microphones remotely.

In 2020, the spyware was used



Cybersecurity trainer Farhan Alsadi speaking during a session on the second day of the Cybersecurity Awareness Workshop at the Qatar Press Center yesterday.

to infiltrate the phones of 36 Al Jazeera journalists, enabling attackers to monitor private conversations and track their movements. The revelations were part

of the Pegasus Project, a global investigation that found more than 50,000 potential targets, including journalists, activists, lawyers, and heads of state. International watchdogs condemned the misuse of such tools, warning that surveillance of journalists undermines democracy and press freedom.

Understanding the threat landscape

The workshop outlined the most common cyber risks facing media professionals today:

- Spyware, like Pegasus, that secretly takes over devices.
- Phishing attacks, which use fake e-mails or text messages to trick users into sharing passwords or clicking malicious links.
- Malware, often embedded in files or downloads, capable of crippling networks.

Alsadi said that while these threats are invisible, their consequences are real, ranging from

data theft and reputational damage to risks against personal safety. To counter these dangers, Alsadi provided participants with a set of practical and actionable steps:

- Use strong, unique passwords of at least 12 characters, mixing numbers, symbols, and upper- and lowercase-letters. Store them in trusted password managers such as LastPass or Bitwarden.
- Enable two-factor authentication (2FA) or multi-factor authentication for all accounts. Where possible, opt for more advanced options like cryptographic passkeys.
- Regularly update devices and software to patch vulnerabilities that spyware exploits.
- Encrypt communications by using secure platforms such as Proton Mail for e-mail and Signal for messaging.
- Avoid public Wi-Fi unless connected through a Virtual Private Network (VPN). VPNs encrypt traffic and mask IP addresses, reducing exposure to interception.

• Be wary of phishing: never click on suspicious links or attachments, even if they appear to come from trusted contacts.

• Scan devices regularly with security tools such as Amnesty International's Mobile Verification Toolkit (MVT) to detect traces of spyware.

• Back up data securely, ideally in encrypted formats, to allow recovery in the event of ransomware or breaches.

Beyond technology, Alsadi emphasised the human factor in cybersecurity. Awareness training, phishing simulations, and vigilance at the individual level, he said, remain the most effective first line of defence. "Attackers often exploit human weakness, not just software vulnerabilities," he said, urging media organisations to build a culture of cyber resilience where every staff member recognises their role in digital safety.

QIC launches 'Qatar's first' school fees protection insurance solution

Qatar Insurance Company (QIC) has launched Qatar's first-ever 'School Fees Protection Insurance', a pioneering solution designed to safeguard families and ensure uninterrupted education for children across the country.

Salem al-Mannai, Group CEO, QIC, said: "Education is the cornerstone of every nation's progress, and at QIC, we recognise the profound responsibility parents feel in securing their children's future. Our 'School Fees Protection Insurance' is not just about covering financial risk—it is about protecting dreams, ambitions, and the stability of families.

"By ensuring that no child's education is interrupted due to unforeseen challenges, we are reinforcing the values of security, resilience, and opportunity that are central to Qatar's growth story.

"Launching innovative insurance products locally is a strategic step to enhance Qatar's position as a leading financial



Salem al-Mannai

hub in the region. "This comes in line with the Third Financial Sector Strategic Plan launched by the Qatar Central Bank in 2023, which aims to build an advanced financial and capital market that leads the region in innovation, efficiency, and investor protection, thereby enabling Qatar to unlock its full economic potential in accordance with Qatar National Vision 2030.

As a national leader, our role is to be a partner in economic and social development, and a

guardian of family stability in the face of change." QIC's School Fees Protection Insurance provides families with comprehensive financial support in the event of unforeseen circumstances such as involuntary loss of employment, permanent disability, or accidental death.

Coverage also includes cases where a child cannot continue their studies due to health issues or accidents, as well as reimbursement of prepaid examination fees if a student is unable to attend due to illness, hospitalisation, or the accidental death of a close relative.

All benefits are paid directly to the school, ensuring a seamless continuation of education without disruption to the student's academic journey. Customers can easily obtain this product through the qic.online portal, which provides a smooth and convenient experience, or by visiting any QIC branches across the country, in addition to its direct availability in selected schools.

Al-Hammadi bids farewell to Saudi envoy



HE the Secretary-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Dr Ahmed bin Hassan al-Hammadi met yesterday with Saudi ambassador Prince Mansour bin Khalid bin Abdullah al-Farhan al-Saud, on the occasion of the end of his tenure in Qatar. HE al-Hammadi thanked the ambassador for his efforts in enhancing and promoting bilateral relations, wishing him success in his new duties. (QNA)

British Community Foundation to foster stronger ties with host nation

By Joey Aguilar
Staff Reporter

The British Community Foundation (BCF) was launched yesterday, marking a new non-profit initiative dedicated to supporting the welfare and well-being of Qatar's 23,000 British expatriate community and fostering stronger ties with the host nation.

Hosted by British ambassador Neerav Patel at the embassy, the event brought together British diplomats, including deputy British ambassador Duncan Hill, and representatives from across Qatar's British expatriate community. The launch also unveiled the BCF's upcoming schedule of events.

Speaking at the gathering, Patel, who also chairs the BCF Council, highlighted what he described as the "vibrant, diverse, and engaged community" of Britons who call Qatar home, noting the "multi-generational link" connecting the two countries. "We know that life here can be rich and diverse and really rewarding. But I also am conscious that sometimes you need a bit of support and you need a community to help situate you and generate it, which is why a few months ago, and this really was the brain-



British ambassador Neerav Patel hosted a special event yesterday to launch the British Community Foundation.

PICTURE: Joey Aguilar

child of Duncan. "We suddenly wanted to do something to just energise and bring the community together in a bit more of an organised way," he said.

Patel extended an invitation to all British nationals in Qatar to participate in upcoming events, regardless of how long they have resided in the country. The Foundation's upcoming calendar for the autumn and winter seasons includes a weekly playgroup for parents and pre-schoolers, a monthly mixer for Brits in Doha, support groups and family days for British Special Educational Needs families, town hall meetings for community feedback, and

a Winter Bazaar to be held at the ambassador's garden.

Patel also thanked the volunteers who played a key role in establishing the BCF, acknowledging Daisy Organ for her significant contribution and describing her as the "engine and the dynamo of all of this". He stressed that the Foundation's success will reflect the community's involvement, encouraging attendees to spread the word and engage through the BCF's website and social media.

In a press statement, Roxy Hailes, founder of the 3,000-strong British and Irish Mums Living in Doha Facebook Group and a volunteer organiser for the BCF playgroup, said: "It's wonderful to have the British Community Foundation here to help Brits. I am really excited to welcome parents and little ones to the BCF playgroup.

"This is something that has been missing here in Doha in recent years. Playgroup is a brilliant opportunity for families to get together and make new friends. It is open to everyone across the British community: both new arrivals in Doha and those who have been here for years."


The BCF operates independently but in close co-ordination with the British embassy in Doha, the British Council, and other community organisations.

Qatar, EU hold workshop on digital regulation

The Public Prosecution, in co-operation with a EU delegation in Doha, has organised a training workshop on regulatory frameworks and practices in the digital age. HE Attorney-General Dr Issa Saad al-Jafali al-Nuaimi inaugurated the two-day event, in the presence of EU ambassador to Qatar Dr Cristian Tudor. In

his opening remarks, Tudor highlighted the EU's partnership with Qatar in addressing the urgent challenges of the digital era. He emphasised the EU's commitment to upholding the rule of law, protecting rights and freedoms online, and guiding technological innovation responsibly. The workshop, led by a group of

international digital governance experts from the European University Institute, aims to deepen mutual understanding of regulatory challenges in the digital sphere, encourage experience-sharing between Qatari and European institutions, and explore policy tools and approaches to safeguard digital rights.



قطر تستحق الأفضل
Qatar Deserves The Best

هيئة الأشغال العامة
Public Works Authority

STATE OF QATAR
Public Works Authority

RFP STAGE 1: REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS – STAGE 1 (QUALIFICATION)
RFP STAGE 1: REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS – STAGE 1 (QUALIFICATION)
THE WEST BAY BEACHES AND AL SAFLIYA ISLAND DEVELOPMENT

RFP STAGE 1: REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS – STAGE 1 (QUALIFICATION).

Qatar Tourism (the "Contracting Authority") through the Public Works Authority ("Ashghal") is planning a Design, Build, Finance, Operate, Maintain and Transfer ("DBFOMT") tender for the development of the West Bay Beaches and Al Safliya Island Development (the "Project") as a Public Private Partnership (PPP). The Contracting Authority is looking for a suitable private sector developer /operator (the "Project Company") with international and/or regional experience to develop and operate five (5) beachfront plots in the West Bay Area along with Al Safliya Island (the "Project") which will feature a range of offerings including Eco Tourism, Waterfront Destination, Food & Beverage, and leisure activities etc. The developer would have the choice to develop the whole Project or selected sites, based on their interest:




Figure 1: Project Sites with associated plot No




Figure 2: Al Safliya Island: Plot # TBD

The developer will be fully responsible for the Design, Build, Finance, Operation and Maintenance of the facilities over a period of 25 years, but subject to revision if required. The plots allocated will be leased from the Government on a nominal rent basis. The purpose of this Request for RFP Stage 1 is to collect design ideas from participants and to pre-qualify competent Qatari, regional and international companies and consortia, capable of delivering the Project, to participate in the tender process. Following the RFP Stage 1, if Qatar Tourism proceeds with the Request for Proposal ("RFP") Stage 2, only the prequalified bidders will be requested to participate in the RFP Stage 2. Please be advised that a Bidder Day will be held during this RFP Stage 1 process to provide further information and to answer questions from potential interested parties on the Project.

