



Qatar Insurance
Financial Results (Q3 2025)

Gross Written Premiums (GWP)

9% 

QAR 7.9B

Net Profit

23% 

QAR 645M

Net Profit

12% 

QAR 588M

Earnings Per Share

14% 

QAR 0.135

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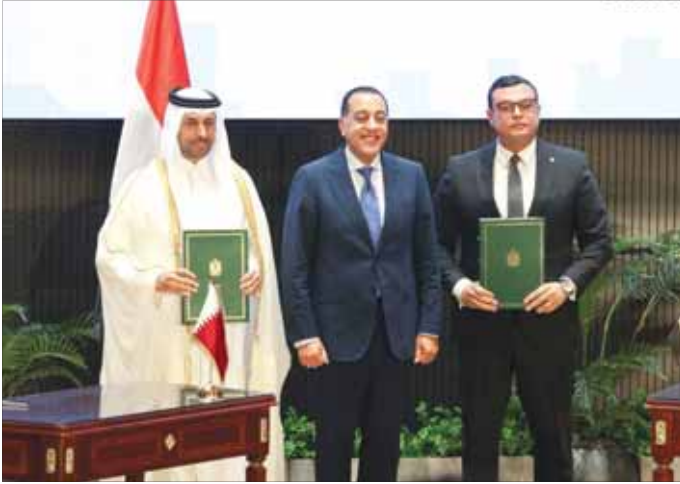

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Qatar, Egypt sign deal to implement \$29.7bn urban development project

Qatari Diar Real Estate Investment Company and Egypt's New Urban Communities Authority to develop an integrated urban tourism project in the Alam al-Roum area on the Mediterranean coast

QNA
Cairo

Qatari Diar Real Estate Investment Company signed an investment partnership agreement with Egypt's New Urban Communities Authority to implement an integrated urban tourism project according to the highest international standards, in the Alam El Roum area on the North Coast of Matrouh Governorate. The project extends over an area of around 4,900 acres and along 7.2km of Mediterranean beaches, with total investments estimated at more than \$29.7bn. The signing ceremony was



Qatari and Egyptian officials at the agreement signing ceremony.

attended on the Egyptian side by Prime Minister Dr Mostafa Madbouly, Minister of Finance Dr Ahmed Kouchouk, and Minister of Housing, Utilities, and Urban Communities Sherif El Sherbini.

On the Qatari side, it was at-

tended by HE the Minister of Municipality and Chairman of the Board of Directors of Qatari Diar Abdullah bin Hamad bin Abdullah al-Attiyah, CEO of Qatari Diar Ali Mohammed al-Ali, and Chief Development and Project Delivery Officer – Asia and Africa at

Qatari Diar, Sheikh Hamad bin Talal al-Thani.

The project aims to transform Alam al-Roum into a comprehensive tourism and investment destination, encompassing residential, tourist, commercial, and service areas. It will feature upscale residential complexes and neighbourhoods, tourism and entertainment projects, open artificial lakes, golf courses, and a marina for yachts, including one international and two inland local marinas. The project will also include a complete infrastructure, such as a service free zone, electricity distribution and water desalination and treatment plants, hospitals, schools, universities, and several government offices.

Stretching along a 7.2km waterfront, the project is expected to be one of the largest development projects in the region and is anticipated to attract investments, boost economic growth, and create both direct and indirect job opportunities. **To Page 4**

Amir receives written message from president of Namibia



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani received a written message from President of the Republic of Namibia Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah pertaining to bilateral relations and ways to bolster them. The message was received by HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani, during his meeting yesterday with Prime Minister of the Republic of Namibia Elijah Ngurare. **(QNA)**

FIFA U-17 World Cup: Qatar earns 1st point

The Qatari national team drew 1-1 with their South African counterparts in a match held yesterday at Mansour Mufthah Stadium in Aspire, as part of the second round of Group A in the FIFA U-17 World Cup Qatar 2025, which continues until November 27. Yazan Hani scored for Qatar in the third minute, giving the Maroons their first point, while Emile Wetoboye equalised for South Africa in the 16th minute.. **Sport Page 1**

UN talks on Gaza force set to begin

The United Nations Security Council is to start negotiations on a US-drafted resolution to endorse President Donald Trump's Gaza peace plan, said a senior US government official, and authorise a two-year mandate for a transitional governance body and international stabilisation force. The US formally circulated the draft resolution to the 15 council members late on Wednesday.

COMMUNITY
See Page 5

Qatar-Bahrain passenger ferry launched

By Joey Aguilar
Staff Reporter

A regular passenger maritime link connecting Qatar and Bahrain was officially inaugurated yesterday at Al Ruwais Port, signalling the start of a new phase of constructive bilateral co-operation in maritime transport. The event was led by Qatar's Minister of Transport HE Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdullah bin Mohammed al-Thani and Bahrain's Minister of Transportation and Telecommunications Sheikh Dr Abdulla bin Ahmed al-Khalifah, along with other government and port officials between the two countries.

This new service establishes a maritime connection between Qatar's Al Ruwais Port and Bahrain's Saada Port, covering a sea distance of around 35 nautical miles (about 65km).

In a statement, HE Sheikh Mohammed said: "This project represents a pioneering strategic step that reflects the depth of fraternal



The vessel carrying the dignitaries and other government officials arrives at Al Ruwais Port, marking the start of the passenger maritime link service between the two nations.

ties between the two brotherly countries, while further strengthening co-operation and integration among the Gulf Co-operation Council (GCC) states.

"The project also reflects Qa-

tar's keenness to establish and enhance developmental and strategic partnerships with Bahrain in the fields of transportation, logistics, and related services, in a way that serves mutual interests and pro-



HE Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdullah bin Mohammed al-Thani (right) with Sheikh Dr Abdulla bin Ahmed al-Khalifah at Al Ruwais Port during the inauguration of the passenger maritime link service between Qatar and Bahrain yesterday. **PICTURES:** Shaji Kayamkulam

notes economic integration within the GCC framework."

According to the Ministry of Transport (MoT), travel time between the two ports ranges from

70 to 80 minutes. Passengers can book services and flexibly manage their travel schedules using the dedicated 'Masar' mobile application. **To Page 4**



The UN flag lowering ceremony at Qatar National Convention Center.

2nd WSSD advances social development globally

QNA
Doha

Hosted by Qatar from November 4 to 6, the Second World Summit for Social Development (WSSD) concluded yesterday with wide international praise for its outcomes and results in terms of advancing social development globally and linking it to sustainable development.

At the closing session, the summit reiterated its welcome of the Doha Political Declaration, which was adopted by the conference. The declaration emphasised the inter-connectedness of eradicating

poverty, providing decent work opportunities for all, and achieving social inclusion as essential elements for attaining sustainable development.

It also provided significant impetus to accelerate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

In her address at the Summit's closing session, President of the 80th Session of the UN General Assembly Annalena Baerbock stated that the Doha Summit marks a new beginning for advancing social development globally and achieving many goals related to improving education, healthcare services, communications, and other vital areas that serve societies.



SECOND WORLD SUMMIT FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT DOHA 2025

She noted that the Doha Political Declaration and its provisions, adopted by the summit, form the basis for building more just, secure, and resilient societies, 30 years after the first summit.

She further said that the Second World Summit in Doha marked a turning point, as it moved from diagnosing problems to taking practical steps to solve them,

thanks to multilateral efforts involving governmental and international organisations, civil society organisations, and the private sector.

The time has come more than ever to capitalise on the great momentum generated by the Doha Summit after listening to and learning about the views of heads of state, heads of government, and all parties concerned with social development, she stressed, noting that the focus should now be on transforming the ideas and proposals presented into tangible innovations, actions, and initiatives by considering how to invest in the financial commitments related to the Sustainable Development Goals.

QF drives dialogue on inclusion, sustainable development at Social Development Summit

As Qatar staged the United Nations Second World Summit for Social Development (WSSD) 2025, Qatar Foundation (QF) hosted a series of sessions at the global forum – aimed at fostering dialogue on social progress, strengthening partnerships, and promoting inclusive policymaking to ensure equitable opportunities for all.

The three-day summit, which concluded yesterday at Qatar National Convention Centre, took place 30 years after its landmark first edition in Copenhagen – the year in which QF itself was established – and brought together the international community to renew commitment to social progress amid growing inequalities, demographic shifts, and rapid technological transformation.

During the summit, HE Sheikha Hind bint Hamad al-Thani, Vice-Chairperson of QF, launched a new partnership between QF's Earthna Center for a Sustainable Future and the Children's Investment Fund Foundation to accelerate sustainable development in dryland ecosystems. The aim is to address the dual vulnerabilities of food system failure and heat stress, and traditional practice and community-driven solutions to achieve land restoration and regeneration, prioritising the most vulnerable pop-



HE Sheikha Hind bint Hamad al-Thani launched a new partnership between QF's Earthna Center for a Sustainable Future and the Children's Investment Fund Foundation to accelerate sustainable development in dryland ecosystems.

ulations. QF's Doha International Family Institute (Difi) organised a series of sessions during the summit, emphasising the pivotal role of the family in social development. These included a discussion focusing on 'Safeguarding Families in Wars and Conflicts: Policy and Program Interventions', where Dr Sharifa Noaman al-Emadi, executive director of Difi, highlighted the need to develop future strat-

egies that integrate family well-being into humanitarian and post-conflict development agendas.

In another session, titled 'Leaving No One Behind: Advancing Inclusive Development', Dr al-Emadi emphasised the importance of caring for the elderly, as a deeply rooted aspect of local culture that should be considered in the development of policies and laws. Panelists discussed the need to ensure

an inclusive approach that involves youth and people with disabilities.

Difi was also a partner in hosting summit sessions titled 'The Circle of Care: Families Supporting the Young, the Old, and All in Need', which discussed strategies for supporting families in caregiving roles; and 'Generations United: The Family at the Heart of Social Progress Towards Sustainable Development for All', focusing on family-



A view of the QF booth at the summit.

oriented policies as a cornerstone of social development.

Earthna participated in a session titled 'Empowering Young Professionals Through Education and Skill Development for Sustainable and Inclusive Growth', organised by the International Institute for Sustainable Development.

Throughout the summit, delegates had the opportunity to learn about QF's work and mission through a dedicated space where immersive virtual reality elements allowed them to experience Education City, and stories from people who have been shaped and inspired by QF were showcased.

Visitors to QF's space at the summit were also invited to pause for reflection by interactive cubes that offered quizzes and insights,

alongside illuminated outlines of QF's diverse community symbolising collective progress. Gifts for delegates – such as notebooks created by students from QF's Renad Academy, which supports children with autism and their families, and honey harvested from the Education City Apiary – reflected QF's role as a driver of social progress and community wellbeing.

QF-founded QatarDebate hosted an interactive session featuring a multigenerational panel that explored solutions to promote intergenerational equity, while QF's Doha Debates organised a virtual Majlis-style discussion in which young people from around the world examined challenges and opportunities related to employment and the future of work.

Al-Misnad in Doha meetings

HE the Minister of State for International Co-operation Dr Maryam bint Ali bin Nasser al-Misnad met yesterday with CEO of Save the Children, Inger Ashing, on the sidelines of the Second World Summit for Social Development 2025, currently taking place in Doha. The two sides discussed bilateral relations and explored ways to further strengthen and expand partnerships between Qatar and Save the Children. They also addressed a range of issues of mutual concern.



