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Arab, Islamic FM's
welcome Trump's
Gaza peace plan

Eight Arab and Muslim nations welcomed Trump's 'sincere efforts' to end the Gaza war in a joint statement yesterday.

"The foreign ministers of Qatar, Jordan, the UAE, Indonesia, Pakistan, Türkiye, Saudi Arabia and Egypt welcome President Trump's leadership and his sincere efforts to end the war in Gaza, and assert their confidence in his ability to find a path to peace. They emphasise the importance of the partnership with the US in securing peace in the region. Along these lines, the ministers welcome the announcement by President Trump regarding his proposal to end the war, rebuild Gaza, prevent the displacement of the Palestinian people and advance a comprehensive peace, as well as his announcement that he will not allow the annexation of the West Bank. The ministers affirm their readiness to engage positively and constructively with the US and the parties toward finalising the agreement and ensuring its implementation, in a manner that ensures peace, security, and stability for the peoples of the region. They reaffirm their joint commitment to work with the US to end the war in Gaza through a comprehensive deal that ensures unrestricted delivery of sufficient humanitarian aid to Gaza, no displacement of the Palestinians, the release of hostages, a security mechanism that guarantees the security of all sides, full Israeli withdrawal, rebuilds Gaza and creates a path for a just peace on the basis of the two state solution." (QNA)

Israel apologises for attack on Qatar

● Never again, Netanyahu tells Qatar PM in phone call

● Qatar to continue efforts to end the war in Gaza Strip



HE Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani

President of the United States of America, Donald Trump, held a phone call with HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani, and Prime Minister of Israel, as part of US efforts to address the repercussions of the Israeli aggression that targeted a residential neighbourhood in Doha, which housed the headquarters of the Hamas negotiating delegation, and the resulting flagrant violation of the sovereignty of Qatar. At the beginning of the call, HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs thanked the US president for his efforts to achieve peace in the

region, including guarantees that aggression against Qatar would not be repeated and the United States commitment to its defence partnership with Qatar. During the call, the Israeli Prime Minister apologised for the attack on Doha and on Qatar's sovereignty, which resulted in the martyrdom of Qatari citizen Badr al-Dosari, pledging to not repeat any targeting of Qatari territory in the future. HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs affirmed Qatar's absolute and unequivocal rejection of any infringement on its sovereignty under any circumstances, emphasising that protecting its citizens and residents is a top priority. He further expressed appreciation for the assurances conveyed to safeguard Qatar from being a target, and for the commitments undertaken to ensure that such violations will not be repeated. This underscores Qatar's readiness to continue engaging in efforts to bring an end to the war in the Gaza Strip, within the framework of the US president's initiative, which reflects the consistent approach of Qatar in addressing crises through diplomatic means, and in line with its role in promoting regional security and stability.

Trump announces Gaza peace plan, with Netanyahu backing

AFP/Reuters
Washington

President Donald Trump unveiled a wide-ranging Gaza peace plan yesterday and won backing from Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

The 20-point plan, which Trump has also circulated to Arab leaders, calls for a ceasefire, release of hostages by Hamas, disarmament of Hamas and gradual Israeli withdrawal from Gaza.

Other key points include deployment of a "temporary international stabilisation force" and creation of a transitional authority headed by Trump himself and featuring other foreign leaders.

The deal would demand resistance movement Hamas fighters fully disarm and be excluded from future roles in the government. However, those who agreed to "peaceful co-existence" would be given amnesty.

Following Israeli withdrawal, the borders would be opened to aid and investment.

In a crucial change from Trump's earlier apparent goals, Palestinians will not be forced to leave Gaza and instead, the document said, "we will encourage people to stay and offer them the opportunity to build a better Gaza."

Trump admires Amir's efforts to achieve peace

President of the United States of America, Donald Trump, voiced his deep appreciation for the efforts of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani to achieve peace and stability in the region, describing His Highness as an amazing person who seeks peace. During a press conference held yesterday, the US president stressed the importance of Qatar's pivotal and strategic role as a reliable and effective mediator in efforts to promote peace and stability in the Middle East, emphasising the significance of its constructive contribution to achieving diplomatic solutions. He also noted the wonderful and productive phone call he had earlier yesterday with HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani, stressing the importance of the close partnership and ongoing co-ordination with Qatar in supporting peace efforts and enhancing regional stability. (QNA)



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Qatar, Malaysia defence ministries sign deals



HE the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Defence Affairs Sheikh Saud bin Abdulrahman bin Hassan al-Thani met with Malaysian Minister of Defence Mohamed Khaled Nordin and his accompanying delegation during their official visit to Qatar. The two ministers signed several agreements between the Qatari and Malaysian defence ministries, as well as a deal in the field of technology, information exchange, and the development of domestic industrial capabilities between Barzan Holdings and Ingress Corp Berhad of Malaysia. The agreement was signed by CEO of Barzan Holdings Mohammed Badr al-Sada and Managing Director of Ingress Corp Berhad Mohd Sirajuddean Ab Rahim of Malaysia. Attending the meeting were HE the Chief of Staff of the Qatar Armed Forces, Lt Gen (Pilot) Jassim bin Mohammed al-Mannai, and Chief of Malaysian Defence Forces, General Tan Sri Mohd Nizam Jaffar, along with several high-ranking officers from both sides. HE the Deputy Prime Minister hosted a luncheon banquet in honour of the Malaysia minister and his accompanying delegation. **(QNA)**



OFFICIAL

Amir condolences with Saudi King Salman

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani, His Highness the Deputy Amir Sheikh Abdullah bin Hamad al-Thani and HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani have sent cables of condolences to Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman bin Abdulaziz al-Saud of Saudi Arabia, on the passing of Princess Abta bint Abdulaziz bin Abdulrahman al-Saud. **(QNA)**

Social development ministry organises first national meeting of volunteering partners

HE the Minister of Social Development and Family Buthaina bint Ali al-Jabr al-Nuaimi has chaired the ministry's first national meeting of volunteering partners, bringing together representatives from a wide range of national institutions and sectors.

In her remarks, HE al-Nuaimi hailed the meeting as a platform for unifying national visions and volunteer initiatives. She reaffirmed the ministry's commitment to strengthening collaboration and ensuring the sustainability of volunteer-driven social impact, commending national institutions for their ongoing contributions to promoting volunteerism and community service.

The session explored the current landscape of volunteer work in Qatar, including prevailing challenges, and featured a visual presentation outlining the concept, objectives, and roadmap for future periodic meetings.

Key strategic projects spearheaded by the ministry were presented, including the development of national volunteer policies and legislation, enhance-



ment of the digital volunteering platform, and the launch of nationwide campaigns to foster a culture of volunteerism. Expanding community engagement across various segments of society was also a central focus.

Nasser al-Mughiseeb, the Director of the Ministry's Community Development Department, emphasised that these initiatives are foundational to institutionalising and sustaining organised volunteer work in Qatar.

He noted efforts to bolster the national volunteering platform as a comprehensive digital tool, implement inclusive awareness campaigns, and broaden opportunities for public involvement.

Al-Mughiseeb highlighted that these initiatives are aligned with

the Third National Development Strategy, which targets raising the national volunteer participation rate to 10% by 2030. He added that the ministry aims for these efforts to act as an umbrella for all stakeholders, enabling innovative, integrated approaches that open new avenues for societal contribution.

The meeting marks the beginning of a series of regular meetings designed to align national volunteer efforts with global best practices, expand civic engagement, and contribute to the realisation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

It also underscores Qatar's growing role as a regional and international leader in social and volunteer work. **(QNA)**

Qatari mediation opens avenues for peace, stability: envoy

Qatar's mediation, along with its diplomatic and humanitarian efforts, forms integrated pathways that contribute to bolstering opportunities for peace and stability, said Qatar's ambassador to the UK, HE Sheikh Abdullah bin Mohammed bin Saud al-Thani.

The envoy was speaking during a discussion dinner that revolved around Qatar's role in the Middle East and North Africa, as well as on development and the situation in Gaza. The event was organised by the Labour Foreign Policy Group (LFPG), on the sidelines of the UK Labour Party Conference in Liverpool, in collaboration with the Qatari embassy in London. Achieving enduring peace in the region requires meeting the fundamental humanitarian needs, he underlined, warning of the aggravation of the situation in Gaza due to the imposed restrictions on the flow of humanitarian aid. He stressed



that depriving civilians of humanitarian aid constitutes an egregious breach of international humanitarian law, emphasising the importance of sustained support for the UN, particularly the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA).

Doha Bank gold sponsor for Doha Marathon by Ooredoo

Ooredoo has announced a three-year partnership with Doha Bank as the gold sponsor for the 14th edition of the Doha Marathon by Ooredoo, set to take place on January 16, 2026. The 13th edition has been awarded a World Athletics Gold Label status for the second consecutive year, placing it among the top 25 marathons worldwide.

The partnership was officiated yesterday at the Ooredoo headquarters, attended by senior representatives from both organisations. Sheikh Ali bin Jabor bin Mohammad al-Thani, CEO of Ooredoo Qatar, said: "Through sustained commitment, we aim to create lasting value for our community, inspire the next generation of athletes, and reinforce our dedication to Qatar's sporting legacy and the well-being of its people."

Sheikh Abdulrahman bin Fahad bin Faisal al-Thani, Group



Sheikh Ali bin Jabor bin Mohammad al-Thani and Sheikh Abdulrahman bin Fahad bin Faisal al-Thani during the signing ceremony.

CEO of Doha Bank, said: "Our sponsorship of this edition of the Doha Marathon, organised by Ooredoo, marks the continuation of a partnership that began with the previous edition and will extend over the next three consecutive years. Through this partnership, we aim to strengthen Doha

Bank's contributions in the area of social responsibility."

With an expected 20,000 participants this year, the Doha Marathon by Ooredoo has grown into the largest sporting and community event in Qatar, drawing participants from both local and international communities.

Awqaf minister meets Algerian counterpart

HE the Minister of Endowments (Awqaf) and Islamic Affairs Ghanem bin Shaheen al-Ghanem met in Algiers on Sunday with Algerian Minister of Religious Affairs and Endowments Dr Youssef Belmahdi. The meeting witnessed the signing of a co-operation agreement between the two sides. It includes provisions for the exchange of expertise in the field of endowment management and the development of competencies in religious affairs, in a way that strengthens institutional partnership and opens new horizons for bilateral co-operation. The



bilateral meetings between the two ministers also presented an opportunity to consult on mechanisms for activating joint co-operation and exchange

views on issues of common interest in the religious field, contributing to the service of Islamic and endowment work. **(QNA)**

Ministry of Awqaf, IIFA sign MoU to enhance co-operation

The Ministry of Endowments (Awqaf) and Islamic Affairs signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) yesterday with the International Islamic Fiqh Academy (IIFA), affiliated with the Organisation of Islamic Co-operation (OIC). The MoU aims to enhance co-operation in common areas and strengthen ties to address contemporary issues.

HE Undersecretary of the Ministry of Endowments and Islamic Affairs, Sheikh Dr Khalid bin Mohammed bin Ghanem al-Thani, explained that the MoU represents an important and practical step within the ministry's efforts to achieve its lofty mission of spreading Islamic culture, preserving heritage, and instilling religious awareness in society.