SCOPE OF SERVICES:

The scope of services for the Project will include but not be limited to:

- Design
- Construction
- Project Financing
- Operation and Maintenance (Hard & Soft Facilities Management)
- Transfer back to the Contracting Authority

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL STAGE 1 DOCUMENT (RFP STAGE 1)

ASHGHAL HAS PUBLISHED THE RFP STAGE 1

Ashghal has published the RFP Stage 1 and Bidders will need SFTP Client application to download the Document. Please find below link to Download SFTP Client (WinSCP – Free to Use).

<https://www.linode.com/docs/tools-reference/file-transfer/transfer-files-with-winscp-on-windows>

After download, please install and use the same application to download the Documents, which can be downloaded using the given user name and password:

FTP Server IP	: 213.130.100.91
User Name	: rfp-wbalsi
Password	: rFPw2#90!
Port	: 22

During the bidding period, the Bidders shall visit Ashghal's website frequently for updates, RFP Stage 1 circulars and/or addenda, if any.

SUBMISSION OF REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL STAGE 1 DOCUMENT

Please be advised that the deadline for submission of the RFP Stage 1 Proposals shall be no later than

(Sunday, 02 November 2025 at 1:00 pm (local Doha time, GMT +3:00)). The RFP Stage 1 Proposals must be in accordance with the requirements in the RFP Stage 1 Document and submitted to:

**PUBLIC WORKS AUTHORITY
ENGINEERING SERVICES DEPARTMENT MANAGER
ASHGHAL Tower (3) – Ground Floor
P.O. BOX : 22188
Doha, State of Qatar**

All enquiries are to be directed to :
Engineering Services Department Manager
E-mail : esd.tenders@ashghal.gov.qa

Qatar sends 90 tonnes of aid to regions in Syria



As part of its ongoing support for the Syrian people, Qatar yesterday sent a new batch of medical and humanitarian aid of medical equipment and supplies, worth over QR45mn – provided through the Qatar Red Crescent Society (QRCS).

The Qatari aid, as part of its "Take Heart Syria" initiative, was

delivered by two Qatar Armed Forces aircraft, carrying 12 tonnes of medical and humanitarian supplies to be distributed to beneficiaries in co-ordination with the Syrian Ministry of Health and the Syrian Arab Red Crescent.

On Aug 28, 22 aid trucks departed from Doha in three batches. The convoys travelled through

Saudi Arabia and Jordan, ending in Syria, with 78 tonnes of aid. So far Qatar has sent 90 tonnes of aid.

The aid distribution will cover all Syrian regions, sending a clear message that Qatar is committed to ensuring its humanitarian aid reaches all Syrians without exception. (QNA)

Qatar sets up field hospital for Afghan quake victims

Qatar International Search and Rescue Group of the Internal Security Force (Lekhwiya) set up a temporary field hospital to provide urgent medical support to earthquake victims in eastern Afghanistan. The hospital has already received several injured individuals and provided them with the necessary care, while critical cases were transferred to main hospitals in neighbouring provinces. The group also established several shelter tents to provide temporary accommodation for the quake-affected families and to ensure their basic needs are met. (QNA)



QRCS in co-operation pact with CIVIC

Qatar Red Crescent Society (QRCS) and Center for Civilians in Conflict (CIVIC) have signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU), as a legal framework for long-term co-operation on community support and protection; facilitation of mediation efforts in conflict zones; and integration of the Islamic and international humanitarian principles into the legal, regulatory, and practical civilian protection systems.

The agreement was signed by QRCS secretary-general Faisal Mohamed al-Emadi and CIVIC executive director Hichem Khadhraoui.

The ceremony was attended by QRCS board member HE Essa bin Ahmed al-Nasr, Relief and International Development assistant secretary-general Mohamed Bader al-Sada and assistant secretary-general and Medical Affairs Division executive director Abdullah Sultan al-Qattan.

In his keynote speech, al-Emadi emphasised the importance of the



agreement in enabling the two parties to share resources, expertise, and relations in common areas and specialisations, on the one hand, and to have a crack at new ones, on the other, thus helping enrich their respective portfolios and to launch future joint programmes towards the desired goals of collaboration.

Khadhraoui said: "We share a vision of advancing civilian protection by drawing on our respective strengths – CIVIC's expertise in harm mitigation and protection

strategies, and QRCS's longstanding presence and humanitarian reach".

CIVIC is an international humanitarian organisation specialising in the protection of civilians affected by armed conflict. Established in 2003, it is headquartered in Washington, DC, with offices in Geneva, The Hague, and New York. It operates in more than 10 conflict-affected countries, including Syria, Yemen, Nigeria, Somalia, Ukraine, and the Sahel region.

Conservation, sustainable use of plant genetic resources in spotlight

The 10th meeting of the Technical Committee on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture was launched yesterday.

The four-day meeting is organised by the Ministry of Municipality's Agricultural Research Department, with the participation of official delegations, international and regional experts, besides representatives of a number of organisations specialised in this field.

In his opening remarks, Hamad Sakit al-Shammari, director of the Agricultural Research Department at the Ministry of Municipality, welcomed the participants, stressing the importance of the meeting in strengthening regional and international co-operation. He highlighted that conserving plant genetic resources and ensuring their sustainable use constitute a fundamental pillar for achieving food security and sustainable agricultural development.

Aisha Dasmal al-Kuwari, head of the Biotechnology and Gene Bank Section, delivered a welcome speech in which she affirmed that the meeting represents an important milestone for exchanging expertise and enhancing joint work. She added that such gatherings are a valuable opportunity to unify efforts in addressing challenges related to the protection of plant genetic resources and to discuss best practices and joint initiatives for adapting to accelerating environmental and climate changes.

The meeting's agenda includes a review of the main challenges facing the plant genetic resources sector, in addition to discussions on Articles (5) and (6) of the related international treaty. Participants stressed the importance of strengthening international and regional co-operation and supporting national programmes aimed at the sustainable use of genetic resources, as well as developing modern technologies in this field.

The Secretariat of International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture confirmed that the outcomes of this meeting will contribute to establishing a clear roadmap for enhancing joint efforts and embedding sustainability concepts in line with the priorities of food security and sustainable agricultural development in the region and the world.

It also expressed its gratitude and appreciation to Qatar for its constructive efforts in hosting and organising this important technical meeting. Holding this meeting in Doha reflects Qatar's pioneering role in conserving plant genetic resources through the efforts of the Agricultural Research Department and the Biotechnology and Gene Bank Section at the Ministry of Municipality, strengthening the position of the Qatari Gene Bank as a key pillar in preserving plant genetic resources for food and agriculture at both the regional and international levels. (QNA)



Invitation to participate in Barwa Tender

Barwa Real Estate Company wishes to invite capable and competent companies to participate in the tender described below:

Tender Reference	Tender Description	Tender Bond	Non-refundable Tender Fees	Closing Date
BRE/RFP/GAM/12503/2025	Design, Supply, and Installation of External Branding Signage for Various Barwa Projects	QAR 100,000	QAR 200	29 September 2025 12.00 p.m.

To receive the tender documents, a copy of the tender fee deposit slip and valid commercial registration of the bidder must be forwarded to the following email address: Tender@barwa.com.qa

To pay the tender fee, it should be deposited into the following account:

Beneficiary : Barwa Real Estate Company
Bank Name : Dukhan Bank, Main Branch, Doha – Qatar
Account No. : 200000008022
IBAN Number : QA04BRWA00000000200000008022

Bid documents submitted to Barwa Company should include a Tender Bond in accordance with the tender document, issued in a form of a Bank Guarantee from a local bank registered in Qatar, and valid 120 days from the closing date. No offers submitted beyond the closing date will be considered.

Tender bids to be submitted to:

LTC Secretary
Barwa Real Estate Company
Barwa Al-Sadd Towers – Tower 1 – 16th Floor
P.O Box: 27777 Doha-Qatar



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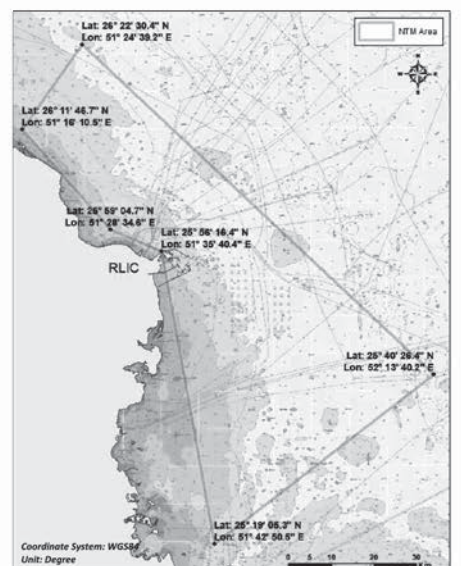
Public Announcement
 To all Ships, Fishermen and Mariners
 Seismic Survey Acquisition by Vessels AOS Glory, Stanford Hawk, GMS Apollo, Voyager Explorer, BGP Innovator and Safa Searcher
 Seismic Survey Works Offshore Qatar from 27th November 2024 – 27th November 2025

Pursuant to and under directives from the Department of Seafarers Affairs & Registration, Ministry of Transport, State of Qatar, this announcement is to inform all Vessels, Mariners and Fishermen that QatarEnergy LNG intends to perform Ocean Bottom Node Seismic Survey Works with Vessels AOS Glory, Stanford Hawk, GMS Apollo, Voyager Explorer, BGP 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

MGD expands UK footprint with two flagship showrooms

Malabar Gold & Diamonds (MGD), the world's fifth largest jewellery retailer with over 400 showrooms across 13 countries, has expanded its UK footprint with the launch of two new flagship showrooms at Birmingham and Southall.