HE the Minister of State for International Co-operation Maryam bint Ali bin Nasser al-Misnad met yesterday with Minister of State at the Irish Department of Rural and Community Development Jerry Buttimer. Held at the margin of the Second World Summit for Social Developments, the meeting discussed bilateral relations and ways to bolster them in addition to a host of topics of mutual interest. (QNA)

Amir condolences with president of the Philippines

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 sent cables of condolences to President of the Philippines Ferdinand Marcos Jr on the victims of the typhoon, floods and landslides that struck central Philippines, wishing a speedy recovery for the injured. (QNA)



Baladna's EGM Approve a 7.1% Capital Increase through the Issuance of Bonus Shares at a 1:14 Ratio

Doha, Qatar, 6th November 2025: Baladna Q.P.S.C announced its Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM) which approved an increase in the company's capital to QAR 2,143,984,962, representing a 7.1% increase. This will be achieved through the issuance of bonus shares at a 1:14 ratio.

The Ordinary General Assembly, held on 4th November, 2025, unanimously approved the Board of Directors' proposal to distribute interim dividends for the first half of 2025 and retained earnings for 2024, amounting to QAR 142,932,331, in the form of bonus shares at a ratio of one (1) share for every fourteen (14) shares held (equivalent to 0.071 share for each share).

Eligibility for these shares shall be for shareholders registered in the shareholders' register with the Depository Center at the end of the trading day on which the Ordinary General Assembly was held, November 4, 2025.

The Bonus Issue rewards shareholders following the successful execution of the Company's operational strategy and its strong financial performance. Most recently, Baladna announced its record H1 2025 results which reflected consistent growth year-on-year driven by sound governance, effective management of resources and costs, and enhanced operational efficiency, alongside the Company's continued commitment to creating added value for its shareholders.

H1 2025 Financial Highlights:

- Revenue of QAR 643 million (+8% year-on-year)
- EBITDA of QAR 444 million (+128% year-on-year)
- Net Profit of QAR 331 million (+229% year-on-year)

Baladna's strong profitability was supported by internationally diversified investment contributions, which served as a key driver alongside operational performance. This included QAR 239.3 million in unrealized gains from the Company's investment portfolio, reflecting a disciplined approach to allocating surplus cash across a diversified range of investments. This is fully aligned with the Group's long-term objective of preserving shareholder value and enhancing returns.

Baladna's effective and profitable strategy is centered on its "From Qatar to the World" strategy, focusing on growth, operational efficiency, product innovation, and international expansion, while actively contributing to food security and embedding sustainability in its operations. This successful strategy delivered a CAGR of 9.9% in revenue and 89.49% in net profit over the past 3 years.

Additionally, Baladna is committed to supporting Qatar's national vision for food security by ensuring a reliable local supply of high-quality, innovative, and nutritious products, which is driving its rapid growth.

Key elements of the Company's successful strategy include:

- International expansion:** A key long-term goal is to position Baladna as a major global dairy producer leveraging its integrated farming model and entering new geographic markets through strategic partnerships and large-scale projects in Algeria (one of the world's largest dairy projects), Syria, and other countries.
- Accelerating growth and local diversification:** Growth is driven by Baladna Food Industries' existing key categories (dairy, juice, etc.) and expansion into new product segments in its home markets.
- Distribution reach and execution:** Own network covering 145 sales routes and +3,630 retail & HoReCa customers; +270 products delivered across Qatar daily.
- Driving efficiency and optimisation:** Rigorous end-to-end efficiency throughout the value chain, continuous improvement, automation, and cost optimization including focusing on producing its own feed and using best-in-class technologies.
- Integrated farm-to-shelf scale:** Two large-scale farms, state-of-the-art processing/packaging, rigorous food-safety and biosecurity, and a self-sufficient breeding program.
- Product innovation and quality:** Relentless focus on producing superior products, continuously innovating to meet consumer needs (e.g., high-protein drinks, new flavors), and maintaining stringent quality standards across all operations.

Mr. Marek Warzywoda, Group CEO, commented:

"Baladna's successful strategy is delivering results through strong performance, and expansion of our business both in our home markets and internationally. We look forward to continuing our successful execution of our 'From Qatar to the World'. With a healthy balance sheet and a clear investment pipeline, we are well positioned to deliver disciplined growth and sustained value for our shareholders"

The following decisions were taken by the EGM:

- Extraordinary General Meeting approved the amendment of Articles (6, 7 and 8) of the provisions of the Articles of Association, and any articles related to the Company's capital.
- Extraordinary General Meeting authorized the Managing Director to take the necessary measures and granted him all the necessary powers to implement this decision of the Extraordinary General Meeting and complete all procedures for amending the Articles of Association and sign all documents with the Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Qatar Financial Market Authority, Qatar Stock Exchange, and Edaa.



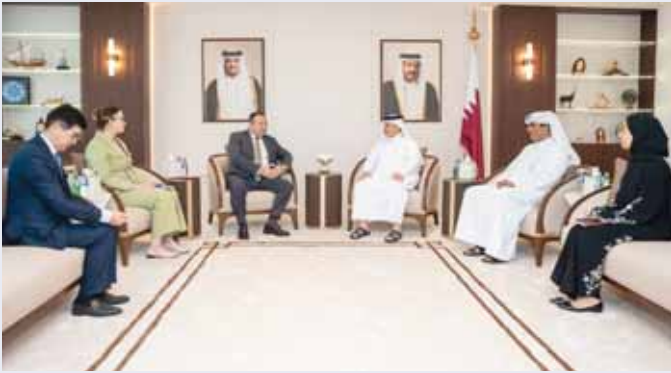
Maldives president receives Qatar minister



Maldives President Dr Mohamed Muizzu, received yesterday HE the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Sultan bin Saad al-Muraikhi. During the meeting, HE al-Muraikhi conveyed greetings of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani to President Muizzu, along with His Highness's best wishes for his continued well-being and success, and for further progress and prosperity for the government and people of Maldives. For his part, the president of Maldives, entrusted HE al-Muraikhi with his greetings and best wishes to His Highness the Amir, wishing Qatar continued growth, development, and prosperity. The two sides discussed ways to strengthen and expand bilateral relations, as well as issues of mutual interest. **(QNA)**

Environment minister meets Kyrgyz diplomat

HE the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Dr Abdullah bin Abdulaziz bin Turki al-Subaie met with ambassador of the Kyrgyz Republic to the State of Qatar, Marat Nuraliev. Discussion during the meeting, dealt with relations between the two countries in environmental fields, and ways to enhance them. The two sides also discussed a host of topics of mutual interest. **(QNA)**



QPC partakes in media sovereignty conference

By Tawfik Lamari
Staff Reporter

The Qatar Press Centre (QPC) has participated in the conference “Media Sovereignty: Defending Reason and Awareness in the Face of Dis-information,” organised by the Interim Committee for Managing the Affairs of the Press and Publishing Sector, in co-ordination with the General Union of Arab Journalists, in the city of Laayoune in the Kingdom of Morocco, with the participation of a number of journalists from 18 countries. The participants called for supporting press free-

dom and developing Arab legislation regulating the activities of digital platforms. Sadiq Mohammad al-Ammari, Director-General of the QPC, affirmed in the discussion session that the control of most governments over traditional media outlets drives a segment of society to turn to social media platforms, which are fertile ground for the dissemination of misleading information and content that incites sedition. He said: In an era where news flows like a torrent, and where facts intersect with deceits and misleading news, journalism emerges as a compass of truth. The louder the noise of false news



From left: Sadiq Mohammad al-Ammari and other panellists.

on digital platforms, the greater the need for a professional and sound voice that carries the torch

of truth and illuminates the paths of public awareness. Al-Ammari noted that combating mislead-

ing news is not achieved through slogans, but rather by empowering journalists with their tools, foremost among them the right to access information; that right affirmed by Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and confirmed by the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, as a cornerstone of freedom of expression and an indispensable pillar for safeguarding integrity and transparency. He added: When information is made available to the press clearly and quickly, areas of ambiguity diminish, and the path is blocked for those who spread rumours. Since accurate information is the

most powerful weapon against falsehood, and a society that allows the press access to the truth protects its collective consciousness from the poisons of false news. He affirmed that the free flow of information is not a luxury, but a fundamental guarantee for a public life based on honesty and accountability. Therefore, strengthening the role of the press is not merely an option, but a national, humanitarian, and moral duty for the advancement of nations. He said: It is time for the digital platforms and official news websites of ministries to regain their credibility, in a way that meets the aspirations of citizens in the media sector.

QMC signs agreement with QREC

QNA
Doha

Qatar Media Corporation (QMC) signed yesterday a media sponsorship agreement with the Qatar Racing and Equestrian Club (QREC), aimed at enhancing media coverage of major races and championships organised by the club during the 2025-2026 equestrian season. This collaboration reflects the shared commitment of both entities to support equestrian sports and elevate their presence locally and internationally. The agreement was signed by QMC's Director of the International Co-operation and Agreements Abdullah Ghanem al-Mohannadi, and QREC's Director of Support Services Ahmed Amanullah al-Shaibani, in the presence of several officials from both sides. This partnership underscores the strategic synergy between media and sports as complementary forces in showcasing national achievements, reinforcing cultural identity, and promoting Qatar's image regionally and globally. Al-Mohannadi affirmed that



the agreement marks a solid step toward institutional co-operation that serves the state's goals in highlighting equestrian sports as an integral part of Qatar's cultural heritage. He stated that they take pride in supporting one of Qatar's most historic sports, and reaffirm their commitment to presenting the excellence of Qatari equestrianism in a modern spirit that reflects the country's vision for global prominence across sporting platforms. For his part, al-Shaibani praised the agreement, noting that it coincides with the club's golden jubilee celebrations. He said signing this agreement in their golden year carries special significance. It embodies the integration of national institutions in showcasing the

events and activities hosted by the club, and highlights the vital role of media in raising public awareness and strengthening the presence of equestrian sports both locally and internationally. Under the terms of the agreement, QMC will provide comprehensive media coverage through its television, radio, and digital platforms for major events and championships, including the Founder's Trophy, Qatar Derby, HH the Amir Sword Festival, and Qatar Arabian Horse Show. This agreement continues the ongoing efforts to support heritage sports and enhance their visibility, reflecting the cultural identity of Qatari society and promoting the values of equestrianism as a symbol of authenticity.

FROMM. strengthens global presence via Giorgetti partnership, investment



FROMM., the contemporary design brand founded by Alia Rachid, has announced its participation — through Alsara Investment Group — in the acquisition of Giorgetti, one of Italy's most iconic luxury furniture houses. Alia Rachid, founder of FROMM. and managing director at Alsara Investment Group, stated: “This acquisition will strengthen FROMM.'s global presence and deepen our engage-

ment within the international design industry. Giorgetti represents the highest standards of craftsmanship, innovation, and timeless design — values that are deeply aligned with our own.” The acquisition, led by Solida Capital alongside Alsara Investment Group and Vivium Holding, marks a new chapter for Giorgetti, a brand celebrated for its exceptional craftsmanship and contemporary vision, a statement said.



Alia Rachid

This milestone reflects Alsara's commitment to investing in creative excellence and advancing global design innovation through brands such as FROMM.. FROMM. is a luxury contemporary furniture and accessories brand, founded in Doha's Msheireb and Milan, creating the ideal fusion of design and manufacturing.