He emphasised that IIFA is a strategic partner with a deep knowledge and jurisprudence, which is part of the ministry's strategic plan for international co-op-



eration. He added that this co-operation will have a positive impact on spreading Islamic knowledge and culture, especially with regard to the exchange of expertise and publications and the organisation of joint scientific events, which will benefit Qatari society and the entire Islamic nation.

For his part, IIFA Secretary-General Dr Qutb Mustafa Sano said that the primary goal of the

academy is to achieve intellectual convergence and cognitive integration among the nation's jurists and specialists in Sharia sciences. He noted that this co-operation will deepen joint efforts to monitor intellectual challenges and provide sound Sharia opinions, serving the stability and prosperity of Islamic societies.

The three-year MoU seeks to achieve a number of shared strategic objectives, most notably: disseminating Islamic knowledge and culture and preserving Islamic heritage by monitoring the most important intellectual, social, economic, and scientific challenges, providing Sharia opinions on them, and offering appropriate solutions.

He also explained that joint scholarly activities (seminars, conferences, and discussion groups) are intended to study contemporary issues and developments. **(QNA)**

QMC chairperson meets Egyptian envoy

HE the Chairperson of Qatar Media Corporation (QMC) Sheikh Hamad bin Thamer al-Thani met yesterday with Egyptian ambassador Walid Fahmy al-Faqi. The two sides discussed media relations between the two countries and explored ways to support and develop them. **(QNA)**



Ashghal using AI to increase efficiency of project implementation, maintenance

By Shafeeq Alingal
Staff Reporter

The Public Works Authority (Ashghal) is making use of AI to improve the efficiency of project implementation and maintenance, a senior official told Qatar TV. Technical Office director engineer Khaled Abdullah al-Najjar said Ashghal is currently using AI to analyse data to find out if there are any defects or cracks in the road.

"In addition to that, we are planning to implement pre-fixing plans to reduce the number of times we need to fix the road. The AI that we are working on will help us in implementing the plans to improve the efficiency of the projects and their maintenance," he explained.

Regarding the implementation



Engineer Khaled Abdullah al-Najjar during the Qatar TV interview.

of the projects that were recently awarded by Ashghal, al-Najjar said, some will take two to three years, depending on the implementation plan.

"The contracts related to operation and maintenance will focus on the operation and maintenance of roads and health care networks," he said, while observing that they will allow Ashghal to use the latest

systems in the construction sector. "This includes data analysis systems with artificial intelligence, laser scanning cars for roads and health care networks in order to identify the shortcomings as well as the implementation of priority improvements," he added.

Ashghal on Sunday announced 13 new contracts worth QR12bn to enhance the infrastructure of road and drainage networks and public buildings and improve the quality of life in Qatar. The new projects that were awarded include road network operation and maintenance works, drainage networks operation and maintenance works, construction of three new schools, improving safety and fire systems in 40 existing schools, refurbishment of the Psychiatric Hospital of Hamad Medical Corporation, and renovation of Al Zubara Horse Breeding Farm.



Rawabi launches 'Mega Month End Deal 10 20 30'

Rawabi, Qatar's leading hypermarket chain, has launched its 'Mega Month End Deal 10 20 30' a 'spectacular' shopping festival running until October 7, across all Rawabi and Grand stores in the country. The campaign brings shoppers 'unbeatable value' across more than 1,000 products, all priced at QR10, QR20, QR30 or QR30, ranging from daily essentials to lifestyle must-haves, a statement said.

Among the featured items are Al Yaqeen Chicken 1100gm for QR10, Lipton Yellow Label Tea Bags 100s for QR10, Rozana Basmati Rice 5kg for QR20, Tide Detergent Powder 2.5kg x 2pcs for QR30, Fairy Dish-wash Lemon 600ml x 2pcs for QR10, BlueLine Pressure Cooker 5ltr for QR30, and Trolley Bags 24" for QR30, along with hundreds of other 'irresistible deals'. Rawabi is also running its 'Seasonal Sale' of up to 50% off on garments and footwear until today (Tuesday) offering the latest fashion trends for men, women, and children at the best prices.

As part of its social commitment and community initiatives, Rawabi marked World Heart Day yesterday with a special healthy-eating campaign. Speaking at a press meet announcing the launch, Kannu Baker, group general manager of Rawabi Group, said: "The Mega Month End Deal 10 20 30 is more than just a promotion – it is Rawabi's way of thanking our valued customers for their loyalty and trust. Our goal is to continuously deliver exceptional value, innovation, and convenience, making Rawabi the ultimate shopping destination."



Xiaomi unveils Redmi 15C 5G at Safari Mall



Xiaomi has announced the official launch of its latest smartphone, the Redmi 15C 5G, at a high-profile event held at Safari Mall, Abu Hamour. Key officials from Safari Mall, Intertec Group and Xiaomi, along with industry partners were present. General manager Surendra Nath, AGM - legal and public relations Tamer Elsaid Farag, BDM lifestyle products Thameem Hamza Kamal, and head of sales Tittu George were present. The Redmi 15C 5G features a 6,000mAh battery that delivers up to 2.26 days of power, along with a large 6.9-inch immersive display. The smartphone combines high performance with stylish design, making it a standout in its category, a statement said. The Redmi 15C 5G is now available across Qatar at a launch price of QR579, making it one of the most competitive 5G smartphones in the market today, it was explained. This launch marks yet another milestone in the ongoing partnership between Xiaomi, Safari Mobiles and Intertec Group, the statement added.

St Regis Doha, Alfardan Hospitality partner with Qatar Charity



The St Regis Doha, in collaboration with Alfardan Hospitality has announced a partnership with Qatar Charity (QC) to donate high-quality furnishings from the hotel's recent interior upgrade. This initiative is a core part of the hotel's Corporate Social Responsibility efforts, focused on giving back to the community and promoting environmental responsibility, a statement said. As part of a routine refresh of its accommodation rooms and suites, The St Regis Doha, recognising the furnishings were in excellent condition, chose to donate them to families and individuals with limited income across the country through QC's channels, the statement added.

Sony, Modern Home launch Inzone gaming gear

Sony Middle East and Africa, together with Modern Home, has announced that the new Inzone gaming gear range with a full suite of products aimed at PC gamers, will soon be available in Qatar.

The Inzone H9 II joins the range alongside the new in-ear gaming earphones, Inzone E9. Completing the suite of gaming products are the specially designed Inzone KBD-H75 gaming keyboard, Inzone Mouse-A gaming mouse, and Inzone Mat-D and Mat-F mousepads.



The full range will be available in Qatar in October, at Modern Home in Al Maha Center on Salwa Road and Fnac stores in Lagoona Mall, Doha Festival City, and Place Vendome, in addition to other major electronics retailers in town.

All the new models have been co-developed with the world's leading e-sports team, Fnatic. The Inzone H9 II flagship gaming headset offers high-quality sound and noise cancellation in a light-weight design with a detachable microphone. The product is built around the driver unit in Sony's new critically acclaimed WH-1000XM6 wireless noise-cancelling headphones.

The Inzone E9 features a compact design that ensures a snug fit with minimal ear pressure. It also offers interchangeable noise-isolating foam tips or silicone hybrid tips in multiple sizes, providing all-day comfort and adaptability for different environments. The Inzone KBD-H75, Sony's first gaming keyboard, features a rapid trigger that allows gamers to toggle input on/off without returning keys to the reset position, combined with an up to 8000Hz polling rate for lightning-fast signal delivery.

Weighing only 48.4g, the Inzone Mouse-A ensures strength and durability, allowing for consistent performance throughout long sessions, with up to 90 hours of battery life. The Inzone Mat-F provides a 6mm thickness with the SlimFlex material, just enough resistance to support sharper aiming and smoother braking.



The Inzone Mat-D has a 4mm thickness and is designed for smooth gliding and high-speed response in Battle Royale-style games. The Inzone H3 Wired Gaming Headset is available now in a new black colour option, in addition to the existing white model, a statement added.

Chef Surender returns to Jamavar Doha with signature creations

Jamavar Doha, the pan-Indian dining destination at the iconic Sheraton Grand Doha Resort & Convention Hotel, has welcomed back its culinary director and Michelin-starred Chef Surender Mohan for a special visit until October 2. This limited-time exclusive gastronomic experience offers guests an opportunity to witness the artistry of one of India's most celebrated chefs, whose culinary vision has shaped Jamavar's acclaimed presence in London, Dubai, and Doha, a statement said.

Throughout his visit, Chef Surender will bring his distinctive perspective to the Jamavar Doha kitchen, overseeing a refined showcase of signature creations that reflect his mastery of Indian cuisine. Known for his ability to balance authenticity with innovation, Chef Surender's cooking is deeply rooted in the royal kitchens of India, yet elevated through modern technique and a global lens, a philosophy that helped earn Jamavar Doha its prestigious Michelin star.

The highlight of his return will be an exclusive Chef's Tasting Menu, offered on October 1-2, from 6pm-10pm. Guests will be invited to experience a 5-course



menu personally curated by Chef Surender, featuring elevated interpretations of regional Indian flavours, crafted with depth, precision, and artistic presentation. Each course is a celebration of storytelling through food, showcasing the richness and diversity of Indian culinary heritage.

The experience features Pan-er Stuffed Baby Kulchas & Oscietra Royale Caviar, Meen Varuval, Lucknowi Bhuna Gosht, signature Leela's Lobster Neeruli, Bikaneri Paneer Tikka, Chilgoza Malai Broccoli, Guccchi Mutter Malai, and Chocolate Bounty, priced at QR425 for the non-vegetarian menu and QR375 for the vegetarian menu. Following this exclusive experience, Jamavar Doha will unveil its Winter Menu on October 11, the statement added.

Qatar to host Shell Eco-marathon regional contest, inaugural global championship

Following the success of the 2025 Shell Eco-marathon Asia-Pacific and Middle East Regional Competition, Shell has announced that it will once again host the event in Qatar in 2026, followed by the first-ever Shell Eco-marathon Global Championship in 2027.

The 2025 edition, held at the Lusail International Circuit, marked the first time in the programme's 40-year history that the event was hosted in the Middle East, a statement said. "Hosting the Shell Eco-

marathon is more than a competition. It's a platform for innovation, education, and global collaboration," said Rob Maxwell, managing director and chairperson of Shell Companies Qatar.

"We are honoured to continue this journey in Qatar, where the spirit of ingenuity and sustainability thrives."

Both the 2026 and 2027 events will continue to be held under the patronage of HE Sheikh Al Mayassa bint Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani, Chairperson of Qatar Mu-

seums, and in collaboration with the Qatar Auto Museum. "At Qatar Museums, we are committed to nurturing creativity and innovation, especially among the next generation," said CEO Mohammed al-Rumaihi. The 2027 Shell Eco-marathon Global Championship will bring together top-performing teams from across the world, competing in multidisciplinary challenges that test not only engineering prowess but also creativity, collaboration, and environmental stewardship.



A file picture from Shell Eco-marathon, Asia-Pacific and Middle East, 2025.