Acclaimed Bollywood actress and MGD brand ambassador Kareena Kapoor Khan inaugurated the showrooms, marking a significant milestone in the brand's growing influence in the international jewellery sector, a statement said in Doha yesterday.

Malabar Group chairman M P Ahammad, vice-chairman Abdul Salam K P, MGD international operations managing director Shamlal Ahamed, Group executive director A K Faisal, other directors and senior management team members, community leaders, and customers were present at the openings.

Ahammad said: "UK is an in-



The opening of MGD's Birmingham showroom.



The opening of MGD's Southall showroom.

tegral link in our global growth journey in the West, and we are delighted to celebrate this new milestone. With the current retail presence of four showrooms and more in the pipeline, these openings not only strengthen our presence in the UK but also rein-

force our mission of being among the most preferred jewellery retailer in the global market."

The newly opened MGD flagship showrooms in Birmingham and Southall offers over 30,000 designs in 18K, 22K gold, diamond, and precious gems, rep-

resenting over 25 exclusive collections from MGD's vast design portfolio. Specialised services such as customised jewellery designing facilities and exclusive bridal designs are also available. Spanning 5,700+ sq ft, the Birmingham showroom is the

brand's largest outlet in the UK. The other two MGD showrooms in the UK are in Leicester and Green Street (London).

Abdul Salam said: "The UK marks the beginning of our consistent growth strategy across Europe, with further launches

planned in key cities across the continent." Shamlal Ahamed said: "Our future expansion plans in the UK include opening showrooms in Manchester and a third showroom in London. We will also be marking our entry into Ireland and France."

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8.75 QAR/kg	5.75 QAR/kg	5.50 QAR/kg	2.75 QAR/kg	9.25 QAR/kg	4.25 QAR/kg
5.25 QAR/kg	8.25 QAR/kg	5.25 QAR/kg	5.25 QAR/kg	7.25 QAR/kg	6.25 QAR/kg
2.00 QAR/kg	1.00 QAR/kg	5.75 QAR/kg	8.75 QAR/kg	4.25 QAR/kg	3.25 QAR/kg
13.50 QAR/kg	15.25 QAR/kg	16.25 QAR/kg	16.75 QAR/kg		

Elevate your special occasions with Zulal's Wellness Journeys

From intimate escapes to shared milestones, every celebration is transformed into meaningful moments of joy, balance, and renewal.



Zulal Wellness Resort by Chiva-Som, the Middle East's largest immersive wellness destination, proudly unveils its wellness-inspired journey for Special Celebrations - a new way to celebrate life's milestones through transformative experiences rooted in holistic wellbeing. More than a party, these thoughtfully designed packages embrace the art of self-love, connection, and renewal, creating memories that are both joyful and nourishing.

Special occasions are moments to pause, reflect, and celebrate life's journey. At Zulal, every celebration is infused with the principles of Traditional Arabic and Islamic Medicine (TAIM) blended with modern integrative therapies, inviting guests to step away from the ordinary and into a world of balance, vitality, and heartfelt connection. From an intimate escape for two to a gathering of friends and loved ones, Zulal transforms special celebrations into experiences of rejuvenation, joy, and wellness.

Perfect as a meaningful gift or intimate escape, guests are invited to indulge in an Explore Retreat with the luxurious accommodation. Each guest is treated to two treatments of choice, from a curated menu; one massage, with a choice of Signature Full Body Tadleeq, Invigorating Massage, Oriental Scalp Massage, or the Signature Al Qadam Foot Massage; and one specialised therapy, selecting from Gyrotonic, Neurac, TECAR Therapy, Watsu, NuEra, Cupping, Acupuncture, Reiki, or Craniosacral Therapy. This thoughtful blend of relaxation and restoration ensures every celebration is as rejuvenating as it is memorable.

Guests are welcomed with a red-carpet entrance, a thoughtful wellness gift of an essence candle and fresh flower bouquet, and a personalised touch in the room, complete with special décor, embroidered pyjamas, engraved flasks, and a wholesome snack.

The evening unfolds with a dinner under the stars, hosted at unique resort venues such as the serene mangrove deck, the cosy fire pit, or a private terrace. A personalised a wellness-crafted cake completes the celebration, while shared treatments



and tranquil moments create lasting memories of connection and care.

For those who believe joy multiplies when shared, Zulal introduces a tailored the Special Celebration Package for three guests and above. Perfect for milestone any special occasions, family reunions, or wellness-inspired get-togethers, the group package transforms traditional gatherings into collective journeys of health and happiness.

"At Zulal, special occasions are moments to pause and embrace wellness in its truest form," says Mr. Ammar Samad, General Manager. "Our new packages combine celebration with transformation, ensuring every guest leaves with renewed energy, joy, and purpose."

Whether seeking a private retreat for couples or group gathering with loved ones, Zulal Wellness Resort crafts wellness celebrations that honour the self, celebrate togetherness, and embrace the timeless gift of wellbeing.

SCAN TO GET CONNECTED



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

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MBA Group Celebrates Continued Growth Across Multiple Sectors, Expresses Deep Gratitude to Qatar's Leadership

Since its establishment in 2019, MBA Group has grown into one of Qatar's most dynamic and diversified business groups. Operating across a wide range of sectors including real estate, construction, trading, rent-a-car, general services, and hospitality, MBA Group stands as a proud example of entrepreneurial success powered by national support and strategic vision. With a strong portfolio of properties located in key areas such as The Pearl, Lusail, Al Waab, and other prime locations, the company continues to contribute to Qatar's rapid urban and economic development. Each division under the group reflects a deep commitment to excellence, service, and innovation.

Chairman's Message

At MBA Group, we believe that true success comes not only from growth in business, but also from the impact we create in the lives of people and the communities we serve. With strong foundations across real estate, construction, rent-a-car, trading, hospitality, and general services, our journey reflects resilience, innovation, and a commitment to excellence.

We owe our success to the wise leadership of the State of Qatar, whose vision and policies have enabled companies like ours to flourish in an environment of stability, growth, and innovation. Their guidance continues to inspire us to align our goals with Qatar National Vision 2030, ensuring that we play our role in building a sustainable and prosperous future.

To our clients, partners, and employees, I extend my sincere gratitude. Your loyalty, dedication, and trust remain the driving force behind our continued success. Together, we will move forward with confidence, building a brighter tomorrow for Qatar and beyond.

Mr. Mohamed Al Nuaimi
Chairman, MBA Holding Group

CEO's Message

The strength of any organization lies in its ability to adapt, innovate, and respond to the needs of the community it serves. Our journey has been defined by a commitment to excellence, the pursuit of sustainable growth, and a determination to deliver services that make a meaningful impact.

Qatar's leadership has not only provided stability but also a spirit of ambition that drives companies to think beyond boundaries. Their unwavering support encourages us to explore new opportunities, embrace global standards, and position ourselves as contributors to both national and international progress.

Looking ahead, our priority is to expand opportunities, invest in people, and strengthen partnerships built on trust. With dedication and focus, we remain committed to shaping a future of progress that reflects both our values and Qatar's aspirations.

Mr. Haitham Abdelghany
Chief Executive Officer, MBA Holding Group



For media inquiries, business collaborations, or more information, please contact: **Email:** info@mbaholding.com, **Tel:** 4472 5504, **Website:** www.mbaholdinggroup.qa



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VCUarts Qatar Student Revives Qatar's Oral Traditions Through Art

In a groundbreaking presentation at VCUarts Qatar's final year show, Art & Design Now, held at M7 in Msheireb, Art History student Fatima Al Moftah brought the melodies of childhood to life through a multi-sensory installation that captured the attention of visitors and the wider community.



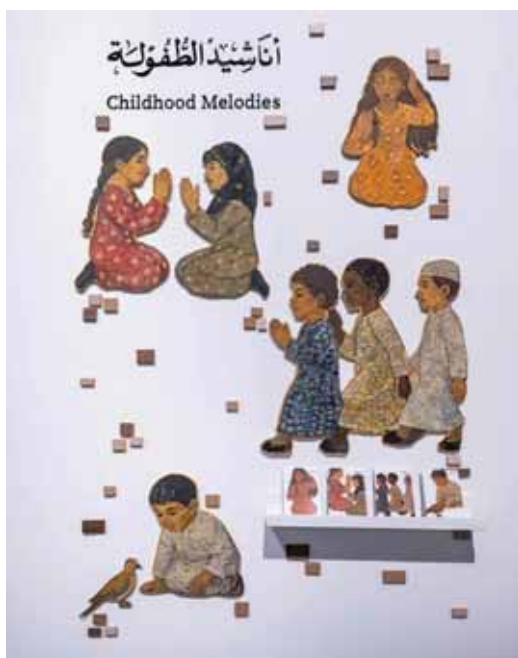
Participating for the first time as a department in the final year showcase, the Art History students at VCUarts Qatar presented projects that were deeply rooted in cultural preservation and storytelling. Among them, Fatima Al Moftah's project, Childhood Melodies, stood out as a heartfelt tribute to Qatar's intangible heritage.