Marking the start of the actual implementation phase to enhance national energy security

The Ministry of Energy signs the final concession agreements to build and operate eight power plants with a total capacity of 5000 MW with a foreign consortium led by UCC Holding

The Ministry of Energy in the Syrian Arab Republic today signed the final concession agreements to build and operate eight new power generation stations with a total capacity of 5,000 megawatts, with the international consortium led by Urbacon Holding, through its subsidiary Urbacon Concessions Investment, and in partnership with Kalyon G.I.S. Energy, Cengiz Energy, and Power International (USA). This signing comes as part of the Qatari project package in Syria, and as an extension of the Memorandum of Understanding signed on 29 May 2025, which laid the general framework for strategic cooperation in the energy sector and set the practical foundations for initiating the rehabilitation and development of the country's electrical infrastructure. Following the signing of the MoU, preparatory engineering and technical works were completed, including field surveys for the plant sites and the necessary technical studies, to enable immediate commencement of implementation.

The agreements were signed at the Ministry of Energy headquarters in Damascus between H.E. Eng. Mohammad Al-Bashir, Minister of Energy of the Syrian Arab Republic, and Mr. Ramez Al-Khayyat, President of UCC Holding, in the presence of representatives of the consortium companies, and officials from the Ministry, the Syrian Energy Company, and the Syrian Electricity Company. This step reflects the transition from contractual, technical, and financial preparation to direct on-ground execution.

The final contracts include the construction and operation of four high-efficiency, natural-gas-fired combined-cycle power plants, namely the North Aleppo Power Plant (1,200 MW), the Deir Ezzor Power Plant (1,000 MW), the Zayzoun Power Plant (1,000 MW), and the Mhardeh Power Plant (800 MW). In addition, the agreements include the implementation of solar renewable energy projects with a total capacity of 1,000 MW distributed across four locations: Widian Al-Rabee (200 MW), Deir Ezzor (300 MW), Aleppo (300 MW), and Homs (200 MW).



These projects will be executed using the latest advanced technologies in performance, efficiency, and reliability, in accordance with the highest global standards for environmental and public safety considerations, and based on an accelerated implementation schedule that ensures phased commissioning and timely entry into service. This project represents a pivotal stage in rehabilitating Syria's energy system and driving economic growth, as the availability of stable electricity is essential for restoring factories and production lines to full operational

capacity, and for launching new industrial, agricultural, and commercial ventures. It will contribute to reducing operational costs, improving the investment climate, and enhancing the competitiveness of local production and exports, thereby encouraging domestic and international investment and supporting long-term economic diversification. The projects are expected to generate tens of thousands of direct and indirect job opportunities during both the construction and operational phases. Furthermore, the adoption of modern technologies will enable the training

and upskilling of national technical personnel, supporting sector sustainability and the localization of expertise in the field of energy. H.E. Eng. Mohammad Al-Bashir, Minister of Energy, stated: “This project represents a qualitative leap in the development of Syria's energy infrastructure. It enhances generation capacity and supports the stability of the electrical grid, aligned with national economic development objectives. These projects aim to close the generation gap, meet the growing demand for electricity, and enhance energy supply security, forming a fundamental base for sustainable economic and social growth, strengthening the performance of productive and service sectors, and enabling stable economic development in the coming years.” Mr. Moutaz Al-Khayyat, Chairman of UCC Holding, said: “The strategic partnership between the public and private sectors in this project constitutes an essential step toward building a sustainable development model in Syria, and reflects the confidence of international partners in the prospects of Syria's economic recovery. We are committed to executing these projects according to the set timelines and the highest global standards, ensuring a tangible economic impact that extends beyond the energy sector to supply chains, industry, and investment flows. Enhancing Syria's energy security will contribute to the revival of industrial activity, support economic stability, and open broader pathways for regional cooperation in the coming stage.” It is noteworthy that this project represents the first and most prominent integrated public-private partnership model in the Syrian energy sector, reflecting the attractiveness of the national investment environment and its ability to draw international partners. The project is expected to pave the way for further major investments in other key economic and service sectors in the near future.



Culture minister honours winners of inaugural Doha Photography Award

QNA
Doha

HE the Minister of Culture Sheikh Abdulrahman bin Hamad al-Thani honoured the winners of the first edition of the Doha Photography Award. The award is one of Qatar's most prominent cultural and artistic initiatives, aimed at supporting visual creativity and strengthening the nation's photographic identity.

The winners were celebrated across six award categories during a ceremony held at the Doha Photography Festival stage, currently taking place in the open plaza opposite Darb Al Saai in Umm Salal. In the Qatar category, first place went to photographer Abdullah al-Musleh, followed by Hisham Thameen in second place and Ali Saif al-Din in third. In the youth category (under 18), Ahmed Khalifa al-Mansouri won first place, Hamad Ali Saif al-Din second, and Rashid Abdulaziz al-Kuwari third.

In the storytelling category, Palestinian photographer Abdulrahman Zaquout took first place, Bahraini photographer Isa Ibrahim second, and UAE's Shajith Unden third. In the colour category, Qatari photographer Shaima al-Matawa won first place, followed by Ali al-Qamish from Bahrain and Hassan Rohan from the United States.

In the black and white category, first place went to Bahraini photographer Zakaria Omran, second to Sheba Sesh from India, and third to Qatari photographer Abdullah al-Muadhin. In the emotion category, Omani photographer Ahmed al-Hosani won first place, Syrian photographer Moawia Atrash second, and Kiwa Lin from Myanmar third.

The total prize pool exceeded QR2mn, with top prizes reaching QR300,000 for the Qatar category and QR150,000 for first place in other categories. Second-place winners received QR100,000 and third-place winners QR75,000.

Following the awards ceremony, HE the Minister toured the fes-



tival's exhibition spaces, which featured a wide range of artistic showcases including solo and group exhibitions, photography and camera displays, and booths from leading global imaging companies. He also attended the launch of a book that documents the work of 48 Qatari photographers and was unveiled as part of the festival's second edition.

On this occasion, Director of the Qatar Photography Center Jassim Ahmed al-Buainain noted the award's strong turnout, with 5,206

photographers from 101 countries submitting 31,681 works. He congratulated the 18 winners for their outstanding achievements. Al-Buainain emphasised that the Doha Photography Award reflects Qatar's commitment to supporting the arts and culture, offering a global platform for talent to compete and leave a mark in the world of visual storytelling. He added that the competition was designed to encompass a broad spectrum of visual creativity and narrative expression through the lens.

He highlighted that the substantial prize money underscores the award's prestige and its role as a global platform attracting local and international talent across all ages and experience levels. The winning photographs are currently on display in the festival's main area, serving as inspiration for both the public and aspiring photographers. He also announced that the second edition of the award will be launched soon, with hopes of discovering more local and regional talent.

Regarding the launch of the book, al-Buainain described the book as a valuable addition to Qatar's visual library. It features the creative work of 48 Qatari photographers and has been translated into both Arabic and English, as part of the MoC's efforts to support photography locally and regionally and foster creative visual dialogue.

The book's design mimics a camera, reflecting its visual identity. Photographers are listed alphabetically, and the interior design uses traditional film colours

to enhance its aesthetic appeal. Each photographer is assigned a unique barcode linking to their personal portfolio, blending print and digital experiences in an innovative way.

Photographer Abdullah al-Musleh, winner of the Qatar category, expressed his joy saying that he didn't expect to win, it was a wonderful surprise. He revealed that his winning photo took nearly five years of planning and was finally captured in late 2023.

He explained that the image was particularly challenging due to its composition and timing, taken at sunrise during winter, requiring precise conditions including fog. Over five years, he made several attempts, but the conditions were never ideal until that final moment.

On the second day of the festival, attendees also enjoyed a series of lectures and workshops, on the camera basics and focus by Saleh Bahlais, on lens that defy the rules by Faisal Hamada, and the journey through the lens by Asim Sheema.

Ministry announces second edition of Fereej Art and Design Festival

THE Ministry of Culture announced the launch of the second edition of the Fereej Art and Design Festival, which will be held from November 9 to 14 at Darb Al Saai. This edition builds on the success of the first and offers a more diverse and comprehensive range of artistic content.

This year's festival features a significant expansion in the number of art galleries, exhibitions, and workshops, with the participation of more than 120 artists from 21 countries, including Qatar, Kuwait, Egypt, Korea, Japan, Azerbaijan, Morocco, India, Australia, Spain, Iraq, Russia, Oman, Lebanon, the Philippines, Algeria, Jordan, Syria, Yemen, Indonesia, and Iran.

The event also includes more

than 12 art exhibitions and 14 workshops, including 7 international workshops in diverse fields such as Japanese Bingata art, Kuwaiti glass melting, creating colours from Australian nature, a Spanish gilding workshop, a fabric printing workshop from India, a floral plate workshop from Russia, a live performance workshop from Kuwait, and other experiences that blend artistic heritage with modernity.

Huda al-Yafei, Director of the Visual Arts Center, said: "We are proud to launch the second edition of the Fereej Art and Design Festival, which reflects the Visual Arts Center's commitment to promoting the cultural and artistic movement in Qatar

and embracing creativity in all its forms. We have ensured that this edition is richer and more diverse by hosting artists from various countries and expanding the scope of events to include educational workshops and interactive activities for all ages. Fereej Art is not just a festival; it is a space for aesthetic dialogue, innovation, and cultural exchange."

The festival features six main art spaces, including the Exhibition House, the Art Workshops House, the Calligraphy House, the Ceramics House, the Artists' Studios House, the Seminar House, the Art and Design Market, and the Children's Courtyard area. The festival showcases a remarkable artistic diversity, bringing together more

than 70 artists from Qatar and several other countries. They present solo and group exhibitions, showcasing paintings, ceramics, and calligraphy that embody the interaction of cultures and the diversity of artistic schools.

The festival also includes a series of international workshops in arts such as Japanese Bingata, Kuwaiti glass melting, and Andalusian motifs, in addition to workshops on fabric printing and creating colours from natural stones. The festival also celebrates Arabic calligraphy, ceramics, sculpture, and the creativity of young people in the fields of design, anime, and digital art.

The festival features the participation of several cultural and academic institutions from within and

outside Qatar, including Katara Art Center, Riwaq Gallery, the Qatar Philatelic and Numismatic Center, the Qatar Center for the Deaf, Qatar University, the University of Babylon, the University of Mosul, and Al-Mustansiriyah University, in addition to a number of art centres from participating countries.

The festival programme also includes art activities for children such as paint-pouring workshops, art school workshops, a free drawing area, panel discussions, and art seminars that bring together artists, critics, and the public, as well as live drawing sessions held in an interactive, open atmosphere.

The Fereej Art and Design Festival is based on a set of core values: innovation and creativity, cultural



diversity, education and learning, communication and belonging, and artistic sustainability. It aims to support the artistic and cultural identity of Qatar and solidify its position as a centre for contemporary visual arts.

Qatar Foundation for Social Work holds meetings with UN officials

CEO of the Qatar Foundation for Social Work Rashid Mohammed al-Hamda al-Naimi held bilateral meetings with UN officials, including CEO of Save the Children Inger Ashing; Executive Director of UN Women Dr Sima Bahous; and Deputy Executive Secretary for Programmes and Leader of the Gender Justice, Population and Inclusive Development Cluster at the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) Dr Mehriroz El Awady. During the meetings, discussions focused on ways to co-operate in the areas of child protection and developing the skills of social and

psychological professionals, as well as enhancing the role of women and empowering them in the social development process. The meetings also explored opportunities for the Foundation to participate in training and capacity-building programmes, joint research projects, and coordination in future UN events and meetings.

These meetings reflect the Qatar Foundation for Social Work's commitment to strengthening its regional and international partnerships and actively contributing to global efforts aimed at achieving social justice and inclusive development. As part of its participation in the Second

World Summit for Social Development, the Qatar Foundation for Social Work organised a dialogue session entitled 'Fulfilling rights: inclusive access to education and health through targeted reforms,' in partnership with the Creators Union of Arab and the United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG). The session was held at the Qatar National Convention Centre and was moderated by Director of Therapeutic Services at the Shafallah Center for Persons with Disabilities Dr Mohammad Telfat.