Pilot phase of platform for domestic worker recruitment begins

The Ministry of Labour has launched the pilot phase of the Moawen Platform - a pioneering digital system designed to redefine domestic worker recruitment, bolster transparency, and safeguard the rights of all stakeholders. This was announced during the meeting of HE the Undersecretary of the Ministry of Labour Sheikha Najwa bint Abdulrahman al-Thani with licensed recruitment offices. Discussions focused on enhancing co-operation with recruitment offices, supporting and developing their operational capacity, and addressing the sector's key challenges - particularly in workforce management and recruitment procedures. The Moawen Platform streamlines every stage of domestic worker recruitment. Recruitment offices can orchestrate applications through a unified digital portal, while employers can select workers and licensed offices with full

transparency, based on service quality and pricing. Simultaneously, the ministry receives comprehensive, real-time data on recruitment office activity, enabling rapid analysis, identification of bottlenecks, and timely, evidence-based interventions-strengthening sector stability. Key features of the platform include: Submission and management of recruitment offer; Conducting job interviews; Worker and office selection; Contract finalisation; Payment of recruitment fees and wage transfers; and Management of end-of-service entitlements and processing of refunds in disputes. During the pilot phase, the platform will register recruitment offices and available workers to create verified, comprehensive profiles; enable offices to manage applications, submit feedback, and refine processes; and allow selection of clients to test end-to-end application submission and tracking. (QNA)

NCSA opens Cyber Governance and Assurance Conference

Frameworks to strengthen Qatar's cyber resilience launched

Under the patronage of HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani, the National Cyber Security Agency (NCSA) yesterday inaugurated the 4th Annual Cyber Governance and Assurance Conference, in the presence of several ministers, senior officials, and representatives of government entities, private companies, and cybersecurity service providers.

The two-day conference is held under the theme "Navigating the Cyber Horizon: Resilience through Preparedness and Innovation." During the opening, NCSA launched the National Cyber Crisis Management Framework and the National Institutional Framework for Cyber Crisis Management, aimed at enhancing the security and resilience of Qatar's cyber ecosystem. The frameworks are designed to manage cyber crises at the national level in co-ordination with relevant authorities, mitigate their impact, ensure rapid response and recovery, and guarantee the continuity of vital services. These initiatives reflect NCSA's commitment to implementing projects under the Third National Strategy and the National Cyber Security Strategy 2024-2030.

HE NCSA President engineer Abdulrahman bin Ali al-Farahid al-Malki said the conference provides a rich platform for exchanging expertise and exploring the latest global trends in specialised cybersecurity fields.



He announced the signing of a Professorship Chair agreement between NCSA and University of Doha for Science and Technology (UDST), aimed at promoting knowledge transfer, advancing education and research, and adopting best practices in cybersecurity, particularly in protecting critical technological infrastructure and operational technology.

HE al-Malki also announced NCSA's accession to the Security Compliance Institute of the International Society for Automation (ISA), which will strengthen international co-operation in the field of cybersecurity. Engineer Dana Yousef al-Abdullah, director of Policy Affairs at NCSA, delivered a comprehensive presentation on the cybersecurity land-

scape in Qatar, highlighting key current realities and future trends shaping the sector.

Mohammed Murshid al-Mannai, director of the Cyber Resilience, Risk and Insurance Department, presented on the National Cyber Crisis Management Framework and the National Institutional Framework for Cyber Crisis Management, outlining their role in strengthening national readiness and resilience.

During the conference, the NCSA president honoured several entities that obtained accreditation and compliance certificates for the National Information Assurance Standard.

The conference also witnessed the signing of a Professorship Chair agreement in cybersecurity between NCSA and University of Doha for Science and Technology. (QNA)

CONDOLENCES

The Management, Principal, Staff and Students of
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Doha, Qatar



With deep sorrow and profound grief, we extend our heartfelt sympathy and deepest condolences on the demise of



ANDREA MARIA JENSON
(Students of Class 1-F)

on her sad demise on Monday, 29 September 2025

Heartfelt condolences to the bereaved family for their immense loss. May the Almighty grant peace and eternal paradise to the departed soul.

Top experts for global mental health summit from today

The sixth Global Ministerial Mental Health Summit will kick off today in Doha under the theme "Transforming Mental Health through Investment, Innovation, and Digital Solutions".

The two-day summit will bring together a wide range of health ministers, experts, and specialists from across the world, along with international organisations concerned with mental health.

The primary purpose of the summit is to strengthen international co-operation, share best practices, and develop innovative solutions to improve mental health care systems worldwide. Its overarching goal is to address mental health as an integral part of public health, social justice, and human rights, in line with UN Human Rights Council resolution on mental health and human rights, as well as UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

The summit will feature a rich programme of sessions and events, including two panel discussions and six workshops, alongside a number of side activities. Policymakers, officials, and specialists will deliberate on pressing mental health issues to develop strategies at the global level.

Building on the momentum of previous summits held in London, Amsterdam, Paris, Rome, and Buenos Aires, the Doha Summit underscores the urgent need to integrate mental health into public policies. It also highlights the importance of global commitment to mental health, in line with other international initiatives, including UN 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda, High-Level Commission on Noncommunicable Diseases, and WHO Mental Health Action Plan 2013-2020-2030.

Following on from the discussions of previous summits, the sixth edition aligns with Qatar's vision for a future grounded in innovation and sustainable development, with a focus on multiple dimensions of innovation in mental healthcare.

The summit will examine the growing challenges and opportunities in mental health care in a rapidly changing world, where digital technologies have become an integral part of daily life. (QNA)



QatarEnergy LNG
Tender Invitation

No.	TENDER NUMBER / DESCRIPTION	TENDER ISSUE PERIOD	TENDER FEE (QAR)	TENDER BOND (QAR)	TENDER CLOSING DATE
1	SUP/C/OON/7280/25 Provision of Strainer Cleaning Services on Call Off Basis	29/09/2025 to 09/10/2025	0	0	20/10/2025

Scope of Work:

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

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

Place for Tender Collection and Bid Submission:

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

Note: Local Companies (established under the Laws of State of Qatar with local Commercial Registration) are advised to refer to the tender documentation and In-Country Value (ICV) Digital Portal: - <https://icv.qa/en-US/> for details of ICV compliance that may be applicable.



QATAR FERTILISER COMPANY
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QAFCO ANNOUNCES THE FOLLOWING TENDER

TENDER NO.	DESCRIPTION OF WORKS	TENDER FEE (QAR)	TENDER BOND (QAR)	TENDER FEE RECEIPT SUBMISSION DATES	TENDER CLOSING DATE
RFQ-6000003766	Supply, Install, Operation and Maintenance of Indoor Air Quality Monitoring System at Qafco Offices Buildings	500/- (Non-refundable)	24,000/- (twenty-four thousand Only)	30.09.2025 01.09.2025 02.09.2025 05.10.2025 06.10.2025 07.10.2025 08.10.2025	28.10.2025

GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

- During the period this tender is offered, the interested bidders shall first deposit appropriate Tender Fee amount in cash (Cheque will not be accepted) into Company's following Account at any QNB branch:
 - Account Name : **QATAR FERTILISER COMPANY (QAFCO)**
 - Account Number : **0013-025828-058**
 - IBAN : **QA51QNBAA00000000013025828058**
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- The interested Bidders shall mention their company's name and Tender Number on the payment receipt provided by the bank and submit it as Tender Fee receipt.
- Besides the Tender fee receipt (which should have the Tender Number and bidder's name clearly mentioned on it), interested bidders shall also submit a copy of the valid Commercial Registration, an authorization letter from their company with the name, telephone, fax and e-mail ID of the focal point for this tender (**Very Important**), during the submission of Tender Fee Receipt for ensuring electronic receipt of the Tender Document.
- Tender Fee Receipt along with the specified documents shall be submitted to purchase@qafco.com.qa on the dates indicated above, after payment of Tender Fee (nonrefundable).
- After submission of the above documents to the above email, Tender Document will be provided through an electronic platform separately after the last date of Tender Fee Receipt Submission Date.
- For any queries related to non-receipt of the tender documents after the last date of Tender Fee Receipt Submission Date, you may contact at "purchase@qafco.com.qa" or on 44227797
- Technical & Commercial details and Submission Procedures will be specified in the Tender Documents.
- The Company will not consider any offer without the enclosure of the Tender Bond.
- The Tender shall be strictly submitted using the QAFCO's Supply Chain Portal – SAP / Ariba, on or before the "Tender Closing Date". Tenderers who fail to adhere to this requirement will result in the disqualification of their Tender.



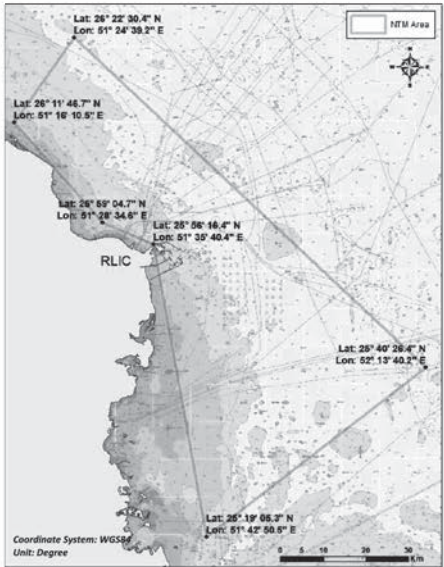
Public Announcement
To all Ships, Fishermen and Mariners
Seismic Survey Acquisition by Vessels AOS Glory, Stanford Hawk, GMS Apollo, Voyager Explorer, BGP Innovator and Safa Searcher
Seismic Survey Works Offshore Qatar from 27th November 2024 – 27th November 2025

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
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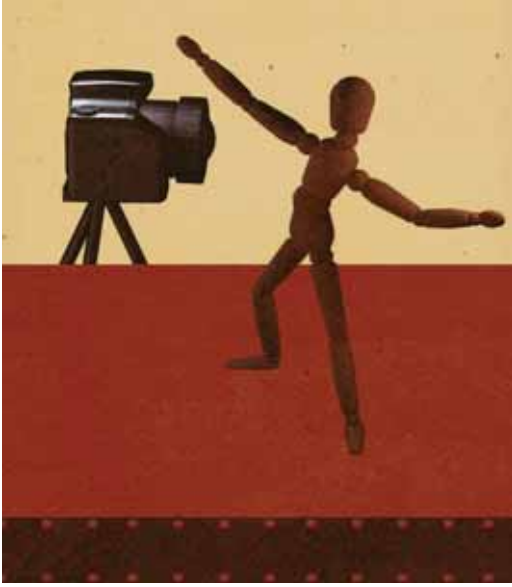
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Virginia Commonwealth University School of the Arts in Qatar Launches Dynamic Community Education Program

VCUarts Qatar is excited to announce the launch of its latest Community Education Program, offering a diverse range of creative courses designed to inspire learners of all ages.



From architecture and interior design to graphic design, pop art, sound exploration, and stop-motion animation, the program provides hands-on workshops that blend technical skill-building with creative expression. Open to participants aged 16 and above, the courses are beginner-friendly and led by experienced instructors who foster curiosity, experimentation, and personal growth.



“VCUarts Qatar has always been a hub for creativity and innovation,” said Rasha Alkasab, Program Manager for Community and Continuing Education at VCUarts Qatar. “Our Community Education Program invites the wider community to explore new disciplines, develop practical skills, and discover fresh ways to express themselves.”