Inspired by the often-overlooked oral traditions of children's songs passed down through generations in Qatar and the Gulf, Fatima Al Moftah embarked on an extensive research journey that combined ethnography with visual art. "What initially inspired me was an interest in intangible heritage," Fatima explained. "Especially those forms that are passed down by women and children. It's a space of memory, imagination, and community that isn't often formally recorded."

Through intergenerational interviews and fieldwork, Fatima uncovered how these melodies have transformed over time—some persisting, others fading, yet all holding a significant place in the region's cultural fabric. Her exploration evolved into a personal artistic journey, where she chose oil painting as her medium to evoke the emotional layers of these childhood songs.

The final installation featured four oil paintings accompanied by bilingual lyric cards embedded with QR codes, allowing visitors to listen to the melodies as they engaged with the artwork. "Integrating audio was essential—I wanted people to hear the melodies,



to feel them as I had," Fatima shared. "This multi-sensory approach reflects the way these songs were originally experienced—within homes, playgrounds, and communities."

One of the most rewarding moments for Fatima came when visitors—young and old—recognized the songs and began singing along, bridging generations through shared memory. "Those moments of connection made all the challenges worthwhile," she recalled.

Fatima's project not only resonated deeply with audiences but also shaped her academic and professional ambitions. She now envisions a future at the intersection of ethnography, visual storytelling, and curatorial practice, working to preserve and celebrate community voices and intangible heritage.

Childhood Melodies stands as a testament to the power of art in safeguarding cultural memory and marks a significant milestone for the Art History program at VCUarts Qatar in its commitment to nurturing research-driven, socially impactful creative practices.

For more information, please contact:
VCUarts Qatar Communications Office:
vcuqcomm@vcu.edu



MIE-SPPU launches BEd programme in Qatar

MIE-SPPU Institute of Higher Education, the Qatar campus of Savitribai Phule Pune University (SPPU), Pune, has announced the launch of Bachelor of Education (BEd) Degree Programme.

The two-year programme marks a significant step in bringing high-quality teacher education to the region, addressing the growing demand for qualified educators, a statement said.

The BEd degree offered at its Qatar campus is recognised by the University Grants Commission, the National Council for Teacher Education, New Delhi, as well as the Ministry of Education and Higher Education, Qatar.

The programme has been designed with the needs of working professionals in mind. Delivered through a hybrid model, it combines online learning with face-to-face classes conducted in the evenings and on Saturdays.

The practicum requirement of the curriculum can be fulfilled by teaching in their own schools, ensuring practical application



MIE-SPPU Institute of Higher Education

of learning without additional burden.

"With a fee of only QR12,000 per year – a total of QR24,000 for the entire two years – and the option to pay up to four instalments, the university has ensured that cost is not a barrier to pursuing the programme," it was explained.

The curriculum, aligned with India's National Education Policy, has been enriched with several new modules to prepare educators for the 21st-century classroom. These include yoga education, health and wellness, digital learning, community engagement, educational research projects, drama and art in edu-

cation, and mentoring in education.

Yasir Nainar, president MIE-SPPU remarked: "Our vision is to empower educators with the knowledge, skills, and values necessary to meet the evolving demands of education, both locally and internationally. By offering this programme at an affordable cost and in a flexible format, we hope to make teacher education accessible to all those who aspire to excel in the profession."

Admissions for the programme are now open with only 50 seats and classes to begin at the end of September, the statement added.

QF to reveal sports, fitness offerings at inaugural Back-to-School fair

Qatar Foundation (QF) will host its inaugural Back-to-School Sports Fair on Sept 13, from 4-7pm at Awsaj Recreation Center, giving community members the opportunity to explore programmes, memberships, and facilities across Education City – including a new addition to its sporting scene.

More than 20 professional and community-based sports and fitness providers will host booths, showcasing inclusive programmes and demonstrations for all ages and abilities. Offerings will include ladies-only fitness sessions, family-friendly activities, and options tailored for persons with disabilities. Those who attend will also have the opportunity to explore Education City's world-class recreation venues, from Olympic-sized swimming pools and multi-purpose halls to elite training gyms and learn about daily and long-term access options. An Education City booth will provide guidance on booking procedures, passes and membership plans, activity schedules, upcoming events, and venue accessibility. The Back-to-School Sports Fair will also see the official

opening of QF's newly upgraded Pitch No 4, a FIFA-certified 9-a-side artificial turf facility designed to offer enhanced durability and year-round playability for both women's and men's teams. To mark the inauguration of this facility, a friendly match between six teams from PSG Academy Qatar's Girls, from categories of U12 to U17, will take place. "As we kick off the new academic year with our newly launched Back-to-School Sports Fair, we are once again emphasising our commitment to providing the very best activities, facilities, and opportunities for our entire community," Kholoud M al-Ali, executive director of Community Engagement and Programming, QF Communication Initiatives.

Didier Domi, PSG Academy technical adviser and former Paris Saint-Germain professional player, said: "At PSG Academy, we believe football is a powerful tool to bring communities together. Being part of Qatar Foundation's Back-to-School Sports Fair and giving our girls' team the chance to play on a world-class pitch, reflects our shared commitment to education and opportunity."

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LEGAL

International court postpones hearing on Duterte crackdown

The International Criminal Court yesterday postponed "until further notice" a crimes against humanity hearing concerning former Philippines president Rodrigo Duterte, while judges weigh his fitness to take part. Duterte was scheduled to appear at the ICC on September 23 to hear the charges over his years-long campaign against drug users and dealers that rights groups say killed thousands. But the court decided to adjourn the hearing until it could rule on a defence motion that the 80-year-old was "not fit to stand trial". Duterte was arrested in Manila on March 11, flown to the Netherlands that same night.

CRIME

Trial begins of woman accused of killing children

The trial of a South Korean woman accused in New Zealand of killing her children, stuffing their bodies in suitcases and leaving them in a storage locker began yesterday. The case caused widespread shock in New Zealand when the bodies of Minu Jo, 6, and Yuna Jo, 8, were found in an abandoned storage locker by an Auckland family in August 2022. Police believe Hakyung Lee killed her children in June or July 2018, a year after her husband's death, and then returned to South Korea. She was extradited from South Korea in November 2022 at the request of the New Zealand police.

DECISION

Sri Lanka rejects call for foreign war crimes probe

Sri Lanka's new government yesterday rejected a call by the United Nations for an international investigation into alleged war crimes committed during its ethnic conflict which claimed over 100,000 lives. Foreign Minister Vijitha Herath told the Human Rights Council in Geneva that his administration opposed the UN's "Accountability Project", which preserves evidence for possible future prosecutions. "The government is opposed to any external mechanism imposed on us, such as the Sri Lanka Accountability Project, which serves to create divisions and complicate the national reconciliation process underway in Sri Lanka," Herath said.

INDUSTRIAL ACTION

Millions hit as Tube train workers strike

Rush-hour commuters faced chaos yesterday as staff on the London Underground train network staged a five-day strike, shutting stations and forcing people to work from home or use alternative modes of transport. Transport for London (TfL), which manages the Underground, also known as the Tube, warned there would be little or no service between Monday and Thursday. Lauren, 53, a construction sector admin worker, said she was having to walk a couple of kilometres to work in central London. "It's a real inconvenience. I'm not sympathetic (to train drivers). They should get back to work," she said.

New Zealand fugitive father killed in police shootout

Reuters
Wellington

A New Zealand father who had been on the run with his three children for nearly four years was shot dead by police yesterday and the children are all safe in custody, police said.

Tom Phillips disappeared with his children, now aged 9, 10, and 12, in late 2021 in a case that has made national headlines over his ability to evade arrest. A police officer was shot several times with a high-powered rifle and seriously injured in the attempt to arrest Phillips, New Zealand police acting deputy commissioner Jill Rogers said at a press conference.

Police were alerted to a robbery at a store in a small rural town in the region of Waikato around 2.30am (1430GMT Sunday) and laid spikes on the road to stop the suspects - Phillips and one of his children - were expected to take.

Phillips' motorbike hit the spikes and the first officer at the scene was "confronted by gunfire at close range," Rogers said. "Our officer has been struck in the head. He immediately fell to the ground and took cover," Rogers said, adding that the injuries were survivable. She said a second police officer then arrived and Phillips was shot, and de-

spite efforts to save him he died at the scene. The body had not been formally identified but police were confident it was Phillips.

One of his children was with him during the shooting and the other two children were later found at a campsite in dense bush.

"I can confirm that the children are well and uninjured, and they will be taken to a location for medical checks," Rogers said. Phillips failed to attend a court hearing in 2022 and had been pursued by police ever since. He evaded authorities by allegedly hiding out in thick bush and remote farmland in New Zealand's central North Island.