Participants were Executive Director of the Shafallah Center Maryam Saif al-Suwaidi and Executive Director of the Al Noor Center for the Blind Mishal

Abdullah al-Nuaimi. They discussed ways to ensure equitable access to education and healthcare for persons with disabilities, and the role of assistive technology and targeted reforms in promoting social justice and human empowerment.

Maryam Saif al-Suwaidi highlighted the most prominent efforts of the Shafallah Center for Persons with Disabilities in supporting inclusive education and health through initiatives that combine vocational training, early intervention programmes, and assistive technology, all of which contribute to developing the capabilities of persons with disabilities and improving their quality of life. (QNA)

Qatar-Bahrain passenger ferry launched

From Page 1

In its initial phase, the project will offer passenger services to GCC citizens and residents. The inaugural operational trips are scheduled from today to November 12, providing two daily round trips, one in the morning and one in the evening.

MoT noted that service frequency will soon increase, with three daily round trips planned from November 13 to 22. Further gradual expansion of the schedule remains an option, subject to demand and utilisation rates.

The service will utilise two types of vessels: standard-class ships accommodating 28 passengers per trip, and VIP-class ships with a capacity of up to 32 passengers. Both vessel types are outfitted with modern hospitality services and amenities to ensure passenger comfort. In addition, all approved security and customs procedures in both countries will be strictly applied to guarantee travelers' safety.

Sheikh Mohammed stressed that MoT, in collaboration with its Bahraini counterpart, is committed to applying the highest standards of safety, security, and operational quality. This commitment, the Minister pointed out, is intended to ensure passengers enjoy a comfortable and safe travel experience while simultaneously enhancing the efficiency of maritime transport services between the two nations.

He lauded Bahrain's Ministry of Transportation and Telecommunications, along with all relevant entities in both countries, for their efforts in bringing this vital project to completion.

MoT Undersecretary Mohammed bin Abdullah Al Ibrahim al-Maadid said the Qatar-Bahrain maritime link embodies the two nations' shared understanding that transportation is a key driver for sustainable development.

"The inauguration of this new maritime route goes beyond facilitating passenger transport and expanding mobility options; it represents a qualitative step toward creating a stimulating platform for diverse economic, tourism, and service activities—generating tangible benefits across multiple sectors," he said.

Qatar, Egypt sign deal to implement \$29.7bn urban development project

From Page 1

The agreement includes a cash price of \$3.5bn and an in-kind consideration of 396,000 square meters of built-up area, the sale of which is expected to generate revenues of at least \$1.8 bn. In addition, 15 % of the project's profits will be allocated to the New Urban Communities Authority after the company recovers its full investment costs. These profits include the output of the company and its subsidiaries.

The land use within the project is distributed as follows: residential land constitutes approximately 60 % of the total area, 15 % is allocated to service areas, and 25 % to roads, squares, and open green spaces. The project land will be delivered free of any encumbrances in two main phases and several sub-phases.

In this context, Dr Mostafa Madbouly emphasised that this agreement repre-

sents a major investment partnership reflecting the depth of the fraternal relations between Egypt and Qatar. He said that it is an important step in strengthening economic and investment cooperation between the two countries, given the distinguished relationship between President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi and His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani. He added that the partnership embodies the vision of both leaderships for integrated economic cooperation that contributes to supporting sustainable development and attracting high-quality investments to the Egyptian market.

He noted the government's commitment to removing any obstacles facing investors and its keen interest in partnering with Qatar on this project, which is one of the largest Arab investments in the real estate and tourism development sector and reflects investor confidence in the Egyptian economy.

For his part, HE Abdullah bin Hamad bin Abdullah al-Attiyah said that the project represents a strategic step toward enhancing the status of Egypt's North Coast as a comprehensive global destination, and embodies Qatar's commitment as a partner in supporting the Egyptian government's efforts to achieve sustainable development and year-round operation of coastal areas.

The project represents one of the most prominent investment ventures in the region, with a total investment of approximately \$29.7 bn, he said, noting that this is expected to provide more than 250,000 direct and indirect job opportunities.

HE Minister of Municipality and Chairman of the Board of Directors of Qatari Diar added that the project also reflects Qatari Diar's confidence in the strength of the Egyptian economy and its belief in the value of investing in Egypt's

unique geographical location.

Speaking to Qatar News Agency following the signing of the deal, CEO of Qatari Diar Ali Mohammed al-Ali emphasized that the "Alam al-Roum" project represents a new step in developing luxury destinations in Egypt, as part of a series of strategic investments targeting high-value tourist destinations. He added that the project will be a landmark in the development of the North Coast and a global destination that will redefine tourism standards on the Mediterranean through development spanning more than 20mn square meters and boasting over 4,500 hotel rooms.

He indicated that the project will be implemented by a special-purpose project company wholly owned by Qatari Diar, in coordination with the New Urban Communities Authority to ensure the design adheres to the highest international standards.

Qatar Indian Football Forum Season 16 launched



The Qatar Indian Football Forum (QIFF) officially kicked off Season 16 with the launch of the QIFF Super Cup 2025 at a grand function inaugurated by Qatar Football Association (QFA) general secretary Mansoor Mohammed al-Ansari.

Indian ambassador Vipul was the chief guest. The Super Cup was jointly launched by dignitaries including Mohammed bin Hammam, former FIFA Goal Bureau chairman and former president of the Asian Football Confederation; Ahmed Ali Bukshaisha, former joint secretary, Ministry of Finance; and Khalid Mubarak al-Kuwari, director of marketing, QFA. Also gracing the occasion were Lt Hamad Fahhad al-Shammari from the Community Policing Department and Lt Abdul Rahman al-Jassim from the Qatar Police Sports Federation.

During the ceremony, Dr Mohamed Althaf, group director of LuLu Group International, was officially announced as Qiff chief patron. Qiff president Sharaf Hameed presided.

300 expatriate women take part in breast cancer awareness campaign

In a united effort to promote health and awareness, the Women Community Leaders Forum, in collaboration with the Workers Support and Insurance Fund (WSIF) and Building Wood and Workers International, organised the Breast Cancer Awareness Campaign 2025 under the theme 'Your Body, Your Power: Stronger Together'.

The event brought together around 300 expatriate women workers from South East Asia, South Asia, and Africa, representing diverse sectors such as construction, hospitality, household work, administration, education, and healthcare.

The campaign aimed to educate, empower, and inspire action toward early detection and prevention of breast cancer.

The programme opened with welcome remarks and an introduction to the campaign theme, setting the tone for an impactful day. Participants began with energising physical wellness activities, including a lively Zumba session and a symbolic Awareness Walk, reinforcing the importance of active lifestyles in cancer prevention.

Moosa Saeed al-Mosallam, head of



administrative services at WSIF, urged everyone to unite in raising awareness, sharing knowledge, and supporting one another in promoting women's health and well-being.

Dr Rayana Bou Haka, World Health Organisation Representative in Qatar, said: "Breast cancer is not a death sentence. It can be cured, and many women have survived."

Dedicated health and wellness booths provided free screenings and consultations.

A keynote talk titled 'Understanding Breast Cancer' by Dr Amina Azzah, Na-seem Medical Centre, offered critical insights into risk factors, symptoms, and treatment options. This was followed by an interactive self-breast examination workshop led by the Federation of Indian Nurses in Qatar, guiding participants through practical steps for early detection.

Testimonials from cancer patients and survivors inspired hope and resilience among attendees.

The event also celebrated cultural diversity and creativity through a Mini Bazaar featuring handmade crafts by local artisans and dance performances from: Bayanihan ng Domestic Workers in Qatar, Kenyan Domestic Workers in Qatar and Buklod ng Bayaning Filipino sa Qatar.

Rashtriya Ekta Diwas marked



The Embassy of India, in association with the Indian Cultural Centre (ICC), commemorated Rashtriya Ekta Diwas marking the 150th birth anniversary of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, the Iron Man of India. The event featured a cultural

programme along with the screening of a documentary on the life and legacy of Patel. Ambassador Vipul, in his address, highlighted the significance of national unity and the exceptional leadership of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel.

ICC president A P Manikantan also stressed on the importance of upholding unity and harmony within the community. Embassy's counsellor Dr Vaibhav A Tandale, other officials of ICC and other apex organisations were among those present.



Markhiya Knight Riders champions

Markhiya Knight Riders emerged as the champions of the Indian Pharma Cricket League 2025, defeating Sunrises Hilal. The tournament was organised by the Indian Pharmacist Association Qatar (Ipaq). Abdul Kareem was named the player of the tournament and T P Ismail the best bowler. The



championship trophy was presented by Sajeer, Sameer K I, and Riyas, while the runners-up trophy was handed over by Shareef Meppur. The tournament was led by Abdul Rahiman Eriyal, Arif Babrunna, Ameer Ali, Haneef Peral, Ashraf Nellikunnu, Shanavas Bedriya, Jassir Mangad, Jafar Wakra, and Shanib Areekode.

Junior rapid chess tournament

As part of the 20th anniversary celebrations of Focus International Qatar Region, a Junior Rapid Chess Tournament was organised in collaboration with Horwitz Bishop Chess Academy.

Around 200 children participated in the tournament.

Ivan Varghese Sanju emerged as the champion in the Under-15 category, while Shivansh Joshi won the title in the Under-10 category.

In the Under-15 section, Kishore Arunagiri was runner-up, followed by Sreejan Dhanaraj, Laina Ann Mathew, and Prince Liven Karunanayake who secured the third, fourth, and fifth positions, respectively.

In the Under-10 section, Ankit Arun was the runner-up, while Edwin Idikkula, Muhammed Azam, and Devansh Kumar took third, fourth, and fifth places, respectively.

Ain Vaibhav and Shruthika Sunil (Under-12), Swarith Tejas Mehta and Anliya Sajan (Under-11), Aadavan Rajasekhar and Subanya Vasantharajan (Under-9), Daya Vasantharajan and Monisha Shri Dhanaraj (Under-8), Shlok Bhavisi and Hanvika Shrutagna (Under-7), and Adinath Anand (Under-6) were selected as the Best Players in their respective categories.

Focus International Qatar Region



CEO Haris P T presented trophies. The tournament was co-ordinated by Focus International Rayyan Division director Sajeer Punathil and deputy director Muhammed Sadeed. Shamsad Kakkad, Shaneer Edathannattukara, Hafiz Shabeer, Rashid Backer, Sabeeh Mampad, Shahid Nallalam, Musthafa Kappad, Muhammed Hafees, Ramshad and Jasir Ameen controlled the event.

Digital detox programme held

The Indian Community Benevolent Forum (ICBF) organised a special educational session for the Indian expatriate community under the title 'Digital Detox' - A Journey to Mindfulness.

Dr Sreya Chattopadhyay, leading AI trainer and digital transformation expert from New Delhi, was the resource person. She elaborated on the addiction of individuals, families and society to the social media and the danger it causes to all.

The smart way to reduce the addiction and smart usage was presented with typical examples. Indian embassy first secretary Dr Eish Singhal was the chief guest.

ICBF president Shanavas Bava presided. Vice-president Rasheed Ahamed introduced

the guest speaker. General secretary Deepak Shetty welcomed the gathering and secretary Jafar Thayyil proposed a vote of thanks.

The event was co-ordinated by managing committee members Mani Bharathi, Shankar Goud, Irfan Ansari, Mini Siby, Khaja Nizamudeen, Amar Veer, Neelambari S, and advisory council member Satheesh V.