The program emphasizes experiential learning, encouraging participants to create portfolio-worthy projects and gain confidence in their creative abilities. The offerings include courses such as Introduction to Architectural Drawing, Adobe Illustrator Basics, Pop Art Canvas Experience, Geometry & Visualization, Stop-Motion Animation, and Soundscape Art.

The program is now open for enrollment. For more details and registration, please visit qatar.vcu.edu/community-education or contact:

- vcuqcommunity@vcu.edu
- WhatsApp: +974 3013 3448



Reignite togetherness with couple’s wellness retreats at Zulal Wellness Resort by Chiva-Som

Curated programmes invite couples to reconnect through serenity, movement, and shared wellbeing.



Zulal Wellness Resort by Chiva-Som, the world’s first full-immersion wellness destination to showcase the principles of Traditional Arabic and Islamic Medicine (TAIM), invites couples to embark on a transformative journey of wellness and connection with its newly curated Couples Retreats. Designed for partners seeking to recharge and reconnect, these immersive programmes combine shared wellness rituals with moments of adventure, ensuring every couple discovers a balance of serenity and vitality.

The retreats celebrate the power of experiencing wellness together, offering couples the chance to deepen their bond through thoughtfully designed activities. Guests may choose Recharge Together, a serene one-night retreat that blends soothing wellness therapies, mindful practices, and tranquil moments such as stargazing or floating meditation, concluding in a romantic dinner under the stars. For couples who crave energy and activity, Wellness Together delivers invigorating experiences, from yoga and Thai boxing to kayaking and marine eco-trails, paired with nourishing dining and opportunities to unwind together in perfect harmony.

Each retreat includes early check-in and late check-out (subject to availability), a welcome tea ceremony,

personalised health consultations, and indulgent couple’s treatments. To make the experience even more memorable, every couple receives personalised pyjamas embroidered with their initials as a keepsake of their journey.

“Our Couples Retreats are designed to remind partners that wellness is most meaningful when shared,” says Ammar Samad, General Manager of Zulal Wellness Resort by Chiva-Som. “Whether through calming rituals or active adventures, these retreats inspire couples to reconnect, recharge, and create memories that will last long after their stay.”

The Couples Retreats are available at QAR 5,000 per couple per night, offering a unique opportunity to rediscover the joy of wellness together at Zulal Wellness Resort by Chiva-Som.

For more information or reservations, please email reservations@zulal.com, call/WhatsApp +974 4477 6555 or visit www.zulal.com.



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Qatar Charity delivers aid to 35,000 flood-hit people in Pakistan

With support of donors in Qatar, Qatar Charity (QC) has carried out a series of urgent humanitarian interventions in Pakistan, benefiting nearly 35,400 people affected by the recent floods that displaced more than 12,500 families and impacted over 1mn people across the country.

As part of these relief efforts, the QC distributed 2,200 food baskets in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Punjab provinces, reaching more than 15,400 people.

Each basket is designed to meet the monthly nutritional needs of a family, and includes rice, flour, oil, and other essential food items.

In addition, in collaboration with Al Shifa Trust Eye Hospital, Qatar Charity organised a four-day medical camp in Jhang and Muzaffargarh in Punjab.

The camp provided free healthcare services to more than 16,500 flood-affected people,



including cataract surgeries, medical consultations, eye examinations, laboratory tests, and the distribution of medicines and eyeglasses, ensuring comprehensive care for the most vulnerable.

The QC also partnered with Unicef to distribute 500 hygiene kits to around 3,500 people, aimed at promoting personal hygiene and preventing the spread

of diseases in flood-hit areas.

The QC's humanitarian role was particularly notable during the 2022 floods, when it worked with the Qatar Fund for Development (QFFD) and other partners to assist more than 500,000 people, including Afghan refugees, in 18 regions across Pakistan.

The response included distribution of 39,140 food baskets, 6,690 tents, and 5,000 hygiene kits.

Qatar Charity continues support for Afghan quake-affected people

In response to the devastating earthquake that struck southeastern Afghanistan during the end of August, Qatar Charity (QC), with the support of donors in Qatar, has carried out two emergency relief interventions.

The interventions included the distribution of family tents, food packages, and kitchen kits in Kunar province, helping meet urgent shelter and nutrition needs.

QC distributed 393 high-quality family tents designed to withstand weather conditions, fire, and humidity, offering safe shelter to families who lost their homes.

As part of its 'Feeding is Life' campaign, QC also delivered 260 food packages and 260 kitchen kits. Each package contained essential food items sufficient for a family for one month.

Contributions can be made through QC's website (<https://www.qcharity.org/en/qa>), mobile app (qch.qa/appen), branches,



and collection points in the commercial complexes, in addition to calling 44920000.

According to official reports, the death toll has risen to 2,205, while the number of injured has exceeded

3,700, following the 6.0-magnitude earthquake. The disaster has caused extensive damage to thousands of homes, particularly in Kuner province and surrounding areas.

GAC celebrates 10 years in Qatar with Domasco



GAC Motor, in partnership with DOMASCO, the official dealer of GAC in Qatar, is proud to announce a celebration of a decade of growth and success in the country. Since its entry into the Qatar market ten years ago, GAC has quickly become one of the fastest-growing automotive brands, recognized for its cutting-edge technology, modern designs, and unmatched value. This anniversary marks a milestone in Qatar's automotive industry as GAC Motor has evolved from a newcomer into one of the most trusted and recognized auto brands.

Andre Bonthuis, Managing Director of DOMASCO, commented on the milestone: "Reaching this 10-year mark is a reflection of our success, and the trust of our loyal customers. With the continued rise of Chinese automotive innovation and an expanding market in Qatar, we are excited for the future and the continued growth of GAC in Qatar."

To commemorate the 10th anniversary, GAC and DOMASCO are offering special anniversary promotions on a wide range of vehicles, including sedans, SUVs, and MPVs. The offers feature some of the brand's best-selling models, such as the EMZOOM, EMKOO, EMPOW, GS8, and M8. Prices start from an accessible QAR 65,900. To further enhance customer value and peace of mind, all vehicles included in the promotion come with an exclusive 7-year / 250,000 km manufacturing warranty and a 10-year / 100,000 km service package.

This 10-year milestone highlights GAC's ongoing commitment to delivering quality, innovation, and customer satisfaction across Qatar. With a strong vehicle lineup and exceptional after-sales support, GAC looks forward to achieving even greater success in the years ahead.



GU-Q professor unveils book on hidden history of colonial law

Associate professor at Georgetown University in Qatar, Sohaira Siddiqui, has released her new book *Islamic Law on Trial: Contesting Colonial Power in British India* that uncovers a hidden history that flips the script on everything known about colonial law.

Despite being confined by colonial rules of engagement, Muslim judges, lawyers, and jurists in British India found ways to bend, challenge, and even reshape the colonial system from the inside.

"It's not a story of destruction; Islamic law is arguably the most resilient legal system in human history, existing continuously since the 7th century," explains Dr Siddiqui, whose previous work covered 11th to 14th century legal history.

"This book traces the gradual displacement of Islamic Law, and how communities ensured its survival in new forms."

Set against the drama of the East India Company's rise, the 1857 Rebellion, and the British push to dominate Indian courts, *Islamic Law on Trial* shows how colonial law was a battlefield where legal traditions collided and ultimately reshaped each other, with impact on contemporary Muslim society.

"I was often surprised by how many of today's debates mirror those of the colonial period," said Dr Siddiqui, who spent years studying court archives, colonial archives in the UK, the Indian National Archives, and madrasa and university collections across cities like Delhi, Bombay, and Allahabad. "Many questions Muslims asked then are still being asked today in contexts of military, cultural, or social occupation."

Her work doesn't just recover the past; it speaks directly to urgent questions about plural-



Sohaira Siddiqui

ism and authority, by knitting together disparate disciplines of legal history, South Asian history, and Islamic law into a cohesive narrative. Additionally her engagement with Urdu sources along with Arabic and English records allows new insight into biographical reconstructions and legal debates.

Already hailed by leading scholars as "monumental," "brilliant," and "transformative," the book has been called "the most innovative and illuminating study of Anglo-Muhammadan law to date" and is being taught in classrooms including at Yale, Princeton, NYU, and universities in Qatar.

Babies in Gaza City incubators at risk 'as Israeli assault intensifies'

Reuters
Geneva

The UN children's charity called yesterday for an immediate evacuation to save at least 25 ill or premature babies in incubators in Gaza City as Israel steps up its ground offensive, shelling a hospital overnight housing around half of them.

Palestinian health officials say tanks are surrounding the area near Al Helo Hospital where at least 12 babies are in incubators. Medics said the site was shelled. Video obtained by Reuters showed hospital rooms and beds there strewn with debris.

"It is time to move them because Gaza City again has become a combat zone, but moving them where? There is no safe place for them to go," Unicef spokesperson Ricardo Pires told Reuters. Israeli authorities did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Evacuation of the babies, many of them newborns, will mean moving them to makeshift carts, wrapped in blankets with portable oxygen supplies and

drips, Pires said. Still, they could be exposed to infection, variable temperatures or supplies could run out during the transfer.

"Moving them seems like the best option we have now...but at the same time, it's a very risky one."

It was not immediately clear which hospitals could take the babies, with many damaged, overcrowded and facing shortages. Pires was in Gaza City last month where he saw one of the babies — a premature girl named Narges who, he said, had been removed from the womb of her

dead mother who had been shot in the head. "We're very concerned not only about her, but all the other babies," he said, saying efforts to reach her father and her doctors since the shelling had been unsuccessful. In Gaza City, there are more babies than incubators and some of them are sharing, he said, adding that Israel had denied some requests to import more. Pires said he saw four in one incubator last month.

Israeli authorities could not be reached for comment on the accusation they had denied requests to bring in incubators.



A man gestures as he inspects the damage at The Helou International Specialty Hospital, following an Israeli raid, amid an Israeli military operation, in Gaza City, yesterday.

Drones from Turkiye circle Gaza aid flotilla as boats sail east

Reuters
Ankara

Turkiye has joined Spain, Italy and Greece in monitoring an international flotilla carrying aid for Gaza that was sailing east across the Mediterranean Sea yesterday despite warnings from Israel to stop the mission, flight data show.

Flight tracking websites showed that three long-endurance drones originating from Turkiye's Corlu air base have been circling over the flotilla for three days, highlighting the growing international interest in the boats which have vowed to breach an Israeli naval blockade around the embattled Gaza Strip.

Reuters was unable to confirm the reason for the drone flights. Turkiye's foreign and defence ministries and the intelligence agency did not respond to requests for comment. The Global Sumud Flotilla, consisting of civilian boats carrying parliamentarians, lawyers and activists including Swedish climate campaigner Greta Thunberg, was still hundreds of miles off the Gaza coastline yesterday. But it was approaching an area where other flotillas have previously been intercepted, people on board said. Tracking sites showed about 40 boats in the flotilla.

Its advance has raised international tensions, especially after a drone attack last week damaged some boats. No one was injured, but the flotilla had to pause for several days in Greek waters for repairs before setting sail again for Gaza over the weekend. Organisers said yesterday that the mission was now expected to reach Gaza in about four days. Italy and Spain have deployed navy

ships to accompany the flotilla in case of rescue or humanitarian needs, but have said they will not engage militarily. Greece's coastguard had also monitored progress while the flotilla was in its rescue area.