The children's mother, known only as Cat, said in a statement to state-owned Radio New Zealand that they were "dearly missed every day for nearly four years, and we are looking forward to welcoming them home with love and care".

New Zealanders have struggled to understand how Phillips managed to evade capture for so long in the remote area of the Waikato region.

Before disappearing, Phillips had lived in the small farming community of Marokopa, near the west coast, home to less than 100 people. Piopio, where the robbery occurred, was roughly an hour-and-a-half by road from Marokopa.



Demonstrators gather outside Nepal's parliament during a protest in Kathmandu yesterday.

19 dead in Nepal protest over social media ban, corruption

Reuters
Kathmandu

At least 19 people died yesterday in Nepal's worst unrest in decades, authorities said, as police in the capital fired tear gas and rubber bullets at protesters trying to storm parliament in anger at a social media shutdown and corruption.

Some of the protesters, most of them young, forced their way into the parliament complex in Kathmandu by breaking through a barricade, a local official said, setting fire to an ambulance and hurling objects at lines of riot police guarding the legislature.

"The police have been firing indiscriminately," one protester told the ANI news agency. "(They

fired bullets which missed me but hit a friend who was standing behind me. He was hit in the hand."

More than 100 people including 28 police personnel were receiving medical treatment for their injuries, police officer Shekhar Khanal said. Protesters were ferrying the injured to hospital on motorcycles. A government decision last week to block access to several social media platforms, including Meta Platforms' Facebook, has fuelled anger among the young. About 90% of Nepal's 30m people use the internet.

Officials said they imposed the ban because platforms had failed to register with authorities in a crackdown on misuse, including false social media accounts used to spread hate speech and fake news, and commit fraud. Two of

the 19 people were killed when protests in the eastern city of Itahari turned violent, police said.

Home Minister Ramesh Lehak resigned from the government after taking "moral responsibility" for the violence, another government minister, who requested anonymity because he was not authorised to speak with the media, said.

Prime Minister K P Sharma Oli called an emergency cabinet meeting to discuss the unrest, which erupted after thousands of young people, including many wearing their school or college uniforms, took to the streets earlier yesterday.

Many carried flags and placards with slogans such as "Shut down corruption and not social media," "Unban social media," and "Youths against corruption" as they

marched through Kathmandu.

Police had orders to use water cannons, batons and rubber bullets to control the crowd and the army was deployed in the parliament area to bolster law enforcement officers, Mukti Ram Rijal, a spokesperson for the Kathmandu district office, said.

Violence abated later in the evening although protesters remained in the area outside parliament. Police said similar protests were also held in Biratnagar and Bharatpur in the southern plains and in Pokhara in western Nepal.

Many people in Nepal think corruption is rampant, and the Oli government has been criticised by opponents for failing to deliver on its promises to tackle graft or make progress to address longstanding economic issues.

Trump tariffs 'could cut 0.5% off India's GDP'

US President Donald Trump's 50% tariffs on India could reduce the country's gross domestic product by half a percent this year, the nation's chief economic adviser V Anantha Nageswaran told Bloomberg TV yesterday. "Depending upon how long it lasts even in this financial year, it may translate into a GDP impact of somewhere between 0.5% to 0.6%," he said. US President Donald Trump, who is seeking to broker an end to the Ukraine conflict, has said India's oil imports are helping fund Moscow's war effort and last month doubled tariffs on imports from India to 50%. Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said last week the world's third-biggest oil importer and consumer will continue to buy Russian oil as it proves economical. US-India two-way goods trade totalled \$129bn in 2024, with a \$45.8bn US trade deficit, according to US Census Bureau data.



Britain's Catherine, Princess of Wales and Prince William, Prince of Wales, are welcomed by members during a visit to the National Federation of Women's Institute in Sunningdale, west of London, yesterday to commemorate the three-year anniversary of the death of William's late grandmother Queen Elizabeth II.

Prince William, Harry pay tributes to late queen

Reuters
London

Prince William and his wife Kate yesterday led royal tributes to mark the third anniversary of the death of Queen Elizabeth, as his brother Prince Harry flew into Britain and also paid respects to his grandmother at her final resting place.

Elizabeth, Britain's longest-reigning monarch, died aged 96 on September 8, 2022, at Balmoral Castle, her Scottish summer retreat, after a 70-year reign.

To commemorate the late queen's passing, heir to the throne William and Kate visited the local branch of the Women's Institute (WI) near their home in Windsor, an organisation close to the late queen's heart.

She had been a WI member for 80 years, and president of the

branch near her Sandringham home in eastern England from 2003 until her death.

Meanwhile, shortly after arriving from his home in California, William's younger brother Harry visited St George's Chapel in Windsor Castle, less than 16km away, to lay flowers where the late queen was laid to rest alongside her husband Prince Philip.

Despite their proximity, Harry, who is estranged from his family after their high-profile fallout, is not expected to see William during his visit to Britain this week, although there is speculation he might meet his father King Charles for the first time in 20 months.

Charles himself is currently staying at Balmoral with his wife Queen Camilla, and had no plans to publicly mark the occasion, which is also the anniversary of his accession to the throne.

'Mushroom murderer' sentenced to life in prison

AFP
Melbourne

An Australian woman who murdered three people with toxic mushrooms was yesterday sentenced to life in prison with parole after 33 years, capping a trial that sparked a global media frenzy.

Patterson, 50, was convicted in July of triple murder for serving a poisonous meal to her estranged husband's parents, aunt and uncle during a sumptuous beef Wellington lunch at her home in 2023.

Her trial drew podcasters, film crews and true crime fans to a

courthouse in the rural town of Morwell, a sedate hamlet in Victoria better known for its prize-winning roses.

Audiences from New York to New Delhi followed every twist of what many now simply call the "mushroom murders".

The motive of the murders remains a mystery.

Patterson was sentenced yesterday morning in Melbourne, where Supreme Court Justice Christopher Beale said she had inflicted "trauma" on her victims and their families.

"Your failure to exhibit any remorse pours salt into all the victims' wounds," he said.

"The gravity of your offending warrants the imposition of the maximum penalties for your crimes," he said.

Beale sentenced Patterson to life in prison but said she would be eligible for parole after 33 years, when she will be 83 years old.

Patterson showed little emotion during her sentencing and closed her eyes for parts of it, national broadcaster ABC said.

She also glared at reporters inside the courtroom when Beale said she would remain a notorious prisoner due to the intense media coverage of the case.

Her legal team had argued she should be given the chance of re-

lease after 30 years because the notoriety of her case would mean she will spend most of her prison sentence in isolation.

She now has 28 days to appeal her convictions and sentence.

The *Sydney Morning Herald* reported that Patterson wore a paisley shirt as the sentence was read out, with her hair tied back.

Speaking after the sentence was handed down, Pastor Ian Wilkinson - the only guest to survive the toxic mushroom lunch - thanked those who had supported the family in the aftermath of the murders.

"I'd like to encourage everybody to be kind to each other," he said. "Please respect our privacy as we

continue to grieve and heal."

In July, a 12-person jury found Patterson guilty of murdering her husband Simon's parents, Don and Gail Patterson, as well as his aunt Heather Wilkinson, at her home in Leongatha, in the state of Victoria.

She was also found guilty of attempting to murder Ian, Heather's husband.

Simon had also been invited to the fateful lunch, but pulled out on the eve of the meal, texting his estranged wife that he felt "uncomfortable" attending.

At the time, Patterson's relationship with Simon had turned sour.

The pair - long estranged but

still legally married - were fighting over Simon's child support contributions.

Throughout a trial lasting more than two months, Patterson maintained the beef-and-pastry dish was accidentally poisoned with death cap mushrooms, the world's most lethal fungus.

Death caps are easily mistaken for other edible varieties and reportedly possess a sweet taste that belies their potent toxicity.

Friends and family of the victims last month told a court of the devastating impact of the crime.

Survivor Ian Wilkinson said at the time that he felt only "half alive" without his wife.



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Merz's economic promises suffer reality check

Propelled by a €500bn spending surge and with a clutch of reforms in hand, German Chancellor Friedrich Merz took office in May promising to deliver on a pledge that his predecessors failed to keep: reviving growth in Europe's largest economy.

But while it was clear that the spending would take time to benefit the economy, there is a growing sense among economists, investors and business groups that the promised reforms are slower and less far-reaching than initially expected.

"If the government wants to increase the underlying potential growth rate durably and notably, it needs to implement much more ambitious structural reforms," said Salomon Fiedler, economist at Berenberg, citing the need to address issues such as an inefficient energy sector, high taxes and regulation. Ordinary voters are unhappy too: A Forsa poll showed recently that 61% of Germans expect economic conditions in Germany to deteriorate in the coming years, up from 50% in May.

Failure to deliver on economic pledges could deepen public frustration and feed perceptions of ineffectiveness - creating fertile ground for the far-right AfD party, which has begun to top some national polls. The reform urgency was underlined in August as German unemployment hit three million for the first time in a decade.

One reason for the limited progress may be the reality of coalition. While arch-conservative Merz has long-championed a pro-business agenda, his partners the centre-left Social Democrats (SPD) are more hesitant about reforms that could weaken workers' rights.

Critics say SPD Labour Minister Baerbel Bas' launch of a commission to propose changes to jobless benefits and work incentives by year-end to be followed by months of parliament debates - is just too slow.