Kerala Piravi Day celebrated

Indian Cultural Centre (ICC) along with ICC Malayalam Literature Club and ICC Malayalam associated organisations celebrated Kerala Piravi - Kerala Formation Day on November 1. The evening featured an array of cultural performances, including a percussion ensemble and other traditional art forms that highlighted the rich cultural heritage and spirit of Kerala.

A soulful Sopana Sangeetham presentation by renowned percussionist and Edakka

maestro Dr Thrissur Krishnakumar captivated the audience. A Kerala food festival featured authentic delicacies. As part of the celebration, ICC conducted two special competitions - a Kerala-themed reels making contest and a quiz contest covering Kerala's history, politics, literature, cinema, culture, and art forms, providing both entertainment and learning for the participants.

The chief guest of the evening



was Indian embassy counsellor Dr Vaibhav A Tandale and the guest of honour, renowned Malayalam lyricist and poet Vayalar Sarath Chandra Varma. ICC president A P Manikantan presided.

Malayalam department heads from Indian schools in Qatar were felicitated by Varma. Dr

Tandale presented prizes to the winners of the quiz and reels competitions.

CONTROVERSY

Fijian UN diplomat visits Taiwan, despite Fiji's ties with China

Taiwan said it welcomed a Fijian diplomat this week who met with Vice-President Hsiao Bi-khim – a highly unusual trip, given the Pacific island state only has formal relations with Beijing, and one that drew an angry response from China's government. Taiwan's presidential office said Filipo Tarakinikini, Fiji's permanent representative to the United Nations – of which Taiwan is not a member – had met Hsiao as part of a delegation of other UN ambassadors, including from the Marshal Islands and Paraguay which are Taiwanese allies. China foreign ministry spokesperson Mao Ning said the visit severely violates Fiji's commitment to the "one China" principle

WILDLIFE

Japan to arm riot police with rifles to fight bear attacks

Japan will allow riot police to shoot bears with rifles in a revision of its strict gun laws announced yesterday as authorities battle a record number of fatal attacks. Bears have killed 13 people since April 1, more than twice the previous annual record, as the animals venture further out of their habitats, with the rise in attacks blamed indirectly on climate change, a falling human population and other factors. The revision came after media reports said handguns issued to regular Japanese police are of limited use against bears because the weapons are not powerful enough to kill them.

TRAGEDY

Five trapped after collapse at South Korea power plant

Authorities in South Korea fear five people remain trapped yesterday after the collapse of a large structure at a power station in the city of Ulsan, a fire official said, although four others were pulled from the rubble. Footage from the scene showed a massive steel structure mangled and toppled over in the southeastern city surrounded by similar structures. A fire official, Kim Jung-shik, told reporters that workers were in the process of taking down parts of the structure, a decommissioned heating facility, to prepare it for demolition in about 10 days when the accident occurred.

RESCUE

Nepal searches for avalanche victims

Nepali rescuers yesterday searched for the bodies of multiple climbers killed in an avalanche this week, while Italy said five citizens reported missing in a separate incident were safe. Seven people were killed on Monday when an avalanche hit multiple expedition teams at the base camp of 18,471-foot Yalung Ri peak near Nepal's border with China. "Mountain guides, skilled in search, have been deployed," Mingma Sherpa of Seven Summit Treks said. Crews are digging through snow, and scanning the white landscape with electronic detectors. Sherpa said that they were searching for five bodies – two Italians, two Nepalis and one German.

China begins limited purchase of US farm goods after Trump-Xi meet

Chinese buyers have booked two cargoes of US wheat, the first such purchases since October last year, two traders said

Reuters
Singapore/Beijing

China has begun modest purchases of US farm products after the leaders of both countries met last week, but traders still await significant soybean buys after the White House said Beijing pledged to buy 12mn tonnes by the year-end.

The top market for US farmers, China has turned its vast appetite for crops into a powerful trade war bargaining chip, largely avoiding US wheat and soybeans in favour of other supplies, after rounds of tit-for-tat tariffs.

"This is more of China showing commitment to buy US grains as US wheat is not the cheapest"

Chinese buyers have booked two cargoes of US wheat, the first such purchases since October last year, two traders said yesterday, while a sorghum shipment has been sent from the US to China, a US industry official said.

The deals to import US agricultural goods come as Beijing confirmed on Wednesday that it suspended retaliatory tariffs on US imports, including duties on

farm goods, although shipments of US soybeans still face a 13% tariff.

The purchases of about 120,000 metric tonnes for December shipment include one cargo of US soft white wheat and one of spring wheat, the sources said.

"This is more of China showing commitment to buy US grains as US wheat is not the cheapest," said a Singapore-based grains trader with direct knowledge of the wheat deals. "So it is more of political move to buy these cargoes."

Chinese state grains buyer COFCO yesterday held a soybean procurement signing ceremony during a major import fair in Shanghai, the head of a Chinese agriculture business association said, but no details were given.

The White House has said China would buy at least 12mn metric tonnes of US soybeans in the last two months of 2025 and at least 25mn tonnes in each of the next three years, but Beijing has yet to confirm those figures.

China's decision to leave intact a tariff of 13% on soybeans makes US shipments too expensive for commercial buyers compared to Brazilian cargoes, traders and analysts said.

Chinese importers recently bought 20 cargoes of cheaper Brazilian soybeans as South American prices eased on expectations that US sales would resume, while COFCO took three US cargoes ahead of the Trump-Xi meet.



Men sit amid the remains of destroyed houses that were swept in the floods brought on by Typhoon Kalmaegi in Talisay, Cebu, Philippines, yesterday.

Typhoon hits Vietnam after killing 114 in Philippines

Reutes
Hoi An, Vietnam

Typhoon Kalmaegi slammed into Vietnam yesterday, forcing authorities to cancel hundreds of flights and order people to stay indoors, two days after the storm started sweeping across the Philippines, killing at least 114 people.

Kalmaegi – packing winds of up to 149kph, according to the national weather forecaster – blew roofs off houses and downed trees and telegraph poles. It whipped up waves as high as 10 metres (30 feet) as it hit the central region's coast, the agency added.

Officials closed six airports and the government said more than 260,000 people in Gia Lai province had been moved to safety. Ka-

lmaegi is the 13th storm to hit Vietnam this year, and among the most powerful.

The government said it had placed more than 268,000 soldiers on standby for search and rescue operations. It warned of floods in low-lying areas and impacts on agriculture, including in the Central Highlands, the main coffee-growing region.

As the storm approached, hotels and homes along Cua Dai beach near the ancient Unesco-listed town of Hoi An were shuttered.

Near the coastal city of Hue, farmers were still recovering from floods this week that killed 47 people.

Rice farmer Nguyen Van Rin, 42, said the last floods had drowned his livestock and poultry. "Kalmaegi will flood us for the fourth time and I am afraid it will be quite bad," he said after guiding his boat across a road as ve-

hicles moved slowly through the water.

In the Philippines, the scale of the Kalmaegi's destruction became clearer yesterday as floodwaters receded in its hardest-hit province of Cebu, revealing flattened homes, overturned vehicles and streets choked with debris.

There were 127 people still reported missing as of late yesterday and attempts to distribute aid and find bodies were hampered by the scale of the damage left by Kalmaegi, the 20th storm to hit the Philippines this year.

"The challenge now is debris clearing ... These need to be cleared immediately, not only to account for the missing who may be among the debris or may have reached safe areas but also to allow relief operations to move forward," Raffy Alejandro, a senior civil defence official, told DZBB radio.

Activists rally against plan to name Suharto as national hero

About 100 activists yesterday gathered in Indonesia's capital Jakarta to demand that the government cancel a plan to grant late authoritarian leader Suharto the status of national hero, reflecting wider concerns about historical revisionism. The country's social ministry and culture ministry have proposed Suharto along with 48 other candidates to President Prabowo Subianto to receive the title. The honour is bestowed every year on November 10 to those considered to have made a significant contribution to the country. Indonesia faced decades of repressive rule under Suharto's military-backed "New Order". He held power for 32 years before being forced to step down during an economic crisis, mass protests and deadly riots in Jakarta in 1998. Prabowo, elected last year, has openly praised Suharto, his former father-in-law, while increasingly turning to the military to pursue his agenda.

Gangster get reduced jail sentence



Tony Mokbel (centre), one of the key figures in Melbourne's years-long gangland war, walks from the Victoria Supreme Court of Appeal in Melbourne yesterday. Mokbel has avoided any more jail time over a decades-old drug trafficking charge, a court ruled yesterday.

Bangladesh orders 25 Boeing planes

AFP
Dhaka

Bangladesh has ordered 25 wide-body aircraft from Boeing as part of a tariff deal with the US, a top commerce ministry official said yesterday, as European envoys push an Airbus agreement.

"We made a commitment and ordered 25 wide-bodies, and we expect to receive the first one in 2029," official Mahbubur Rahman said. "It's part of the tariff deal with the US"

Bangladesh has been in political turmoil since a student-led uprising in August 2024 overthrew autocratic former leader Sheikh Hasina.

The South Asian nation, the world's second-biggest garment manufacturer, struck a trade deal with the US to scale back President Donald Trump's punishing tariffs in August.

Dhaka proposed buying Boeing planes and boosting imports of US wheat, cotton and oil to help narrow its trade deficit, which Trump has used as justification for imposing painful levies.

Rahman said Dhaka was also considering an offer from Boeing's European rival.

"We have offers from Airbus as well, and an assessment is currently ongoing," he said.

Bangladesh's state-run BSS news agency said national flag carrier Biman Bangladesh Airlines was reviewing proposals from both companies.

Airbus has proposed supplying 10 A350 wide-body and four A320neo narrow-body aircraft, BSS said.

Boeing's further offer is for 10 787 Dreamliners and four 737 MAX jets, it reported.

Bangladesh has a reported 19 aircraft in its current fleet, an estimated 14 of them from Boeing.

Shooting at start of Bangladesh poll campaign kills one

AFP
Dhaka

Gunmen on motorbikes attacked a Bangladesh political rally, killing one person and wounding two others, including a candidate, officials said yesterday, after parties began campaigning for landmark elections.

Major parties opened their campaigns on Wednesday for the elections slated for February 2026, the first since a deadly uprising last year toppled the autocratic government of former ruler Sheikh

Hasina. Campaigning turned violent almost immediately.

The shooting took place at a rally on Wednesday for the powerful Bangladesh National Party (BNP) attended by hundreds in the port city of Chattogram, police said.

Senior BNP leader Amir Khasru Mahmud Chowdhury said "it was an attempt to destabilise politics and disrupt the election"

The BNP are widely seen as the frontrunner in the polls.

Police said the gunmen opened fire quickly on a crowd of hundreds at the rally but insisted that the

BNP candidate was not the target.

"The miscreants... shot their target, and fled in a flash," senior police officer Hasib Aziz told reporters.

Candidate Ershad Ullah was shot and wounded, along with a supporter. A third man was killed.

"We would urge candidates to inform the police station at least 24 hours prior to any election campaign, so that more police can be deployed," Aziz said.

The South Asian nation of about 170mn people has been in political turmoil since Hasina was overthrown by the student-led upris-

ing in August 2024. Campaigning is technically unofficial because the election commission is not expected to announce the voting day until December.

Interim leader Muhammad Yunus, the 85-year-old Nobel Peace Prize winner serving as chief adviser, has repeatedly promised the elections will be held in February.

Yunus has ordered an investigation into the shooting, his media team said in a statement.

The interim government "calls on all political actors and their supporters to uphold calm, show restraint, and ensure that the Feb-

ruary general election takes place in an atmosphere of peace, dignity, and fairness," it said yesterday.