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PEOPLE

Jailed Thai ex-PM Thaksin requests royal pardon: lawyer

Thailand's influential former prime minister Thaksin Shinawatra has applied for a royal pardon to reduce his one-year prison sentence, his lawyer Winyat Chatmontree said yesterday. Thaksin, 76, is one of the country's most polarising politicians, the patriarch of a dynasty which has for two decades grappled with the country's pro-monarchy, pro-military establishment. The billionaire telecoms magnate is serving his sentence in a Bangkok prison after Thailand's Supreme Court ruled this month that he improperly served a 2023 sentence in a hospital suite rather than a cell. "The petition was submitted but I have no comment about this," Winyat said.

VERDICT

16 Myanmar-linked gang members sentenced to death

A Chinese court yesterday sentenced to death 16 members of a family-run criminal gang that established deadly scam centres in Myanmar's Kokang region on the border with China, among other crimes. Scam compounds have flourished in Myanmar's lawless borderlands, staffed by foreigners - many of them Chinese - who say they were trafficked and forced to swindle people online, part of a multibillion-dollar illicit industry. The Wenzhou Intermediate People's Court said yesterday that a family-run criminal organisation had engaged in cyber fraud, drug trafficking, setting up casinos, and other crimes from 2015.

OPINION

Bangladesh blames foreign arms for deadly hill clashes

Bangladesh's interior chief yesterday said weapons from "outside the country" were fuelling violence in a southeastern border region with India that has left three people dead. Clashes erupted in the Chittagong Hill Tracts on Sunday, when security forces stopped protesters angry at the recent alleged rape of a woman, and three people were killed. The army blamed rebels, while demonstrators accused troops of opening fire. Interior ministry chief Jahangir Alam Chowdhury alleged "arms are coming from outside the country", supplying weapons to "miscreants firing from the hilltops", without giving further details.

DECISION

Nepal imposes travel ban on ex-PM over protest violence

Nepal has imposed travel bans on ousted prime minister K P Sharma Oli and four former senior officials as part of an investigation into deadly unrest earlier this month, the interior minister said. Youth-led protests that began on September 8 over a brief social media ban, economic hardship and corruption quickly morphed into nationwide fury after a crackdown. Two days of violence left 73 people dead, the parliament and government offices were burned down. In addition to Oli, travel bans have been placed on former home minister Ramesh Lekhak, former head of the National Investigation Department security agency, Hutaraj Thapa, and two other senior bureaucrats.

Reeves takes on critics with warning on ‘economic responsibility’

Reuters
Liverpool, England

British Finance Minister Rachel Reeves yesterday mounted a staunch defence of her commitment to "economic responsibility", countering those in the Labour Party who want her to ease her fiscal rules to spend more on the nation's ailing economy.

In a speech taking aim at the opposition Conservative Party and at the "falsehoods" of the populist Reform UK party, Reeves also spoke directly to internal critics who want her to worry less about the bond market and spend more, saying they were "wrong, dangerously so".

Describing a world changed by "the age of insecurity", the finance minister suggested there would be further hard choices to make in a November budget but ones where she would take "no risks".

Labour won last year's July election on a platform of economic trust, a little over a year-and-a-half after the previous Conservative government, then led by Liz Truss, sent the markets into a tailspin with a series of unfunded measures in a "mini-budget" announcement in September 2022.

"We will face further tests with the choices to come, made all the harder by harsh global headwinds and the long-term damage done to our country," she told the party's annual conference in the northern English city of Liverpool.

erpool. "There will be choices to take our country forward, and whatever tests come our way, whatever tests come my way, I make this commitment to you: I will take no risks with the trust placed in us by the British people."

Earlier, Reeves told the BBC that pledges not to raise income or VAT sales taxes stood, but hinted that some tax increases would be necessary at the next fiscal event on November 26.

"Remember everything that is at stake here, the single greatest threat to our way of life and to the living standards of working people is the agenda of Nigel Farage and the Reform Party"

Asked whether she could repeat a statement she made to businesses last November that she was not coming back with more borrowing or more taxes, Reeves said: "I think everyone can see the world has changed, and we're not immune to that change."

She cited US President Donald Trump's tariffs, global conflicts and a possible productivity downgrade by the Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR) as impacting the outlook, and whether she could hit her target of balancing day-to-day expenditure with tax revenue by 2029.

"We have to respond to those... it's very important that we maintain those commitments to economic stability," she said.

"I wish it wasn't so, but I am chancellor in the world as it is, not in the world that I might wish it to be."

After a first year in power marred by missteps and resignations, Labour trails Reform UK in opinion polls, and is under pressure to improve living standards.

Reeves encouraged Labour to be more proud of the government's achievements so far and unite to take the fight to Reform, which she accused of peddling falsehoods.

"Remember everything that is at stake here, the single greatest threat to our way of life and to the living standards of working people is the agenda of Nigel Farage and the Reform Party," she said.

"Whatever falsehoods they push, whatever easy answers they peddle, however willing they are to tear communities and families apart. They are not on the side of working people."

But she offered few new policies. She vowed to make sure all primary schools had libraries by the end of the parliament and announced that every young person who receives Universal Credit benefit payments for 18 months without "earning or learning" would be guaranteed an offer of paid work.

The finance minister also stressed earlier that she wanted the OBR to shift to providing only one set of budget forecasts a year, rather than a mid-year update as well - which earlier this year required government action to keep government budget goals on track.



British Deputy Prime Minister David Lammy waves next to Home Secretary Shabana Mahmood at Britain's Labour Party's annual conference in Liverpool, Britain, yesterday.

UK plans tougher rules for migrants seeking to stay in country

AFP
Liverpool

Britain's interior minister yesterday proposed tough new rules for migrants seeking to settle in the UK, as the ruling Labour Party sought to bolster its fight against the hard-right at its annual conference.

Migrants looking to remain indefinitely will have to have a job, not claim benefits and undertake volunteer community work under plans designed to claw back support among voters drawn to the hard-right, anti-immigrant Reform UK party, whose popularity is soaring in opinion polls.

Confronting Reform, led by firebrand Nigel Farage, is the main theme of Labour's four-day gathering in Liverpool, northwest England.

Currently, migrants with family in Britain and who have lived in the country for five years qualify for "indefinite leave to remain" - permanent residence - as do those who have lived legally in the UK for 10 years on any type of visa.

Eligible applicants meeting those thresholds also earn the right to live, work and study in the UK and to apply for benefits

and British citizenship. But in a major policy shift, Interior Minister Shabana Mahmood told the Labour conference that migrants would have to make social security contributions, claim no benefits, have a clean criminal record and volunteer in their community in order to stay.

The government will consult on the changes later this year.

The announcement comes after Reform, which is currently leading in national polls, vowed to get rid of "indefinite leave to remain" altogether, with migrants instead required to reapply for visas every five years.

X slams India court orders on social media takedown

Social media giant X yesterday warned that an Indian court ruling allowing police to issue "arbitrary" content removal orders through a government portal threatens free expression.

The state High Court in Karnataka - which includes tech-city Bengaluru - dismissed a plea last week filed by X against the government portal that it alleged was being used to censor content. The government says its online portal Sahyog - meaning "co-operate" in Hindi - helps automate the process of sending government notices to content intermediaries such as X and Facebook.

"It aims to create a safe cyber space for the citizens of India by facilitating the removal or disabling of access to any unlawful online information," it says. But X said the portal "enables officers to order content removal based solely on allegations of 'illegality', without judicial review or due process for the speakers, and threatens platforms with criminal liability for non-compliance".



Workers remove fallen trees and electric poles from a road after Typhoon Bualoi makes landfall in Nghe An province, Vietnam, yesterday.

Typhoon kills dozens in Vietnam, Philippines

AFP
Hanoi

A typhoon that ripped roofs off homes has killed dozens of people across Vietnam and the Philippines, officials from both countries said yesterday, as a weakened storm Bualoi crossed into neighbouring Laos.

The typhoon battered small islands in the centre of the Philippines last week, toppling trees and power pylons, unleashing floods and forcing 400,000 people to evacuate.

A Philippine civil defence official said later yesterday the death toll there had more than doubled to 27, with most of the victims either drowned or hit by debris.

Scientists warn that storms are becoming more powerful as the world warms due to the effects of human-driven climate change.

In Vietnam, Bualoi made landfall as a typhoon late on Sunday, generating winds of 130km per hour.

At least 13 people were killed in

Vietnam, while a search is ongoing for 20 others, disaster authorities said in an online update.

More than 44,200 houses were damaged, including those with roofs torn off, mostly in the central Ha Tinh province.

At least 800 houses were flooded, and nearly 6,000 hectares of crops were inundated, according to the update. Images published by AFP showed corrugated metal roofs blown off buildings and household debris strewn across saturated streets in Vietnam's coastal Nghe An province.

"The wind blew my roof to the sky and then it fell down, breaking everything. I had to cover my head and rushed to my neighbour's house to be safe," Trinh Thi Le, 71, in central Quang Tri province, was quoted as saying by state-run Tuoi Tre newspaper.

At least nine people were killed when a typhoon-related whirlwind swept through northern Ninh Binh province early yesterday, according to the local disaster agency.

Singapore denies entry to Hong Kong activist

AFP
Singapore

Singapore yesterday said it had refused entry to Hong Kong democracy activist Nathan Law over the weekend as his presence would not be in the city-state's "national interests".

The activist, who holds a UK refugee travel document, said he had been denied entry when he tried to pass immigration after his plane landed at Singapore's Changi Airport from San Francisco on Saturday. He said he was sent back on Sunday on a plane to San Francisco.

"Law's entry into and presence in the country would not be in Singapore's national interests," the ministry of home affairs (MHA) said in a statement.

"A visa holder is still subject to further checks at point of entry into the country. That is what happened with Nathan Law," the statement added.

Law had fled from Hong Kong in 2020, and the police there issued a warrant of arrest against

him for offences under their National Security Law, the MHA said.

Upon arrival in Singapore, Law was "referred for questioning, and immigration and security assessment" at the airport, according to the MHA.

"Law was then refused entry. He was placed on the earliest flight back to San Francisco on September 28, 2025," the ministry added.

Law said he was granted a Singapore visa to attend a "closed-door, invitation-only event" and

expected to be allowed in.

"I received the visa around three weeks prior to departure... I submitted all information, including the invitation to the event in the application," he said.

"I attempted to go through immigration, but I was detained, despite having a valid visa to enter the country."

"I was not told why I was detained," he said, adding he spent "roughly 14 hours" in Singapore.

He said he thought Singapore's decision to deny him entry was "political, although I am unsure

whether external forces, such as the PRC, are involved, directly or indirectly," referring to China by the initials of its formal name.

Asked about the case yesterday, China's foreign ministry said it was not familiar with the situation but that countries had the right to manage their own immigration processes.

"The person you mentioned is an anti-China, destabilising force in Hong Kong who is lawfully wanted by the Hong Kong police," spokesman Guo Jiakun added.

Law was one of the student leaders of the 2014 Umbrella Movement in Hong Kong, the sometimes violent pro-democracy protests in the financial hub which Chinese officials saw as a challenge to their rule.