A Forsa poll showed 61% of Germans expect economic conditions to deteriorate

"The government must not hide behind commissions and keep postponing, dragging out and watering down necessary decisions," said Rainer Dulger, head of the BDA employers' association.

Alongside the headline-grabbing 'fiscal bazooka' to fund infrastructure spending, Merz's coalition government promised lower energy prices, tax cuts for businesses and middle- and lower-income households, and scrapping a disputed law requiring businesses to do due diligence on their entire supply chain. But delivery is falling short, fuelling impatience. Last Wednesday, the cabinet approved changes to the supply chain law - criticised as costly and bureaucratic - instead of scrapping it as pledged. Similarly, budget constraints mean power-grid fees will be cut by less than promised, and the electricity tax will be lowered for specific sectors but not all consumers.

"By breaking its promise to cut electricity taxes for everyone, the German government is squandering the trust of retailers and consumers," the HDE trade association said.

Ironically, since the new government took office, one measure of German business sentiment has trended up, reaching a 15-month high in August although still well below its historical average.

Yet analysts point out it is being buoyed by the component of the index built around hopes for the future, while the reading on current conditions actually worsened.

"This fits with the view that it will take some more time for the economic rebound to get under way," said Berenberg's Fiedler, noting that new government spending will not get going before the end of this year and then ramp up from 2026. Economists welcome the €500bn infrastructure fund and an "investment booster" approved in June - a package of measures such as better depreciation options for companies - plus extra defence spending and a planned cut in corporation tax.

But overall, only a quarter of 170 economists surveyed by Ifo gave the government's economic measures a positive rating, with 42% of them outright negative, criticising the lack of a plan to address deep-rooted issues like rising pension costs. A summer run of weak data has given a sobering view of the government's progress. The economy contracted in the second quarter, further dimming expectations of a sustained recovery, and exporters must now face the impact of new US tariffs.

Industrial output fell in June to its lowest since 2020 amid weak foreign demand and rising Chinese competition. An EY study shows Germany has lost 245,500 industrial jobs since 2019.

German investor morale also fell more than expected in August, amid widespread disappointment with the European Union-US trade deal.

The fact that Merz's coalition has at least been able to pass budgets for this year and next is a sign that his conservatives can work with the Social Democrats to get policies over the line, said Franziska Palmas, senior Europe economist at Capital Economics.

"But it still remains to be seen whether quick reform will be a priority in practice," she said.

A string of rows on other issues ranging from tax and welfare reform to reinstating mandatory military service has convinced some that Merz, like his predecessor Olaf Scholz, will struggle to produce substantial reforms. - Reuters



As Trump chills US-India ties, Modi warms to China, Russia

By Trevor Hunnicutt, David Brunnstrom and Matt Spetalnick
Washington

Images last week of Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi holding hands with Russian President Vladimir Putin at a summit hosted by Chinese President Xi Jinping seemed to confirm what many experts have already concluded - the US has stumbled in its effort to draw India into its diplomatic orbit.

Successive US presidential administrations have sought to cultivate the historically non-aligned India as a strategic counterweight to China and Russia. But as the images of Modi in Tianjin underlined, US President Donald Trump appears for now to have undercut that goal with a series of actions. These have included piling 50% tariffs on Indian goods and publicly browbeating New Delhi over what his administration sees as its opportunistic purchases of cheap Russian oil. The souring of the India relationship comes even as US adversaries China, Russia and North Korea have tightened their ties, despite Trump's desire to reset relations with each of them. Last Wednesday, the leaders of the three countries appeared together in public for the first time at an event to mark the end of World War Two. And Modi, in a signal to Trump, is showing a willingness to boost rather than reduce ties with Moscow - and to look past his suspicions of Beijing.

"I fear we are locked into a long downward spiral because neither leader is willing to pursue the personal outreach necessary to repair the relationship," said Ashley Tellis, who served in the White House of Republican President George W Bush and is now at the Carnegie Endowment

for International Peace think tank.

"The problem now is Trump's deepening grievances against India," Tellis said. "He may change his mind down the road, but presently the imperative of securing a trade deal with China trumps all other geopolitical considerations."

Indian officials have been rankled by having their trade proposals rejected and their arch-rival Pakistan honoured by Trump, slights compounded by the US president claiming credit for resolving decades-long tensions between the South Asian neighbours, which India regards as a bilateral affair. T

anvi Madan, an India specialist at the Brookings Institution, said US criticism of Modi's meetings with Xi and Putin struck Indians as odd just weeks after Trump rolled out the red carpet for the Russian leader and given the US president's own plans to meet with Xi.

"That criticism and pressure on India isn't going to sway India from seeking strategic autonomy; it is going to reinforce that instinct," she said.

White House spokeswoman Anna Kelly said Trump's foreign policy record "is unparalleled because of his uncanny ability to look anyone in the eye and deliver better deals for the American people," including brokering an India-Pakistan ceasefire.

"President Trump and Prime Minister Modi have a respectful relationship, and teams from both the United States and India remain in close communication on the full range of diplomatic, defence and commercial priorities in our strategic partnership," she said.

India's foreign ministry did not respond when asked for comment.

An Indian official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said

the Trump administration's narrative on India, including recent comments by Trump's advisers, was unjustified but Delhi continues to engage with it. The official said the thaw with China has been happening since October and is not targeted at the US.

Modi's improving relations with Xi are especially striking given long-standing Sino-Indian tensions and sometimes outright hostility, including a military clash on their disputed border in 2020. His trip to China was his first in seven years. Trump's recent attacks have thrown assumptions of a mutually beneficial US partnership with India into the air, with his "America First" approach often hitting Washington's major partners and allies harder than its traditional geopolitical adversaries.

"We get along with India very well, but India, you have to understand, for many years it was a one-sided relationship," Trump told reporters last Tuesday, reprising a theme he has raised multiple times in recent weeks. China, India and Russia are all original members of the Brics, a group Trump has dubbed "anti-American". Another Brics nation, Brazil, which like India has been an important US partner, has also been targeted by Trump, facing stiff tariffs and accusations that it is pursuing a "witch hunt" against his far-right ally, former president Jair Bolsonaro.

Referring to the images of solidarity in Beijing, White House trade adviser Peter Navarro last Monday called it "a shame to see Modi getting cosy as the leader of the biggest democracy in the world, with the two biggest authoritarianism in the world."

Trump's advisers say the shift in tone is not intended as a pivot away from India, but to speak frankly with a partner.

Trump courted Delhi during his first term, hosting a joint "Howdy Modi" rally in Texas in 2019, and revived the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue, or Quad, that also includes Japan and Australia.

Modi quickly sought to rekindle ties after Trump's November election victory, calling to congratulate him within hours, dispatching his foreign minister to sit in a prime seat at the inauguration and launching an account on the Trump-backed Truth Social platform - though he hasn't used it since July. But Trump quickly took aim at the trade imbalance and immigration issues. When Modi visited Washington in February, trade was firmly the focus and they agreed to work toward a limited trade deal by fall 2025, to expand bilateral trade to \$500bn by 2030, while India pledged to boost US energy purchases.

India has been expected to host a November Quad summit, with a more explicit focus on security vis-a-vis China than previously. But Trump has yet to schedule a trip there, according to a person familiar with the issue. Doubts about the meeting have come as Trump has set his sights on a major tariff deal with China ahead of a November deadline.

"For now, in Trump's worldview, there's no great power competition that requires the Quad," said Tellis.

Fixing the US-India relationship may require more effort than it took to break it.

"India is a clear example of a country that for historical, political and economic reasons won't simply bow down to Trump," said Brett Bruen, who served as a foreign policy adviser to former President Barack Obama and is now head of the Global Situation Room consultancy. "They've got other options." - Reuters



Russian President Vladimir Putin and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi attend a meeting on the sidelines of the Shanghai Co-operation Organisation summit in Tianjin, China, last week. (Reuters)

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Rules of war 'being shredded' worldwide, UN rights chief warns

AFP
Geneva

The UN human rights chief has warned that international law and the rules of war – the foundation of peace and global order – are being ripped up.

In his opening address to the United Nations Human Rights Council's 60th session, Volker Turk warned that "disturbing trends that undercut our rights are gaining ground across the world".

He condemned a "troubling erosion of international law", warning that "around the world, the long-established rules of war are being shredded, with virtually no accountability".

He pointed to a blatant disregard for international law in conflicts, including Russia's war in Ukraine, the civil war in Sudan and the devastating war Israel is waging on Gaza.

Turk also voiced alarm at a broader "glorification of violence".

Speaking just days after China hosted a massive military parade and after US President Donald Trump ordered the Department of Defence to be renamed the Department of War, Turk lamented that "pro-war propaganda is everywhere, from military parades to ramped up rhetoric".

"Sadly, there are no Peace parades or Ministries of Peace," he said.

The UN rights chief stressed that inter-

national law is "the foundation of peace, our global order, and our daily lives, from trade rules to the global Internet, to our fundamental rights".

"But several governments are disregarding, disrespecting and disengaging from it," he said, cautioning that "when states ignore violations of the law, they become normalised".

Without naming countries, Turk also warned that "some states are becoming an extension of their ruler's personal power".

At the same time, he condemned "the retreat by some states from multilateral frameworks, institutions and international agreements".