Bangladesh police offered cash rewards for the surrender of more than 1,300 machine guns, rifles and pistols looted during last year's uprising.

Lieutenant general Md Mainur Rahman told an army news conference on Wednesday that the military would provide security to ensure peaceful polls and that they would return to barracks after the election.

"We hope stability will be strengthened, law and order will

remain normal, and we will return to the cantonment once the election is held," Rahman said.

Major parties have unveiled their candidate lists, with the BNP saying this week that 80-year-old leader and three-time prime minister Khaleda Zia will run again, as well as her son, Tarique Rahman.

Bangladesh's largest Islamist political party, Jamaat-e-Islami, said it had finalised a preliminary candidate list and was "engaging with other parties on the prospect of seat-sharing", senior leader Abdullah Mohammad Taher said.

Several prisoners ‘mistakenly released from UK prisons each week’

Several prisoners are mistakenly released from British prisons each week, a minister said yesterday, revealing the scale of a problem that came to light with the wrongful release of a migrant sex offender whose offences sparked weeks of protests. The accidental release of Ethiopian asylum seeker Hadush Gerberslasie Kebatu last month compounded the pressure on the government which is struggling with overcrowded prisons and a broken immigration system. His arrest in July already triggered protests outside a hotel housing asylum seekers in Epping, north of London, which then became a touch-paper for wider

anti-immigration demonstrations. He was deported following a three-day manhunt. This week, two more mistaken prisoner releases – including an Algerian national on the sex offenders register who had overstayed his visa – have raised further concerns about the prison system, which has been grappling with overcrowding after the number of inmates in England and Wales doubled in the last 30 years. The government estimates that 262 prisoners were released mistakenly in the 12 months to March 2025 – marking the fourth consecutive year of increase and more than double the 115 reported the previous year.

Action against Delhi air pollution urged



Protesters hold placards and chant slogans during a demonstration demanding immediate government action to address air pollution in New Delhi, India, yesterday.

India pushes REIA to sign pacts for stranded power projects

Reuters
New Delhi

India’s power ministry has asked the country’s renewable energy implementation agencies (REIA) to explore signing power purchase agreements with clean energy developers for projects without a buyer, according to a ministry document. About 50 gigawatts of clean energy projects have been unable to come online due to unfinished transmission lines and legal and regulatory delays, resulting in state power utilities delaying sign-

ing purchase agreements.

REIAs are intermediaries that act as traders, aggregating power from various generators and selling it to the buyer. Typically, power purchase agreements are signed between an REIA and a developer based on agreements signed between the REIA and the end-buyer. According to the document, the ministry has directed REIAs to sign agreements directly with the developer, bypassing the buyer-side agreement, or, alternatively, cancel the tenders as a last resort.

The ministry issued the directive following a high-level meeting chaired by India’s power sec-

retary on October 17. The meeting included officials from power generating firms NTPC, NHPC, SJVN as well as the Solar Energy Corporation of India (SECI), all designated as REIAs.

The power ministry and the REIAs did not respond to queries.

The agencies have been asked to act by November 30. The decisions come as India attempts to streamline its renewable energy procurement framework and address bottlenecks in project execution as part of the country’s push to double its non-fossil fuel power capacity to 500GW by 2030.

Denmark’s UK envoy meets King Charles



Kristina Miskowiak Beckvard, Denmark’s ambassador to the UK, presents her credentials to Britain’s King Charles III during a private audience at Buckingham Palace in London yesterday.

UK sanctions New IRA and suspected terror facilitator

The British government froze the assets of the Irish nationalist militant group, the New IRA, and Kieran Gallagher yesterday, saying it had reasonable grounds to suspect that he was involved in terrorist activity. “This action is the second use of the Treasury-led domestic counter-terrorism regime to target Northern Ireland-related terrorism,” Lucy Rigby, economic secretary to the Treasury, said in the statement. “These designations reflect this government’s continued commitment to protecting the peaceful consensus of the people of Northern Ireland.” The New IRA is one of a small number of active militant groups opposed to Northern Ireland’s 1998 peace deal. It has been behind some of the sporadic attacks that have continued, including the murder of journalist Lyra McKee in 2019.

UK grandmother leaves Indonesia death row to return home

AFP
Denpasar, Indonesia

Two British drug convicts including a grandmother on death row left a Bali jail yesterday, as part of a deal to send them home on humanitarian grounds.

Indonesia has some of the world’s toughest drug laws, but has moved to release more than half a dozen high-profile detainees in the last year, including a Filipina mother on death row.

Lindsay Sandiford, 69, was sentenced to death on the tourist island of Bali in 2013 after she was convicted of trafficking drugs.

She will be repatriated along with Shahab Shahabadi, 36, who was serving a life sentence for drug offences after his arrest in 2014.

Both were presented before the media in a handover ceremony at Kerobokan jail, with Sandiford covering her face.

I Nyoman Gede Surya Mataram, an official from Indonesia’s law and human rights ministry, said their “detention will be moved to the United Kingdom” under the bilateral deal.

“For Lindsay and Shahab, after we hand (them) over to the United Kingdom government, (they) are fully responsible for the legal decision that will be given there but still

respecting our legal decision.”

Sandiford wound up behind bars in Indonesia after customs officers found cocaine worth an estimated \$2.14mn hidden in a false bottom in her suitcase when she landed in Bali in 2012.

Sandiford admitted the offences but said she had agreed to carry the narcotics after a drug syndicate threatened to kill her son.

The repatriation comes after Indonesia’s senior law and human rights minister, Yusril Ihza Mahendra, signed a deal with British Foreign Minister Yvette Cooper last month for the transfer of Sandiford and Shahabadi.

Both prisoners are suffering from

severe health problems.

Yusril said last month that Sandiford was “seriously ill”, while Shahabadi was “suffering from various serious illnesses, including mental health issues”.

Matthew Downing, Britain’s deputy ambassador to Indonesia, said the two were being repatriated on “humanitarian grounds”.

“When they first arrive in the UK, the priority will be about their health,” he said.

“So they’ll be going through a health assessment, and any treatment and rehabilitation that they need.”

The two will be “governed by the law and procedures of the UK” gov-

ernment upon their return, Downing said.

Sandiford’s case caught tabloid attention back in Britain, with one newspaper publishing in 2015 an article in which she detailed her fear of death.

“My execution is imminent, and I know I might die at any time now. I could be taken tomorrow from my cell,” she wrote in the Mail on Sunday. “I have started to write goodbye letters to members of my family.”

As of August, nearly 600 inmates were on death row in Indonesia, according to the rights group KontraS, citing official data.

Among them are around 90 for-

eigners, according to the Immigration and Correction Ministry.

Indonesia last carried out executions in 2016, killing one of its own citizens and three Nigerian drug convicts by firing squad.

President Prabowo Subianto’s administration has repatriated several high-profile inmates since he took office in 2024, including the last five members of the so-called “Bali Nine” drug ring.

In December, Filipina inmate Mary Jane Veloso tearfully reunited with her family after nearly 15 years on death row.

In February, French national Serge Atlaoui, 61, was returned home after 18 years on death row.

Toyota, Honda turn India into car production hub in pivot away from China

Reuters
Tokyo

Toyota, Honda and Suzuki are spending billions of dollars to build new cars and factories in India, a sign of the country’s growing importance as a manufacturing hub as Japanese automakers redraw global supply chains to reduce dependence on China.

Toyota, the world’s largest carmaker, and Suzuki, the leader in the Indian market with almost a 40% share, have separately announced investments totalling \$11bn to beef up manufacturing and export capabilities in the world’s third-largest auto market.

Honda said last week it will make India a production and export base for one of its planned electric cars.

India’s low costs and vast labour pool have long been an attraction for manufacturers.

Now, Japanese automakers are stepping up operations as they pivot away from China, both as a market and a manufacturing base, multiple industry executives said. Another benefit: India remains all but closed to Chinese EVs, so Japan’s carmakers – at least for now – won’t face bruising competition from BYD and others there. A brutal price war among Chinese EV makers has made it difficult to turn a profit in China. Adding to the pain, Chinese carmakers are now expanding overseas and snatching market share from Japanese rivals in Southeast Asia.

“India is a good choice as a replacement market for China,” said Julie Boote, autos analyst at Pelham Smithers Associates in London, citing low profit margins in China.

“For the time being, the Japanese think it’s a much better market because they don’t have to deal with the Chinese competitors,” she said.

Other draws include the improved quality of India’s manufactured goods, and incentives from Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s government, executives say.

Toyota and Suzuki each have majority ownership of their In-

dia units. Honda owns 100% of its business there.

Japan’s annual direct investment in the Indian transport sector, which includes automakers, jumped more than sevenfold between 2021 and 2024, hitting 294bn yen (\$2bn) last year.

As Japanese automakers revved up investment in India, they cooled on China: direct investment in China’s transport sector saw an 83% decrease over the same period, to 46bn yen last year.

Toyota is working with Japanese and Indian vendors to lower costs and expand production of hybrid components. India is one market where it saw tight supply of hybrid parts amid a surge in demand this year. It has localised its offerings, said an executive at a major Toyota supplier. “It is no longer about global specifications but about local ones.” The Japanese automaker plans to launch 15 new and refreshed models in India by the end of the decade and deepen its rural network, Reuters reported last week. It aims to have 10% of the passenger car market before the end of the decade, from 8% now.

“The Indian market is extremely important and is set to grow in the future,” Toyota president Koji Sato told reporters at last week’s Japan Mobility Show, noting many other automakers were also paying attention to the market.

Last year Toyota announced more than \$3bn in investment to expand production at its existing factory in southern India by some 100,000 vehicles a year and build a new plant in western Maharashtra state that is expected to begin production before 2030. That is expected to take Toyota’s Indian production capacity to more than 1mn vehicles.

At its quarterly earnings on Wednesday, the automaker cited the growing importance of India to profits, especially as the North American business has been impacted by tariffs.

India’s economic growth has averaged 8% over the past three fiscal years, a surge that Prime Minis-

ter Narendra Modi’s government wants to sustain by luring more foreign manufacturers. It is rolling out incentives to get them to produce goods for both domestic and global markets.

India manufactured about 5mn passenger cars last financial year, of which almost 800,000 were exported and the remainder sold in the domestic market.

Domestic sales grew about 2% from a year ago, while exports rose 15%. Government limits on Chinese investment are effectively another form of help, making it difficult for new Chinese carmakers to enter and existing ones like SAIC’s MG Motor and BYD to expand.

“India’s protectionist stance toward neighbouring countries is a blessing in disguise for Japanese carmakers,” said S&P Global Mobility’s Gaurav Vangaal. “Because of this, they see an opportunity to expand investment in India, enhancing their cost competitiveness against domestic players.”

Local companies Tata Motors and Mahindra & Mahindra have been expanding their offerings with SUVs, taking market share from Suzuki. Before the pandemic Suzuki had about 50% of the passenger car market. And India is never an easy market. Foreign automakers such as Ford and General Motors previously struggled there and eventually exited. For Honda, India is the biggest market for its highly profitable two-wheel business, and it now intends to ramp up its four-wheel business, chief executive Toshihiro Mibe told the mobility show.

Honda said its top three focus markets for the car business are the US, followed by India and Japan.

It plans to make India the production and export base for one of its “Zero series” electric cars, with one model to be exported to Japan and other Asian markets from 2027.

Suzuki’s \$8bn investment in India is to mainly expand its local production capacity to 4mn cars a year, from some 2.5mn now. Its Indian business, Maruti Suzuki, is the country’s top-selling carmaker and largest car exporter.