He has lived in exile in Britain and the US since fleeing Hong Kong after Beijing imposed a national security law on the territory.

Singapore has refused entry to foreign activists in the past, saying the country cannot be used as a platform for political activities.

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GULF TIMES

Pressure on new PM as French debt hits record high

France's public debt has ballooned to a record level, official data showed on Thursday, piling pressure on new Prime Minister Sebastien Lecornu as he confronts protests and political turmoil. The French debt totalled €3.4tn (\$4tn) in the second quarter of the year, statistics bureau INSEE said, equivalent to 115.6% of France's gross domestic product (GDP). The debt mountain grew nearly €80bn in the previous three months alone. France's debt-to-GDP ratio is now the European Union's third-highest after Greece and Italy, and is close to twice the 60% permitted under EU rules. Lecornu was appointed by President Emmanuel Macron this month to succeed Francois Bayrou, who was ousted by parliament in a fight over his austerity budget after just nine months on the job. But two weeks into the job, Lecornu has yet to form a new government and must deliver a budget proposal to parliament by mid-October, with a vote due by the end of the year. Both tasks are complicated by the power dynamics in the National Assembly, where the Macron-friendly bloc is in a minority. "I am the weakest prime minister of the Fifth Republic," Lecornu said at a meeting with union leaders this week, according to participants, referring to France's current system set up in 1958 under Charles de Gaulle. Bayrou had proposed a series of measures he said would save €44bn in a bid to curb France's annual deficit — currently the EU's highest — and put a dent in the spiralling debt. Lecornu, who is Macron's seventh head of government since 2017, has vowed a break from the past in a bid to defuse the political crisis.

The French debt totalled €3.4tn in the second quarter of the year equivalent to 115.6% of the GDP

both measures are largely cosmetic. France's deficits have deepened in recent years because of accelerated spending to alleviate the impact of the Covid crisis and to offset inflationary pressures, according to economists, but also because of unfunded tax cuts. "This deficit is not only a crisis deficit, it's also structural," said Mathieu Plane, deputy analysis and forecasting director at the OFCE, an economics institute. As Lecornu puts together his budget, reports from his consultations with various political forces have indicated that the right-wing opposition is holding out for €35bn of budgetary savings, while the left will stand for no more than €22bn. In a context where "the passing of a budget from one year to the next is already an extraordinary achievement", the OFCE's Plane told AFP, Lecornu should really seek to establish a plan "over several years" to stabilise the budget, but "without hurting the economy". Beyond divisions in France, Lecornu is also facing growing pressure from international investors who have been demanding an increased risk premium for purchasing French sovereign debt — adding substantially to France's debt financing bill. This month, US ratings agency Fitch downgraded France on its ability to pay back debts, from "AA-" to "A+", warning that France's debt mountain would keep rising until 2027 unless urgent action was taken. "We are not currently in a position that would allow us to stabilise the debt," Francois Ecalle, president at Fipeco, a site specialising in public finances, told AFP. Ecalle recommended spending cuts as a remedy, but also tax hikes, including for the well-to-do. "It is necessary, if only for social and political reasons, to tax the rich a bit more," he said. — AFP

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Web site and an autumn click



Dewdrops are seen on a spider web during an autumn morning in Richmond Park, London, yesterday. (Reuters)

Why Nobel experts aren't betting on Donald Trump

This year's Nobel Peace Prize will be announced on October 10

Trump's actions counter to Nobel Peace Prize criteria: analysts

Lobbying counterproductive, says committee member

Potential winners include aid groups, UN bodies, journalists

By Gwladys Fouche
Oslo

US President Donald Trump will not win the Nobel Peace Prize he so covets as he is dismantling the international world order the award committee cherishes, according to experts. His lobbying is likely to be counterproductive too. The award-giving committee prefers to work independently, one of its members told Reuters, sheltering from outside pressures. Instead, the five-strong body may wish to highlight a humanitarian organisation working in an environment that has become more challenging partly due to Trump's US aid cuts. The announcement is on October 10. This could mean an award for the UN refugee agency, UNHCR, the UN children's agency, Unicef, the Red Cross, Doctors Without Borders, or a local grassroots group such as Sudan's Emergency Response Rooms, among others. "He has no chance to get the Peace Prize at all," said Asle Sveen, a historian of the award, citing Trump's support for Israel in the war in Gaza and his attempts at rapprochement with Russian President Vladimir Putin, among the reasons. Alfred Nobel's will, the award's foundation, says the award should go to the person "who has done the most or best to advance fellowship among nations". That is something Trump is not doing, according to Nina Graeger, director of the Peace Research Institute Oslo. "He has withdrawn the US from the World Health Organisation and from the Paris Accord on climate, he has initiated a trade war on old friends and allies," she told Reuters. "That is not exactly what



SPOTLIGHT: US President Donald Trump speaks at a meeting in the Oval Office at the White House in Washington, DC, on Thursday. (Reuters)

we think about when we think about a peaceful president or someone who really is interested in promoting peace."

Unlikely Nobel Peace Prize laureates

To be sure, many surprising candidates have won the Nobel Peace Prize in the past - Barack Obama less than eight months after he became US president or US National Security Adviser Henry Kissinger at the height of the Vietnam War. "Sometimes people have received the Peace Prize in spite of a brutal record, an authoritarian record, a background where they've contributed to evil, or at least wrongdoing," said Henrik Syse, a former member of the Norwegian Nobel Committee. "But they had explicitly seen the things that they had contributed to were wrong, and therefore took the steps necessary to correct these wrongs," he said, citing the example of FW de Klerk, the last apartheid-era leader of South Africa, who won the prize jointly with Nelson Mandela in 1993.

Should Trump be able to put pressure on Putin to end the war in Ukraine or on Israeli leader Benjamin Netanyahu to stop the war in Gaza, he could well be discussed as a possible candidate, Graeger said.

An intense lobbying campaign

Many have lobbied to win the Nobel Peace Prize, but no-one has done it more intensely than Trump. He has used his platform as US president repeatedly to argue he should win the award, including when addressing the UN General Assembly last Tuesday. But lobbying is generally counterproductive, according to the deputy leader of the present Norwegian Nobel Committee. "These types of influence campaigns have a rather more negative effect than a positive one. Because we talk about it on the committee. Some candidates push for it really hard and we do not like it," Asle Toje said. He was speaking generally about lobbying and not about any particular candidate.

"We are used to work in a locked room without being attempted to be influenced. It is hard enough as it is to reach an agreement among ourselves, without having more people trying to influence us," he added, with a smile. For the current committee's leader, the attention does not impact the work. "All politicians want to win the Nobel Peace Prize," Joergen Watne Frydnes told Reuters. "We hope the ideals underpinned by the Nobel Peace Prize are something that all political leaders should strive for... We notice the attention, both in the United States and around the world, but outside from that, we work just the same way as we always do."

Who could win instead?

Aside from a humanitarian organisation, the committee could also highlight UN institutions such as the International Court of Justice, or the UN as a whole, which is marking its 80th anniversary this year. It could also put the spotlight on journalists, following a year when more media workers than ever before were killed reporting the news, most of them in Gaza. If so, the committee could reward the Committee to Protect Journalists or Reporters Without Borders. It could also highlight local mediators negotiating ceasefires and access to aid in conflicts, such as peace committees in the Central African Republic, the West Africa Network for Peacebuilding or the Elders and Mediation Committee in El Fasher, Darfur. "Any of these would be deserving of the award," said Karim Haggag, head of the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute. — Reuters

A replica of a Nobel Peace Medal in the Institute in Oslo, Norway. (Reuters)



Trump, Congress leaders to meet to avert govt shutdown

Reuters/AFP
Washington

President Donald Trump was due to meet with congressional leaders in a last-ditch effort to head off a government shutdown that could disrupt a wide range of services as soon tomorrow.

It is unclear whether the afternoon White House meeting would yield an agreement to extend government funding beyond a midnight (0400 GMT tomorrow) deadline today.

Democrats say that any agreement to extend government funding must also preserve expiring health benefits.

Trump's Republicans insist health and government funding must be dealt with as separate issues.

Senate Republican Leader John Thune said his chamber will vote again today on a stopgap funding bill that the House of Representatives passed on September 19, which the Senate rejected.

That bill, which would fund the government through November 21, does not address the healthcare issue.

"It's up to the Democrats," the South Dakota Republican told reporters.

He needs at least seven Democratic votes to pass funding legislation.

A shutdown would see non-essential operations grind to a halt, hundreds of thousands of civil servants temporarily left without pay, and payment of many social safety net benefits disrupted.

If Congress does not act, thousands of federal government workers could be furloughed, from the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (Nasa) to the national parks, and a wide range of services would be disrupted.

Federal courts might have to close and grants for small businesses could be delayed.

Such shutdowns are deeply unpopular in the United States, and Democrats and Republicans alike try to avoid the scenario – while blaming the other camp should such a closure arise.

Budget standoffs have become relatively routine in Washington over the past 15 years and are often resolved at the last minute.

However, Trump's willingness to override or ignore spending laws passed by Congress has injected a new dimension of uncertainty.

Trump has refused to spend billions of dollars approved by Congress and is threatening to extend his purge of the federal workforce if

US government shutdown to furlough 41% of health agency workers

The US Department of Health and Human Services plans to furlough 41% of its workforce if Congress fails to prevent a looming government shutdown, suspending critical functions including public health messaging, contractor oversight, and medical research.

Of the department's 79,717 employees, 32,460 are expected to be furloughed under the contingency staffing plan it released over the weekend.

Programmes such as Medicare, Medicaid, the Affordable Care Act marketplace, and Food and Drug Administration (FDA) drug approvals will continue but other public health functions face significant disruptions.

"CDC communication to the American public about health-related information will be hampered, CMS will be unable to provide oversight to major contractors, and NIH will not have the ability to admit new patients to the Clinical Centre, except for whom it is medically necessary," the plan summary said.

The Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), set to furlough 64% of its staff, would be unable to provide guidance to state and local health departments on key public health issues such as opioid overdoses, HIV prevention, and diabetes prevention.

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) would furlough over 75% of its workforce, halting grant peer reviews, advisory council meetings, and basic research.

The FDA is expected to retain 86% of its workforce, while the Centres for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) will keep 53% of employees.

Congress has until today to pass legislation keeping the federal government open or trigger a partial shutdown, with Republicans and Democrats showing no signs they will agree to a temporary spending fix that would avert one.

President Donald Trump's administration has raised the stakes in the showdown with Democrats, threatening to permanently remove workers from some agencies if funding runs out. – **Reuters**

Congress allows the government to shut down.

Only a handful of agencies have so far published plans detailing how they would proceed in the event of a shutdown.

At issue is \$1.7tn in "discretionary" spending that funds agency operations, which amounts to roughly one-quarter of the government's total \$7tn budget.

Much of the remainder goes to health and retirement programmes and interest payments on the growing \$37.5tn debt.

There have been 14 partial government shutdowns since 1981, most lasting just a few days.

The most recent was also the longest, lasting 35 days in 2018 and 2019 due to a dispute over immigration during Trump's first term.

This time healthcare is at issue. Roughly 24mn Americans who get coverage through the Affordable Care Act will see their costs rise if Congress does not extend temporary tax breaks that are due to expire at the end of this year.