Turk highlighted, among other things,

sanctions imposed by Washington on judges and prosecutors of the International Criminal Court and Russia's issuing of arrest warrants against them – as well as US sanctions on the UN special rapporteur on the rights situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

And he described the US decision to withdraw from the Paris climate accord and from several UN bodies, including the rights council, as "deeply regrettable".

"Gradually, the web of global and regional co-operation, carefully crafted over decades for the common good, is being weakened," he warned. "We cannot return to the outdated thinking and approaches that led to two World Wars and the Holocaust."

WHO asks Taliban to lift curbs on female aid workers

The World Health Organisation (WHO) has asked Taliban authorities to lift restrictions on Afghan female aid workers, allowing them to travel without male guardians and help women struggling to access care after a powerful earthquake killed 2,200 people in eastern Afghanistan.

"A very big issue now is the increasing paucity of female staff in these places," Dr Mukta Sharma, the deputy representative of WHO's Afghanistan office, told Reuters.

She estimated around 90% of medical staff in the area were male, and the remaining 10% were often midwives and nurses, rather than doctors, who could treat severe wounds.

This was hampering care as women were uncomfortable or afraid to interact with male staff and travel alone to receive care.

The September 1 magnitude 6 quake and its aftershocks injured more than 3,600 people and left thousands homeless in a country already dealing with severe aid cuts and a slew of humanitarian crises since the Taliban took over in 2021 as foreign forces left.

The Afghan health ministry and a spokesperson for the Taliban administration did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Sharma noted the growing shortage of Afghan female doctors as the Taliban have barred female students from high school and university, meaning a pipeline of women doctors was not being replenished. – Reuters

US appeals court rejects states' lawsuit over Trump mass firings

A federal appeals court has ruled that 19 mostly Democrat-led states and Washington, DC, cannot pursue a legal challenge to the mass firings of 25,000 recently hired federal workers carried out by US President Donald Trump's administration.

The Richmond, Virginia-based 4th US Circuit Court of Appeals in a 2-1 ruling said the states lacked legal standing to sue because they could not demonstrate that they would be harmed directly by the mass termination of probationary federal employees in February.

The ruling marked the Trump administration's latest court victory in its efforts to shrink the size of the federal workforce, including by cutting probationary employees.

They typically have less than a year of service in their current roles, though some are longtime federal workers in new jobs.

A federal judge in Baltimore had initially ordered 18 federal agencies to reinstate more than 24,000 probationary workers nationwide before narrowing his ruling to those who live and work in the states that had sued.

The 4th Circuit panel in April paused that decision, allowing the workers to be terminated, and yesterday overturned the injunction.

The states alleged the administration violated a federal law requiring agencies to give state and local governments 60 days' notice before implementing mass layoffs, which would trigger a flood of unemployment claims. – Reuters

Norway votes in tight election

Norwegians voted yesterday in an election where US President Donald Trump's tariffs and the war in Ukraine could give a boost to the government led by Labour Prime Minister Jonas Gahr Store.

Veteran Store has a slight lead in opinion polls, and analysts said geopolitical uncertainties could push voters to back the perceived stability of a sitting government.

Much of the campaigning however has focused on domestic issues including the cost of living, healthcare, inequality, education and the possibility of abolishing a wealth tax, which has divided the two main camps.

With the political landscape fragmented, the outcome will depend on whether all nine major parties will clear the four-percent threshold required to guarantee representation in parliament.

An average of September polls has the Labour Party and its allies securing 88 of the 169 seats in Norway's parliament, the Storting, according to the pollfoll website. – AFP

Maduro deploys 25,000 troops to country's borders

Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro said he had deployed 25,000 troops along the Caribbean coast and the border with Colombia amid soaring tensions with US President Donald Trump.

In a message on Sunday night on social media, Maduro said he had deployed "25,000 men and women from our glorious National Bolivarian Armed Forces" to the frontier with Colombia and the northeast coast, where the country's biggest oil refineries are situated.

The deployment aimed to ensure "the defence of national sovereignty, the security of the country and the fight for peace", he added. – AFP

French premier is ousted

AFP/Reuters
Paris

France's parliament has ousted the government of Prime Minister Francois Bayrou after just nine months in office, leaving President Emmanuel Macron scrambling to find a successor and plunging the country into a new political crisis.

Bayrou, who has been in the job for just nine months, had blindsided even his allies by calling a confidence vote to end a lengthy standoff over his austerity budget, which foresees almost €44bn (\$52bn) of cost savings to reduce France's debt pile.

Bayrou, the first premier in the history of modern France to be ousted in a confidence vote rather than a no-confidence vote, will submit his resignation this morning, according to a person close to him who asked not to be named.

In the vote in the National Assembly, 364 deputies voted that they had no confidence in the government while just 194 gave it their confidence.

"In line with article 50 of the constitution, the prime minister must submit the resignation of his government," said speaker Yael Braun-Pivet.

Bayrou is the sixth prime minister under Macron since his 2017 election but the fifth since 2022.

Bayrou's ousting leaves the French head of state with a new domestic headache at a time when he is leading diplomatic efforts on the Ukraine war.

However, defending his decision to call the high-risk confidence vote, Bayrou told the National Assembly: "The biggest risk was not to take one, to let things continue without anything changing... and have business as usual."

Describing the debt pile as "life-threatening" for France, Bayrou said his government had put forward a plan so that the country could "in a few years"



Bayrou delivering his general policy speech on the budget issue before the debate and confidence vote at the National Assembly in Paris. – Reuters



A protester stands next to a banner which reads 'Bye Bayrou' during a 'Bayrou's farewell party' protest in front of the city hall in Nantes, after French Prime Minister Bayrou lost a confidence vote at the National Assembly. – Reuters

time escape the inexorable tide of debt that is submerging it".

"You have the power to overthrow the government" but not "to erase reality", Bayrou told the MPs in a doomed final bid to save his government before the vote.

Macron now faces one of the most critical decisions of his presidency – appoint a seventh prime minister to try to thrash out a compromise, or call snap elections in a bid to have a more accommodating parliament.

The next government's most pressing task will be to pass a budget, the same challenge Bayrou faced when he took office.

Securing the backing of a very divided parliament will be equally hard.

There is no guarantee that an election would result in any improvement in the fortunes of Macron's centre-right bloc in parliament.

And although the Socialist Party (PS) has expressed readiness to lead a new government, it is far from clear whether such an administration could survive.

Heavyweight right-wing cabinet ministers, such as Justice Minister Gerald Darmanin, are trusted by Macron but risk being voted out by the left.

According to a poll by Odoxa-

Backbone for *Le Figaro* newspaper, 64% of the French want Macron to resign rather than name a new prime minister, a move he has ruled out.

He is forbidden from standing for a third term in 2027.

Around 77% of people do not approve of his work, Macron's worst-ever such rating, according to an Ifop poll for the *Ouest-France* daily.

Alongside political upheaval, France is also facing social tensions.

A left-wing collective named "Block Everything" is calling for a day of action tomorrow, and trade unions have urged workers to strike on September 18.

The 2027 presidential election meanwhile remains wide open, with analysts predicting the French far-right will have its best-ever chance of winning.

Three-time presidential candidate for the National Rally (RN) Marine Le Pen suffered a blow in March when a French court convicted her and other party officials over an EU parliament fake jobs scam.

Le Pen was sentenced to four years' imprisonment, two of which were suspended, and a fine of €100,000 (\$117,000).

The ruling also banned her

from standing for office for five years, which would scupper her ambition of taking part in the 2027 vote unless overturned on appeal.

However, a Paris court said yesterday that her appeal would be heard from January 13 to February 12, 2026, well before the election – potentially resurrecting her presidential hopes.

Cheered by her MPs, Le Pen urged Macron to call snap legislative elections, saying that holding the polls is "not an option but an obligation" and describing Bayrou's administration as a "phantom government".

France's EU peers will be watching closely.

France holds the highest deficit as a percentage of GDP in the eurozone – the bloc using the EU's single currency.

It pays more to service its debt than Spain and spreads against benchmark German 10-year bonds are at their highest level in four months.

A lengthy period of political and fiscal uncertainty risks undermining Macron's influence in Europe at a time when the United States is talking tough on trade and security, and war is raging in Ukraine on Europe's eastern flank.

Romanian teachers take to streets against school restructuring



Thousands of teachers march in Bucharest against education system cuts on the first day of school. – Reuters

Reuters/AFP
Bucharest

Thousands of Romanian teachers marched in the capital Bucharest and classes were suspended across the country at the start of the school year yesterday in protest against the restructuring of schools and an increase in weekly teaching hours.

Romania's broad coalition government is facing a public sector backlash and strong opposition to spending cuts as it tries to lower the European Union's highest budget deficit and unlock billions of euros worth of recovery funds from Brussels.

Since taking power in late June it has hiked taxes and cut spending, including in education, where it has increased average weekly teaching hours to 20 from 18 without raising pay.

The cabinet has also increased the maximum number of pupils per classroom, merged small schools and cut scholarships.

Yesterday crowds of teachers and students, whom police in the street estimated to number more than 10,000, marched in Bucharest, demanding the resignation of the education minister and the cancellation of the measures.

Blowing vuvuzelas and whistles, demonstra-

tors shouted "Romania, wake up!" and "Down with the government!" as they marched through the capital on the first day of the new school year.