India rapeseed plantings poised to hit record highs

Reuters
Mumbai

India’s rapeseed planting is expected to hit a new high this year due to record Chinese buying of rapeseed meal and above-average rainfall that resulted in favourable soil moisture for the crop.

As the country’s primary winter-sown oilseed, the surge in rapeseed production is also poised to help India, the world’s largest importer of edible oil, limit costly overseas purchases of cooking oils.

“Farmers made great profits from last year’s rapeseed crop, so this year, they’re planting even more of it,” said Anil Chatar, a leading trader based in Jaipur in the northwestern state of Rajasthan.

The combined planting area

for rapeseed and closely related mustard is expected to increase by 7% to 8% this year, he said.

Indian farmers typically sow rapeseed in October and November. So far this year, they have planted 4.17mn hectares, a 13.5% increase compared to the same time last year.

The country planted 8.93mn hectares of rapeseed last year, higher than the five-year average of 7.9mn hectares.

There has been good demand for rapeseed oil domestically this year, while strong export demand for rapeseed meal has come from China, said B V Mehta, executive director of Solvent Extractors’ Association of India.

China aggressively began purchasing rapeseed meal from India after Beijing in March imposed a 100% retaliatory tariff on rapeseed meal and oil imports from Canada, its top supplier.

UN chief scolds nations for failing climate goals

Reuters
Belem

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres tore into nations for their failure to limit warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius, as Brazil hosted world leaders for a summit ahead of the COP30 climate conference in the rainforest city of Belem.

Scientists have confirmed the world is set to cross the 1.5 C warming threshold around 2030, risking extreme warming with irreversible consequences.

“Too many corporations are making record profits from climate devastation, with billions spent on lobbying, deceiving the public and obstructing progress,” Guterres said in his speech. “Too many leaders remain captive to these entrenched interests.”

Countries are spending about \$1tn each year in subsidising fossil fuels.

Leaders have two clear options, Guterres said: “We can choose to

lead — or be led to ruin.”

The COP30 conference marks three decades since global climate negotiations began. In that time, countries have curbed the projected climb in emissions somewhat, but not enough to prevent what scientists consider extreme global warming in the next few decades.

The World Meteorological Organisation announced this year would likely be the second- or third-warmest on record, with the temperature average through August being 1.42 C above the preindustrial average, after record heat in 2023 and 2024.

“The alarming streak of exceptional temperatures continues,” WMO Secretary-General Celeste Saulo said with the report’s release.

Outside of the conference venue — still under construction ahead of next week’s summit start — a small group of indigenous people marched in a circle while singing and urging protection of the world’s forests and their people.

A flotilla bringing indigenous



Brazil’s President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva (right) and UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres posing ahead of the General Plenary of Leaders in the framework of the COP30 UN Climate Change Conference in Belem, Para State, Brazil, yesterday. (AFP)

leaders and activists down rivers of the Amazon Basin to the conference was delayed and would not arrive until next week.

During the leaders’ summit yesterday and today, about 150 heads of state, subnational leaders and

international organisations were due to deliver speeches that would be televised across the world.

Missing from the lineup are the leaders of four of the world’s five most-polluting economies — China, the United States, India

and Russia — with only the leader of the European Union showing up.

The US administration has opted to send no-one to the talks, unlike the others. Instead, top US officials were in Greece alongside fossil fuel giant Exxon Mobil (XOM.N) yesterday as it signed a new deal to explore offshore for natural gas.

Some said the absence of the United States from COP30 may free countries to discuss action without any one player dominating the outcome.

“Without the US present, we can actually see a real multilateral conversation happening,” said Pedro Abramovay, vice-president of programmes at Open Society Foundations and a former justice minister under President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva.

Lula planned to hold bilateral meetings yesterday with UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer, French President Emmanuel Macron and German Chancellor Friedrich Merz, after meeting one-on-one

on Wednesday with the Chinese vice-premier and leaders from Finland and the European Union.

“In a moment in which a lot of people are kind of claiming the death of multilateralism, I think there is a new space for a multilateralism that is not built in a top-down way from powerful countries towards poor countries,” Abramovay said.

Brazil is hoping the World Leaders Summit will deliver at least \$10bn of its overall target of \$125bn for its newly launched Tropical Forest Forever Facility, estimating that would be enough to start generating funds for conservation.

China, Norway and Germany were expected to announce contributions in Belem, after Brazil offered the first investment and Indonesia matched that pledge.

But the United Kingdom, which helped to frame the way the fund works, delivered an early disappointment on Wednesday, disclosing that it would be offering no cash.

Teetering Belgian govt given more time to agree budget

AFP
Brussels

Belgian Prime Minister Bart De Wever gave his deadlocked ruling coalition more time to agree a cost-cutting budget yesterday, staving off fears of an imminent government collapse.

The straight-talking Flemish conservative — who only became premier in February after seven months of painstaking negotiations — set a new 50-day deadline to strike a deal.

That came after he had sought to pile pressure on his governing partners by dangling the prospect that he could resign over the failure to agree through €10bn (\$11bn) of savings by 2030.

De Wever — who earlier insisted he wanted to reach an agreement by yesterday — said he had told Belgium’s King Philippe he now wanted until Christmas to get there.

“I immediately added that this would be the maximum timeframe,” De Wever said in an address to parliament.

Talks over the new budget have already dragged on for several months, missing a number of self-imposed deadlines.

De Wever says the spending cuts are vital to help reduce Belgium’s eye-watering national debt, one of the steepest in the European Union.

He is calling for a series of “historic” reforms to liberalise Belgium’s labour market, curb high unemployment benefits and cut back on pension costs.

“Tomorrow’s prosperity begins with today’s courage. Let’s dare to make the reforms that will bear fruit in a few years,” De Wever told lawmakers.

But trying to get a disparate five-party coalition that in-



Belgian Prime Minister Bart De Wever (centre) addresses Members of Parliament during a plenary session of the Chamber at the Federal Parliament in Brussels yesterday. (AFP)

cludes French-speaking economic liberals and Dutch-speaking socialists to agree on what needs to be done is proving tough.

While those on the right are rigidly opposed to hiking taxes, the left is pushing to hit the wealthy harder rather than slash benefits.

De Wever, a cat-loving former mayor of Antwerp known for his three-piece suits, is hoping the additional breathing space will pay off and he can solve the deadlock. A long-time proponent of independence for his Flemish-speaking region, he would be loath to relinquish the post of prime minister after years of questing for the top job.

The stand-off over the budget comes at a sensitive time for the country, after unexplained drone flights shut down several Belgian airports earlier this week.

De Wever chaired an emergency security meeting yesterday over the incidents, with ministers saying they would look to step up the ability of authorities to monitor drones.

As the budget talks consume his attention at home, De Wever is also facing pressure himself on the European stage for holding up a potential mammoth EU loan to Ukraine using frozen Russian assets.

The vast majority of those assets are housed in international deposit organisation Euroclear in Belgium and De Wever has insisted he needs strict guarantees from EU counterparts before giving his green light.

Top Georgia opposition leaders charged over ‘coup plot’

AFP
Tbilisi

Georgia yesterday charged eight top opposition figures including jailed ex-president Mikheil Saakashvili with plotting to overthrow the government, sabotage and aiding foreign powers, in an intensifying crackdown on opponents.

Those targeted slammed the ruling Georgian Dream party for escalating an intense crackdown on dissent in the Black Sea nation, in what one branded a “war on democracy.”

Georgia has been mired in political crisis since last year’s disputed parliamentary elections, which the opposition says were rigged in favour of Georgian Dream.

Yesterday’s proceedings targeted Saakashvili — who is serving a 12.5-year sentence for abuse of office, a conviction denounced by rights groups as politically motivated — as well as a string of opposition leaders, Prosecutor General Giorgi Gvarakidze told reporters.

The most serious charges — “assisting a foreign state ... in hostile activities” — carries a maximum prison sentence of 15 years.

Many are already behind bars on prosecutions widely seen as political retribution, including opposition leaders Nika Gvaramia, Nika Melia and Elene Khoshtaria.

Gvaramia dismissed the charges as “absurd political theatre,” and accused Georgian Dream of “waging war on de-

mocracy.” “The oligarchy must fall,” he wrote on social media.

Another of those charged, Zurab Japaridze, a leader of the Girchi party, said the government “has crossed the final line into authoritarianism.”

Khoshtaria of the Droa party vowed: “No intimidation will stop us from defending Georgia’s European future.”

Prosecutor Gvarakidze alleged the politicians had “engaged in activities directed against Georgia’s constitutional order and national security” by providing information about energy and defence to Western governments that helped them sanction Georgian officials.

He also alleged that several of them had sought to “radicalise street protests” following elections in October last year by call-

ing for the overthrow of the government and the seizure of state buildings.

Saakashvili, a reformist pro-Western ex-president, is accused of urging his supporters via social media “to resist and topple the regime.” The European Union has heavily criticised Tbilisi’s democratic backsliding in recent years.

Last month, Georgian Dream asked the Constitutional Court to ban the country’s three main opposition forces.

The party, in power since 2012, originally cast itself as liberal and pro-European, but has faced accusations of drifting toward Russia and derailing Georgia’s bid to join the EU.

UN says 2025 to be among top three warmest years on record

AFP
Geneva

An alarming streak of exceptional temperatures is continuing, with 2025 set to be among the hottest years ever recorded, the United Nations said yesterday, insisting though that the trend could still be reversed.

While this year will not surpass 2024 as the hottest ever recorded, it will rank second or third, the UN’s weather and climate agency said, capping more than a decade of unprecedented heat.

Meanwhile concentrations of greenhouse gases grew to new record highs, locking in more heat for the future, the World Meteorological Organisation warned in a report released ahead of next week’s COP30 UN climate summit in Brazil.

Together, the developments make “it clear that it will be virtually impossible to limit global warming to 1.5C in the next few years without temporarily overshooting this target,” WMO chief Celeste Saulo said in a statement.

The 2015 Paris climate accords aimed to limit global warming to well below two degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels — and to 1.5C if possible.

Saulo insisted that while the situation was dire, “the science is equally clear that it’s still entirely possible and essential to bring temperatures back down to 1.5C by the end of the century.”

UN chief Antonio Guterres emphasised what was at stake.

“Each year above 1.5 degrees will hammer economies, deepen inequalities and inflict irreversible damage,” he said in the report.

“We must act now, at great speed and scale, to make the overshoot as small, as short, and as safe as possible — and bring temperatures back below 1.5C before the end of the century.”

But the world remains far off track.

Already, the years between 2015 and 2025 will individually have been the warmest since observations began 176

years ago, WMO said.

And 2023, 2024 and 2025 figure at the very top of that ranking.

In yesterday’s report, the WMO said that the mean near-surface temperature — about two metres (six feet) above the ground — during the first eight months of this year stood at 1.42C above the pre-industrial average.

At the same time, concentrations of heat-trapping greenhouse gases in the atmosphere and ocean heat content continued to rise this year, up from 2024’s already record levels, it found.

In its annual report on Tuesday, the UN Environment Programme also confirmed that fresh emissions of greenhouse gases increased by a further 2.3% last year, an increase driven by India followed by China, Russia and Indonesia.

The WMO said the impact of temperature rises can be seen in the Arctic sea ice extent, which after the winter freeze this year was the lowest ever recorded.

The Antarctic sea ice extent meanwhile tracked well below average throughout the year, it said.

The UN agency also highlighted numerous weather and climate-related extreme events during the first eight months of 2025, from devastating flooding to brutal heat and wildfires, with “cascading impacts on lives, livelihoods and food systems.”