House Democratic Leader Hakeem Jeffries said Congress needs to make those tax breaks permanent right now, because higher health insurance premiums are being finalised and the new sign-up period starts November 1.

"We believe that simply accepting the Republican plan to continue to assault and gut

healthcare is unacceptable," Jeffries said at a press conference yesterday.

Thune said Congress must first ensure funding does not lapse before it tackles other problems.

"Major decisions should not be made in haste," he wrote in a *Washington Post* opinion piece yesterday. "They certainly shouldn't be made because one party is threatening to shut down the government if it doesn't get its way."

Some Democratic aides have suggested their party could back a short-term funding bill if Republicans agreed to hold a vote on healthcare benefits.

However, Jeffries dismissed that idea last week, saying that Republicans cannot be trusted.

Democrats want to energise their voting base ahead of the 2026 midterm elections, when control of Congress will be at stake, and have broadly lined up behind the healthcare push.

However, Democratic aides have privately expressed concerns that a shutdown could create a public backlash if Democrats do not effectively argue their case and instead come off sounding as just being opposed to whatever Trump wants – a stance Republicans like Thune have derided as "Trump Derangement Syndrome".

Nationwide communications blackout in Afghanistan

AFP
Islamabad

A huge communications blackout hit Afghanistan yesterday, weeks after Taliban authorities began severing fibre optic connections in multiple provinces to prevent "vice".

AFP lost mobile phone contact with its bureau in the capital Kabul around 5.45pm (1315 GMT), as well as with journalists in the cities of Herat and Kandahar.

"A nation-wide telecoms blackout is now in effect," said Netblocks, a watchdog organisation that monitors cybersecurity and Internet governance. "We're now observing national connectivity at 14% of ordinary levels."

The watchdog said the incident "appears consistent with the intentional disconnection of service".

Afghanistan's Taliban authorities began the crackdown on Internet access earlier this month, effectively shutting down high-

speed Internet in several regions.

Over the past several weeks, Internet connections have been extremely slow or intermittent.

Telephone services are often routed over the Internet, sharing the same fibre lines, especially in countries with limited telecoms infrastructure.

"Physically pulling the plug on fibre Internet would therefore also shut down mobile and fixed-line telephone services," Netblocks told AFP. "It may turn out that disconnecting Internet access while keeping phone service available will take some trial and error."

On September 16, Balkh provincial spokesman Attaullah Zaid said that fibre optic Internet was completely banned in northern province on the leader's orders.

"This measure was taken to prevent vice, and alternative options will be put in place across the country to meet connectivity needs," he wrote on social media.

At the time, AFP correspondents reported the same restrictions in the northern provinces of



A boy flies a kite in Kabul following a nationwide telecom outage. A huge communications blackout hit Afghanistan yesterday, weeks after Taliban authorities began severing fibre optic connections in multiple provinces. – **AFP**

Badakhshan and Takhar, as well as in Kandahar, Helmand, Nangarhar and Uruzgan in the south.

In 2024, Kabul had touted the 9,350km fibre optic network –

largely built by former US-backed governments – as a "priority" to bring the country closer to the rest of the world and lift it out of poverty.

Air France, Airbus back on trial over doomed 2009 Rio flight

An appeals trial of Air France and Airbus opened yesterday over the 2009 crash of a Rio-Paris flight that killed 228 people, the worst disaster in the French flag carrier's history.

The trial at the court of appeal in Paris, which got underway in the afternoon, is expected to last for two months.

On June 1, 2009, Air France flight AF447 from Rio de Janeiro to Paris was cruising over the Atlantic when the pilots lost control of the aircraft and plunged into the ocean.

There were no survivors among the 216 passengers and 12 crew on board the Airbus-built A330 aircraft, who included 72 French nationals and 58 Brazilians.

Both the airline and aircraft maker were acquitted of involuntary manslaughter two years ago when a court found that the com-

panies had made mistakes but could not be proven to have caused the crash.

The verdict was a blow to the victims' families, who said they were outraged by the court's decision to clear the companies of the charges.

Although the prosecution in the 2023 trial had themselves asked for the charges to be dropped, it subsequently lodged the appeal to allow "the full potential of the legal appeals procedure" to play out.

If convicted, the two companies may face a fine of €225,000 (\$264,000) as well as significant reputational damage.

The hearings in the first trial centred on the role of defective "pitot tubes", which are used to measure flight speed.

The court heard how a malfunction with the tubes, which became blocked with ice crystals during a mid-Atlantic storm,

caused alarms to sound in the plane's cockpit and the autopilot system to switch off.

Technical experts highlighted how, after the instrument failed, the pilots put the plane into a climb that caused the aircraft to stall and then crash into the ocean.

Air France and Airbus blamed pilot error as the main cause, denying any criminal liability.

However, lawyers for the families argued both companies were aware of the pitot tube problem before the crash, and that the pilots were not trained to deal with such a high-altitude emergency.

The court said Airbus committed "four acts of imprudence or negligence", including not replacing certain models of the pitot tubes that seemed to freeze more often on its A330-A340 fleet, and "withholding information" from flight operators.

It said that Air France had committed two "acts of imprudence" in the way it disseminated an information note on the faulty tubes to its pilots.

However, the court also found there was not a strong enough causal link between these failings and the accident to show an offence had been committed.

Daniele Lamy, president of the association representing the victims, said that she and others were "disgusted" by the decision, with the families of Brazilian victims also highly critical of the French acquittal.

It took nearly two years after the crash to recover the "black box" flight recorders, which were found almost 4,000m (13,000') below sea level.

The appeals trial is set to close on November 27. – **AFP**

Zelensky proposes joint air shield with allies

Ukraine has proposed building a joint air defence shield with allies to protect against threats from Russia, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said yesterday, after a series of airspace incursions that caused alarm on Nato's eastern flank.

North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (Nato) leaders have said that Russia has been testing the alliance's readiness and resolve with airspace incursions in Poland and the Baltic states, and Kyiv says its experience in dealing with aerial threats would be valuable.

"Ukraine proposes to Poland and all our partners to build a joint, fully reliable shield against Russian aerial threats," he said in an address to the Warsaw Security Forum delivered via video link. "This is possible. Ukraine can counter all kinds of Russian drones and missiles and if we act together in the region we will have enough weapons and production capacity."

Ukraine has already said that its troops and engineers will train Polish counterparts on countering drones.

Romania, meanwhile, aims to partner with Ukraine to build drones under a new European Union defence funding mechanism.

Romanian Defence Minister Ionut Mosteanu told the Warsaw Security Forum that new drone fragments were found yesterday in the eastern Romanian county of Tulcea, neighbouring Ukraine.

The topic of defence co-oper-

ation with Kyiv was high on the agenda as leaders gathered in Warsaw for the annual security forum.

German Defence Minister Boris Pistorius told the conference that "Europe's and Ukraine's defence industry must work together more closely and effectively".

"The European Union must back this by providing a much more flexible regulatory framework for the defence industry in Europe," he said.

Following the Russian incursions into Nato airspace, countries on the alliance's eastern flank have agreed on the need for a "drone wall" with advanced detection, tracking and interception capabilities.

Polish Defence Minister Wladyslaw Kosiniak-Kamysz said that Ukrainian participation would be essential to the project.

"Polish-Ukrainian cooperation in this area already exists, but we expect... there to be co-operation between the European Union and Ukraine," he said. "Otherwise, we will have dangerous spaces, we will have gaps in the air, missile and anti-drone defence systems."

However, Pistorius warned that establishing a drone wall would not be a quick process.

"We're not talking about a concept that will be realised within the next three or four years," he said. "We need to prioritise, and recognise that we require more capabilities and capacities than previously described." – **Reuters**

Russia quits European anti-torture convention

President Vladimir Putin has signed a law to pull Russia out of a European anti-torture convention, as Moscow extricates itself from Western bodies it was kicked out of or quit over its offensive on Ukraine.

Russia was expelled from the Council of Europe, an international human-rights monitor, in March 2022, though it had technically remained a party to its European Convention for the Prevention of Torture.

The landmark agreement aims to strengthen the rights of persons deprived of their liberty and empowers monitors to visit prisons and detention centres.

Yesterday Putin signed a law denouncing the convention. Explanatory notes to the law, which was passed earlier by Russia's rubber-stamp parliament, accused the Council of Europe of "discrimination" by refusing to appoint a Russian representative to statutory bodies.

Russia's foreign ministry said last month that pulling out of the convention would not "harm" Russian citizens and that Russia "remains committed to its international human-rights obligations".

However, two UN special rapporteurs said earlier this month that the move to pull out of the treaty "raises red flags about what is going on behind bars" in Russian jails.

The decision to quit the body comes after international watchdogs have repeatedly denounced alleged human rights violations by Russian authorities during Moscow's offensive in Ukraine.

Last week, the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) said that Moscow was responsible for "widespread and systematic violations" of international law in the treatment of Ukrainian prisoners of war, including "arbitrary killings".

A UN rights office report has also concluded that Russia "has subjected Ukrainian civilian detainees to consistent patterns of serious violations" of international law. – **AFP**

Maduro declares state of emergency over US 'threat'

Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro has declared a state of emergency over the threat of US "aggression" following a spate of deadly US strikes on suspected Venezuelan drug boats, Vice-President Delcy Rodriguez said yesterday.

Rodriguez told foreign diplomats that Maduro had signed a decree giving himself "special powers" as head of state to act in matters of defence and security faced with the "external shock". – **AFP**

Dolly Parton scraps Vegas shows over health issues

Dolly Parton, 79, has postponed her upcoming Las Vegas concerts due to "health challenges", the American country music legend announced, although she stressed she is not yet ending her glittering career.

"As many of you know, I have been dealing with some health challenges, and my doctors tell me that I must have a few procedures," the singer-songwriter posted on social media late on Sunday.

The singer kept her trademark humour intact, quipping that "it must be time for my 100,000-mile check-up, although it's not the usual trip to see my plastic surgeon!"

Parton was set to perform six nights of sold-out shows in December at Caesars Palace. She revealed that the new dates are set for September of 2026.

She told her millions of followers that she would continue her projects in Nashville but would need "a little time to get show ready, as they say."

"And don't worry about me quitting" the business because God hasn't said anything about stopping yet." – **AFP**

Schools across Valencia close as heavy rains lash eastern Spain

Schools closed across Valencia in eastern Spain yesterday after heavy rains prompted fears of a repeat of fatal floods that devastated the Mediterranean region last year.

Overnight downpours caused localised flooding and a ravine to overflow in Aldaia, one of the towns hardest hit by the October 2024 disaster that killed more

than 230 people. No injuries were reported.

"There is a bit of panic because of what happened. People are very scared," 64-year-old pensioner Jose Luis Ruiz told AFP in Aldaia. "Everyone moved their cars away from the area. We set up barriers outside our doors. We had a bit of a sleepless night."

More than half a million stu-

dents in Valencia had no lessons yesterday because 243 local councils in the region closed their schools as a precaution, regional education authorities said.

The regional capital, Valencia, also closed all public spaces, including libraries, parks, markets and cemeteries, local officials said.

National weather agency AE-

MET kept coastal areas of Valencia province under the highest red alert yesterday because of the risk of torrential rain.