"They started these austerity measures exactly with those they shouldn't have," school counsellor Simona Urluescu, 50, told AFP in front of the main government offices, accusing the country's leaders of "lack of respect" for teachers and students.

Some held banners reading "Higher teaching quota hurts the school" and "Education is investment".

"All these measures save very little money," said Mihai, a Bucharest high school history teacher who declined to give his family name. "Maybe cuts in the education system are not bad, but only when they come with actual reform."

Classes were not affected by the protest but many of the usual first-day festivities were scrapped.

Education Minister Daniel David told local TV it was unrealistic to expect the measures would be cancelled.

Prime Minister Ilie Bolojan's government is also making cuts in healthcare, state-owned firms, regulators, and public administration, arguing that the burden of slashing the budget deficit cannot depend solely on tax hikes and the private sector.

Ariana Grande and Lady Gaga land top MTV honours

AFP/Reuters
New York

Ariana Grande won the MTV Video Music Awards' top honour on Sunday, taking home Video of the Year for *Brighter Days Ahead*, which also claimed Best Pop Song at the ceremony near New York City.

Visibly emotional while accepting the

evening's most prestigious award, the 32-year-old singer-songwriter and actor delivered an extended thank you to her fans, whom she described as "fiercely loving and supportive".

Lady Gaga emerged as another major winner, beating out industry heavyweights including Bad Bunny, Kendrick Lamar, Taylor Swift and The Weeknd for the top artist honour.

The 39-year-old interrupted her concert

series to accept the Artist of the Year award on stage and also won Best Collaboration with Bruno Mars for *Die with a Smile*.

Rose, who is pursuing a solo career after rising to fame with K-pop group Blackpink, received Song of the Year for *APT*, also co-written with Bruno Mars.

Sabrina Carpenter won Best Album of the Year for *Short n' Sweet*.

The evening featured a nostalgic aesthetic with performances by veteran artists includ-

ing Mariah Carey, Busta Rhymes and Ricky Martin, while newer performers like Doja Cat and Tate McRae incorporated choreography heavily borrowed from the 1980s and 1990s.

Carey received a lifetime achievement award and talked about the fun of making music videos.

Videos are "mini movies visualising the sheer fantasy of it all," she said. "And sometimes it's just an excuse to bring the drama and do things I wouldn't do in real life."



Qatar Boat Show 2025 partners announced

The second edition of the Qatar Boat Show (QBS), under the patronage of HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohamed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani, will take place at Old Doha Port on November 5-8.

The signing ceremony with the partners took place during a press conference yesterday at The Terminal, Old Doha Port, with the organisers reaffirming the event's role in positioning Qatar as a global hub for maritime luxury, innovation, and trade.

"From its very first edition, the Qatar Boat Show made history, becoming one of the largest luxury marine showcases in the Middle East," said engineer Mohamed Abdulla al-Mulla, chairman of the QBS 2025 organising committee and chief executive of Old Doha Port.

"Last year, the inaugural edition proved to be a remarkable success as we welcomed 495 leading international brands, showcased over 100 yachts and marine vessels, and unveiled 20 world premieres and 22 debuts in Qatar," he said. "With more than 23,500 visitors from 90 countries, the event firmly positioned Qatar as a destination for maritime excellence."

This year's line-up includes the Ministry of Transport as strategic partner, the Ministry of Commerce and Industry as supporting partner, Visit Qatar as destination partner, Mwan Qatar as platinum sponsor, QTerminals as gold sponsor, and Al Kass Sports Channel as strategic media partner.

Ooredoo joins as the exclusive telecom sponsor, the Qatar Free Zone as the bronze sponsor, and Qetaifan Projects as real estate and hospitality partner.

Falcon Gold and Precious Metals will be present as the official VIP lounge sponsor, Mjhar as the news partner, and Mowasalat (Karwa) as the transport partner.

Visitors to the Qatar Boat Show 2025 can expect an expanded showcase featuring some of the world's most prestigious yacht builders, innovative marine technologies, lifestyle experiences, and a line-up of launches and premieres.

With Old Doha Port's transformation into a modern maritime destination, blending world-class marina facilities with a historic waterfront setting, the event will once again serve as a platform for business, networking, and cultural exchange.



Agriculture Affairs Department honours distinguished engineers

The Agricultural Affairs Department at the Ministry of Municipality honoured a group of its distinguished agriculture engineers yesterday as part of the celebration of Arab Agricultural Engineer Day, which falls on September 9. During the ceremony, Agricultural Affairs Department director Yousef Khalid al-Khelaifi presented certificates of appreciation to the engineers in recognition of their dedication, outstanding efforts in performing their duties, and notable contributions to advancing agricultural work and strengthening the food security system in the country. The ceremony was attended by the department's assistant director, Adel al-Yafei, alongside section heads, a number of engineers, and employees.



S'hail 2025 to kick off tomorrow

The 9th Katara International Hunting and Falcons Exhibition - S'hail 2025 - is set to kick off tomorrow at Katara Cultural Village.

The event, which runs through September 14, will welcome participation from over 200 companies and specialised entities representing 17 countries.

The growing international interest underscores the event's stature as one of the world's leading showcases in the fields of hunting, falconry, camping, and

outdoor adventures.

The vice-chairman of the organising committee, Mohammed bin Abdullatif al-Misnad, noted that this year's edition marks a significant expansion, with exhibition space increasing by 2,000sqm compared to the previous year.

The growth comes in response to heightened demand from local, regional, and international exhibitors - reflecting the diversity and scale of the products and services being presented.

Visitors can expect a wide

range of offerings, from the latest in hunting weapons and rifles to falconry gear, camping equipment, and innovations tailored to desert expeditions.

In addition to the exhibition, S'hail 2025 will feature a rich programme of competitions, cultural events, and artistic activities celebrating the heritage and traditions of hunting and falconry.

Al-Misnad also highlighted that the e-falcon auction will once again be a centrepiece of the exhibition, showcasing some of the

world's finest and rarest falcons.

Participation will be facilitated through the dedicated S'hail mobile application.

This year, the auction introduces a new bidding system aimed at ensuring greater fairness and transparency.

In the final 30 minutes of the auction, participants will be required to write down their final bid on paper and submit it into a sealed box, encouraging a more competitive environment.

- QNA

Sheikh Faisal's new book *Hunting Memories* launched

Al Faisal Global Foundation for Culture and Knowledge and Al Faisal Publishing House have launched a new book titled *Hunting Memories: From a Necessity of Life to a Hobby's Delight* by HE Sheikh Faisal bin Qasim al-Thani.

The book will be released on the sidelines of the 9th Katara International Hunting and Falcons Exhibition (S'hail 2025), organised by Katara Cultural Village on September 10-14.

The 446-page volume is divided into eight chapters brimming with real-life stories and vivid recollections.

It includes a rich archive of photographs that capture adventures, risks, rare moments, and amusing episodes, making it both a visual and literary chronicle of hunting life.

The work distils the essence of

HE Sheikh Faisal's human- and heritage-driven experience in hunting and falconry expeditions that spanned Qatar's wilderness and extended across the globe.

It documents the historical transformation of hunting from a survival necessity in the past to a present-day sport and recreational pursuit embraced by falconers and enthusiasts throughout Qatar and the Gulf.

HE Sheikh Faisal said that he sought to document what he saw, heard, and lived across more than 100 hunting and falconry journeys at home and abroad, in order to preserve this legacy for future generations and for all those interested in the Qatari communities, as well as the Gulf and the Arabian Peninsula.

He highlighted the nation's sustained efforts to preserve heritage through numerous institu-

tions, initiatives, and exhibitions.

HE Sheikh Faisal stressed that launching the book at this exhibition reflects Qatar's mission and stature as a prominent regional and international destination for hunting and falconry enthusiasts.

He applauded the organisers for maintaining the exhibition's standing until it evolved into a global platform bringing together falconers, hobbyists, and experts from around the world under one roof.

The record turnout at this event across all age groups, particularly among young people and children, was a driving force behind the book's conception.

HE Sheikh Faisal underlined that hunting has always been, and remains, a school of patience, responsibility, and self-reliance, and a cornerstone of Qatari and Gulf identity.

He expressed the hope that the



book would serve as a reference for future generations and contribute to human knowledge, encapsulating the balance Qatar has achieved,

with both leadership and people, between embracing modernity and opening the aperture of engagement with the world, while

safeguarding its heritage through the timeless practice of hunting, passed down faithfully from one generation to the next. - QNA

Al Jazeera conference wins seven international platinum awards

Artificial Intelligence in Media Conference, organised by Al Jazeera Media Institute (AJMI) earlier this year, has been honoured with seven platinum awards in three international competitions specialising in media and communication: the Hermes Creative Awards, Dot Comm Awards, and AVA Digital Awards.

The conference received three Platinum Awards from Hermes Creative Awards in the categories of "Team Achievement", "Conference", and "Strategic Campaigns", in addition to three awards from

Dot Comm Awards in recognition of the AJMI's efforts in developing digital campaigns and engagement across platforms.

The conference won a Platinum Award from the AVA Digital Awards, which celebrates innovation in digital communication.

AJMI director Eman al-Amri said that this achievement represents recognition for dedication of work teams to quality and innovation, noting that the conference has become a key platform for discussing media transformations in the age of artificial intelligence (AI).