It said as much as 180mm of precipitation could fall in these areas in the space of 12 hours, possibly in just a few hours.

The weather agency downgraded its alert level to orange in other parts of Valencia as well as for the

southern coast of the neighbouring region of Catalonia.

Last year's flood disaster sparked public anger over warning systems and emergency response, fueling tensions between Spain's left-leaning central government and conservative regional authorities.

Residents continue to protest, accusing officials of failing to provide timely alerts. – **AFP**



Her Highness Sheikhha Moza is seen at Sidra Medicine's DMT conference.
PICTURES: Aisha al-Musallam

Sheikha Moza attends Sidra Medicine's DMT conference

Her Highness the Chairperson of Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development (QF) Sheikha Moza bint Nasser attended Sidra Medicine's first "Disease Modeling and Therapeutics" (DMT) conference yesterday.

The opening plenary included several keynote addresses, and underscored Qatar's commitment to advancing research and therapeutic innovation for diseases of global significance.

HE the Minister of Public Health Man-

soor bin Ebrahim bin Saad al-Mahmoud and other dignitaries also in attended the conference.

"DMT 2025 is a platform where world-class innovation meets collaboration, driving forward our mission to position Sidra Medicine and, in turn, Qatar as leaders in transformative healthcare," said Sidra Medicine chief executive Dr Iyabo Tinubu-Karch. "It also highlights our commitment to knowledge-sharing and collaborating on pioneering research techniques, technologies and medical dis-



coveries that improve lives locally and globally."

Highlights from the opening featured keynote addresses by pioneering scientists whose research is shaping the future of diabetes care.

The keynote speakers were also part of a panel discussion on "Translating Stem Cell Research into Clinical Applications for Diabetes".

The first DMT conference is a milestone in Qatar's journey to bring the country to the forefront of conversations that are shaping the future of regenerative medicine.

"Sidra Medicine is committed to advancing the integration of research and healthcare, particularly around conditions that have a profound impact on our community," Sidra Medicine chief research officer Prof Khalid Fakhro noted. "By convening global experts here in Doha, we ensure that the latest breakthroughs in disease modelling and cell-based therapies are not only shared but contextualised for our local population needs."

"We are committed to accelerating research translation into clinical practice, and to strengthen Qatar's role in global medical innovation," he said.

Through collaborative sessions and invaluable discussions, DMT 2025 aims to emphasise the importance of disease modelling technologies and their application to personalised therapies.

Keynote sessions and experts from the Panel Discussion on Day 1 included:

- Dr James Shapiro from the University of Alberta in Canada, who shared insights on manufacturing autologous stem cell-derived islet therapies without immune suppression.
- He showcased his research aimed at restoring insulin production in patients while avoiding lifelong immunosuppressive treatment.
- Dr Sonja Schrepfer from Cedars Sinai Medical Centre in the US, who presented her groundbreaking work on hypo immune technology, designed to protect transplanted cells from immune rejection.
- Her team's clinical trials have already demonstrated insulin production in a patient with type 1 diabetes without the need for immunosuppressive drugs, a milestone in cell-based therapies.
- Dr Hao Yin, from Shanghai Changzheng Hospital in China, who outlined progress in endoderm stem cell-derived islet therapy.

By generating patient-specific insulin-secreting cells, his team has shown early success in clinical trials for type 2 diabetes, paving the way for personalised, long-term treatment options.

- Dr Camillo Ricordi, from the Diabetes Research Institute at the University of Miami, whose presentation at DMT 2025 focused on 40 Years of the Ricordi Chamber and the Automated Method for Human Islet Isolation.
- Dr Ricordi is acknowledged as one of the world's leading scientists in cure-focused diabetes research, cell transplantation and regenerative medicine.
- He is known for inventing the technology for large scale human pancreatic islet isolation and for performing the first successful islet allotransplants to reverse diabetes.
- Dr Matthias Hebrok from Technical University Munich, Germany, who also heads the Institute for Diabetes and Organoid Technology at Helmholtz Munich.
- He works on the differentiation of human stem cells into functional pancreatic organoids. Using gene editing strategies, hormone-producing islet cells are developed for cell replacement therapies for patients with diabetes. - QNA

'Qatar-Uzbekistan relationship at highest level'

By Ayman Adly
Staff Reporter

Uzbekistan-Qatar bilateral relations are currently at the highest level, Uzbek ambassador Ashraf Khodjaev said yesterday.

He was addressing a reception hosted in Doha by the embassy to mark the 34th anniversary of Uzbekistan's Independence Day.

Qatar's Minister of Environment and Climate Change HE Dr Abdullah bin Abdulaziz bin Turki al-Subaie, HE the Minister of State and Qatar National Library president Dr Hamad bin Abdulaziz al-Kawari, Ministry of Foreign Affairs Secretary-General HE Dr Ahmad bin Hassan al-Hammadi, Department of Protocol director HE Ibrahim Fakhro, heads of various diplomatic missions in Qatar, a number of Uzbek expatriates and other guests were present.

Khodjaev lauded the steadily

growing Qatari-Uzbek relations in all fields.

"In 2023 we had three mutual visits at top level," he said. "In 2024, we signed the Agreement on Strategic Partnership, and in August this year convened the first meeting of the Coordination Council at the level of our foreign ministers."

"Thanks to Qatar Airways, which has established direct flights between Tashkent and Doha, mutual tourism flows are increasing, business ties are strengthening, trade is expanding, and contacts between our peoples are deepening," he said.

"At the most recent high level meetings, President Shavkat Mirziyoyev called our friendship not only strategic, but heartfelt," the envoy added. "Together, these words reflect not only the political ties between our states, but the cultural affinity and shared aspirations of our peoples."

Khodjaev expressed his appre-

ciation for Qatar's achievements in many fields under the leadership of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani.

"Qatar demonstrated outstanding diplomatic initiative and responsibility, establishing itself as a key and balanced actor in international affairs," he said. "As an effective mediator, Qatar has played a part in resolving more than ten international and regional conflicts, thereby contributing to peace and stability worldwide."

"Uzbekistan highly values Qatar's important role as a mediator in international relations and in resolving regional conflicts across the world," the envoy stressed.

"Uzbekistan strongly condemns the recent attacks on Doha - the peaceful city that has become home to all of us," Khodjaev continued. "President Mirziyoyev immediately conveyed a special message and personally called His Highness the Amir to express unwavering solidarity and support."



Dignitaries join Khodjaev in cutting a ceremonial cake at the reception yesterday. **PICTURE:** Shaji Kayamkulam

"At the emergency summit in Doha, Uzbekistan clearly stated its position: the strikes on a residential area constitute a violation of sovereignty and the security of Qatar," the envoy said. "Such ac-

tions are unacceptable and represent a serious disregard for the UN Charter, as well as the fundamental norms and principles of international law."

The Uzbek envoy added that

the two friendly countries have greater potential for more mutual co-operation and partnerships in all fields that would work towards the best of the peoples of the two countries.



Cybercrime Task Force for Mena region convenes in Doha

The 15th meeting of the Middle East and North Africa (Mena) Cybercrime Task Force for unit heads kicked off yesterday in Doha.

The three-day event, hosted by the Ministry of Interior (MoI), is organised by the Cybercrime Directorate of the International Criminal Police Organisation (Interpol).

The opening session was attended by HE Assistant Undersecretary for Technical and Specialised Affairs at the MoI, Staff Major-General Abdullah bin Mohammed al-Suwaidi, along with senior officials and representatives from member states and relevant organisations.

The meeting aims to strengthen regional operational co-operation between Interpol and member countries by addressing current challenges in combating cybercrimes, while also fostering the exchange of expertise and best practices.

This meeting holds special significance with the launch of the first joint operation by Interpol's regional cybercrime office, aimed at curbing electronic crimes within a co-ordinated legal framework. - QNA

EAA, QCA sign agreement

Education Above All (EAA) Foundation, a global foundation for education and development, has signed a collaboration agreement with the Qatar Cricket Association (QCA).

The agreement underscores the shared commitment of both organisations to harness the power of sport to inspire, engage, and expand educational opportunities for children and youth.

Under the agreement, the EAA and QCA will collaborate on initiatives that combine sport with education, inclusion, and community development.

These include hosting inclusive cricket workshops at Assalam Schools to empower children with disabilities, providing students access to QCA matches and events, organising a cricket tournament as part of the EAA's annual "Walk for Education" fair, which commemorates the UN International Day of Education.

The partnership includes opportunities for international visibility, with the EAA branding to appear at regional and global cricket events, including the ICC Men's T20 World Cup Asia and EAP Qualifier, further amplifying the EAA's message on the importance of protecting and promoting education in times of crisis.

"This partnership reflects the EAA's belief in the transformative power of sport as a tool for education, inclusion, and empowerment," said EAA executive director for human resources Ali al-Sobai. "Together with the Qatar Cricket Association, we are creating meaningful opportunities for children and youth, especially the most vulnerable, to learn, grow, and thrive."



"By linking the joy of sport with the right to education, we are not only building skills but also fostering hope and resilience in communities across Qatar and beyond," he said.

"We are delighted to collaborate with Education Above All, an institution renowned for its commitment to universal education," said QCA secretary-general Khalid Saleh al-Rumaihi. "This alliance reflects our conviction that sport and education are mutually reinforcing: cricket can open doors, foster confidence, and draw young people into learning environments."

"Through this collaboration, we aim not only to nurture future cricketers, but also to nurture informed, empowered citizens equipped for life beyond sport," he said.

"Education must extend beyond the classroom," al-Rumaihi added. "Combining it with the discipline, teamwork, and resilience of sport gives us a unique platform to reach youth, strengthen community ties, and promote sustainable social impact." - QNA



DI, PHCC ink pact for scientific research

The Doha Institute for Graduate Studies (DI) and the Primary Health Care Corporation (PHCC) signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) yesterday as part of the efforts to strengthen co-operation between higher education institutions and the healthcare sector in Qatar.

The agreement aims to establish a strategic framework for collaboration in scientific research, training, capacity building, and support for continuing education programmes, aligning with Qatar National Vision 2030 and the National Health Strategy 2024-30.

The DI said in a statement that the MoU seeks to explore opportunities for co-operation between the two parties through specialised training courses, hosting DI students in practical

training programmes within the PHCC, and developing joint research projects that contribute to producing impactful scientific publications addressing healthcare issues at the national and regional levels.

It also provides for the possibility of recruiting outstanding DI graduates to work at the PHCC and outlines plans for joint participation in relevant national and international conferences and forums.

The MoU was signed by PHCC Workforce Training and Development executive director Laila al-Jasmi, and Dean of the DI's School of Economics, Administration and Public Policy, Dr Ayhab Saad.

"The signing of this memorandum represents a strategic step towards building strong bridges

of collaboration between higher education and the healthcare sector in Qatar," said Dr Saad. "At the DI, we believe that investment in scientific research is an investment in the health and well-being of society."

"This partnership reflects our commitment to graduating cadres capable of making a real impact and enhancing the quality of healthcare and education in line with Qatar National Vision 2030," he said.

Al-Jasmi emphasised that the agreement reflects the PHCC's commitment to strengthening the capabilities of its medical and administrative staff through the latest training methods.

This, she noted, will help reduce medical errors, improve patient experiences, and accelerate the delivery of services. - QNA