In this context, the WMO hailed “significant advances” in multi-hazard early warning systems, which it stressed were “more crucial than ever.”

Since 2015, it said, the number of countries reporting such systems had more than doubled, from 56 to 119.

It hailed in particular progress among the world’s least developed countries and small island developing states, which showed a five-percent hike in access in the past year alone.

However, it lamented that 40% of the world’s countries still no such early warning systems.

“Urgent action is needed to close these remaining gaps,” it said.

US to cancel flights as longest govt shutdown drags on

AFP
Washington

US officials said the scheduled capacity for flights was being cut by 10% in 40 busy air traffic areas nationwide today, as the longest government shutdown drags on.

Federal agencies have been grinding to a halt since Congress failed to approve funding past September 30, with some 1.4mn federal workers, from air traffic controllers to park wardens, still on enforced leave or working without pay.

“There is going to be a 10% reduction in capacity at 40 of our locations,” Transportation Secretary Sean Duffy told a White House news briefing on Wednesday, adding they would come into effect on Friday.

Federal Aviation Administra-

tion (FAA) chief Bryan Bedford said the cuts would be at “40 high traffic environment markets.”

According to a proposed list provided to CBS News, some of the nation’s busiest airports in Atlanta, Dallas, Los Angeles and New York City could be among those hit.

AFP contacted the Department of Transport and FAA seeking details about which airports would be affected.

The government shutdown became the longest in history on Wednesday, eclipsing the 35-day record set during President Donald Trump’s first term.

Airport workers calling in sick rather than working without pay — which led to significant delays — was a major factor in Trump bringing an end to that 2019 shutdown.

More than 60,000 air traffic controllers and Transportation



Air travellers face the morning commute at Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport, a day after US Transportation Secretary Sean Duffy said he would order 10% of flights at 40 major US airports to be cut starting today unless a deal to end the federal government shutdown is reached, in Atlanta, Georgia, US, yesterday. (Reuters)

Security Administration officers are now working without pay, and the White House has warned that increased absenteeism could create chaos at check-in lines.

House Speaker Mike Johnson said in late October that 5% of flight delays had been the result of staffing shortages but that number had now increased to more than 50%. He warned at the time that the “longer the shutdown goes on, and as fewer air traffic controllers show up to work, the safety of the American people is thrown further into jeopardy.”

However, Democrats and Republicans have both remained unwavering over the main sticking point in the shutdown: healthcare spending.

Democrats say they will only provide votes to end the funding lapse after a deal has been struck to extend expiring insurance subsidies that make healthcare af-

fordable for millions of Americans.

But Republicans insist they will only address healthcare once Democrats have voted to switch the lights back on in Washington.

Trump has sought to apply his own pressure to force Democrats to cave by threatening mass layoffs of federal workers and using the shutdown to target progressive priorities.

He repeated on Tuesday his administration’s threat to cut off a vital aid programme that helps 42mn Americans pay for groceries for the first time in its more than 60-year history, even though the move was blocked by two courts.

The White House later clarified that it was “fully complying” with its legal obligations and was working to get partial Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program payments “out the door as much as we can and as quickly as we can.”



Manhood in the Qur'an and the Sunnah

Manhood is a quality that is pursued by people of high ambitions and serious thinking men. It is a basic quality that is needed by every man, for when men lose the qualities of manhood, they cease to be real men. Manhood is deeply implanted in a person through strong belief, nurtured by sound upbringing and developed by good example. A real man is one who has good and virtuous deeds to his credit, and possesses good manners and conduct.

Crediting someone with manhood sometimes means that the person possesses the characteristics which exemplify this quality, like bravery, being honest, and standing up for the truth. Allah Says (what means): “And there came a man running from the farthest end of the city. He said, ‘O Moosaa (Moses)! Verily the chiefs are taking council together about you, to kill you, so escape. Truly, I am to you of those who give sincere advice.’” [Qur'an; 28:20]

Recognising the importance of real manhood in the service of Islam, the Prophet, *sallallaahu ‘alaihi wa sallam*, used to look out for men who could help the cause of his religion and with whom his mission could be enhanced. He, *sallallaahu ‘alaihi wa sallam*, would ask his Lord: “O Allah! Make Islam strong with the one who is more beloved to You of these two men: Abu Jahl or ‘Umar Ibn Al-Khattaab.” The narrator commented: “And the more beloved to Him was ‘Umar.” [At-Tirmithi] The Prophet, *sallallaahu ‘alaihi wa sallam*, supplicated with these words looking out for those qualities of manhood that would have a positive impact upon the spread of Islam.

As a matter of fact, the acceptance of ‘Umar’s, may Allah be pleased with him, of Islam was a great event that manifested his manhood as soon as he embraced Islam.

‘Umar’s manhood, may Allah be pleased with him, was not in his physical strength nor chivalry - for there were those stronger than him among the Quraysh - but it manifested in his strength of faith; a quality that won him respect and honour. Other companions of the Prophet, may Allah be pleased with them, migrated to Al-Madinah secretly, while ‘Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, - when he was migrating - armed himself with his sword, went to the Ka’aba, circumambulated the Ka’aba, prayed behind Maqaam Ibraaheem (Ibraaheem’s station), and then announced to the Quraysh chiefs that he was migrating. He told them: ‘Whoever wants to make his mother bereaved, his children orphans and his wife a widow should follow me after this valley!’ But nobody followed him.

Real men are not judged by the size of their bodies, social status or their outward beauty. The Prophet, *sallallaahu ‘alaihi wa sallam*, sent Abdullaah Ibn Mas’ood, may Allah be pleased with him, to fetch him something from the top of a tree. When he had climbed the tree, the companions of the Prophet, *sallallaahu ‘alaihi wa sallam*, looked

at his legs and laughed at their thinness. The Prophet, *sallallaahu ‘alaihi wa sallam*, said: “Why are you laughing? Verily, Abdullaah’s leg will be heavier on the scale on the day of resurrection than Mount Uhud” [Ahmad]

A man passed by the Prophet, *sallallaahu ‘alaihi wa sallam*, one day. He, *sallallaahu ‘alaihi wa sallam*, asked his companions: “What do you think of this man?” They replied, ‘He deserves to be married to whomsoever he proposes, to have his intercession accepted when he intercedes and to be listened to when he speaks.’ The Prophet, *sallallaahu ‘alaihi wa sallam*, remained silent. Then a poor Muslim man passed by and the Prophet, *sallallaahu ‘alaihi wa sallam*, asked the companions: “What do you think of this man?” They replied: ‘He deserves not to be married when he proposes, nor to have his intercession accepted when he intercedes nor to be listened to when he speaks.’ The Prophet, *sallallaahu ‘alaihi wa sallam*, then said: “This one is as much as the fill of the Earth better than the other” [Al-Bukhari]

Sometimes, one fervent man can equal a thousand others; indeed one man can outweigh a nation, as the saying goes: “A devoted man can revive a whole nation.” In a military campaign, Khaalid Ibn Al-Waleed, may Allah be pleased with him, surrounded Al-Heerah and requested supplies from Abu Bakr, may Allah be pleased with him, who only sent him Al-Qa’qaa’ Ibn ‘Amr At-Tameemi, may Allah be pleased with them, and said: “An army having men like Al-Qa’qaa’ will never be defeated.” When ‘Amr Ibn Al-‘Aas, may Allah be pleased with him, requested supplies from ‘Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, during the Islamic conquest of Egypt, he (‘Umar), may Allah be pleased with him, wrote: “I have sent you (the equivalent of) four thousand men; four men each of whom are equal to a thousand others: Az-Zubayr Ibn Al-‘Awwaam, Al-Miqdaad Ibn ‘Amr, ‘Ubaadah Ibn As-Saamit and Maslamah Ibn Makhlad.”

Real manhood means being thoughtful, uttering good words, having decency and resoluteness in opinion, coming out openly with the truth and displaying wisdom in warning against the rejection of truth.

Manhood entails having a sense of responsibility to defend Monotheism and to give sincere advice for the sake of Allah. It means avoiding unsuitable behavior and being on one’s guard against the Difficult Day (the Day of Resurrection). A real man is sincere in his words, fulfills his promises and remains firm on the right path.

A real man is one who frequents the mosque, a man who is called to fornication by a woman of position and beauty, and yet says, ‘I fear Allah,’ a man who gives alms secretly; two men who love each other for the sake of Allah; and they were brought together by their mutual love for the sake of Allah, and they parted upon the same.

A real man is truthful about pledges and fulfils them; it is also to remain steadfast upon the right



path. Allah Says (which means): “Among the believers are men true to what they promised Allah. Among them is he who has fulfilled his vow [to the death], and among them is he who awaits [his chance]. And they did not alter [the terms of their commitment] by any alteration.” [Qur'an; 33:23]

Real manhood is expressed by exerting all efforts to reach real servitude. Allah Says (which means): “And the servants of the Most Merciful are those who walk upon the earth easily, and when the ignorant address them [harshly] they say [words of] peace. And those who spend [part of] the night to their Lord prostrating and standing [in prayer]. And those who say, “Our Lord, avert from us the punishment of Hell. Indeed, its punishment is ever adhering. Indeed, it is evil as a settlement and residence.” And [they are] those who, when they spend, do so not excessively or sparingly but are ever, between that, [justly] moderate.” [Qur'an; 25: 63-67]

Nothing busies real men from worship. Allah Says (which means): “[Such roles are] in houses [i.e., mosques] which Allah has ordered to be raised and that His name be mentioned [i.e., praised] therein; exalting Him within them in the mornings and the evenings. Men whom neither commerce nor sale distracts them from the remembrance of Allah and performance of prayer and giving of Zakaah. They fear a Day in which the hearts and eyes will [fearfully] turn about. That Allah may reward them [according to] the best of what they did and increase them from His bounty. And Allah gives provision to whom He wills without account [i.e., limit].” [Qur'an; 24: 36-38] Imaam Ibn Katheer, may Allah have mercy upon him, said: “The word ‘men’ gives an indication that they have high ambitions, noble goals, and strong wills, with which they are able to maintain themselves in the houses of Allah; and they favour the pleasure of Allah over their own.”

What worse calamity can befall mankind than for its men to become effeminate, while its women adopt male mannerisms, revolting against the very nature in which Allah created them? The Prophet, *sallallaahu*

‘alaihi wa sallam: “cursed the men who behave like women and women who behave like men” [Al-Bukhari]

When the qualities of manhood disappear among men, society falls into crisis, homes are ruined, the nation becomes weak and disgraced, and moral corruption becomes widespread. Allah Says (which means): “Men are the protectors and the maintainers of women because Allah has made one of them to excel the other.” [Qur'an; 4:34]

Nations need planners and those who have determined hearts in order to fully utilise these resources. In fact the greatest of all needs is that for real men.

Real men are very rare to find, they are as rare as precious minerals and jewels. The Prophet, *sallallaahu ‘alaihi wa sallam*, said: “Real men are as rare as a reliable strong camel that can endure the burden of long trips; you can hardly find one in a hundred” [Al-Bukhari]

Qualified righteous men are the backbone of missions, the spirit for progress and the focal point of reformation. There can be countless factories of weapons and ammunition, but if there are no men to use the weapons being produced, there will be no ability to fight. The finest educational curricula can exist, but it takes real men to implement and teach them; one can create many committees to carry out a project, yet these will accomplish nothing if there are no devoted men on these committees.

Reformation and successful cultivation can only be achieved by men who experience and live it - and not merely by reading books on the subject. It is only men with zeal and devotion that accomplish projects, regardless of the number of committees that they may be members of.

A generation that possesses real manhood and righteousness can only be generated through being cultured on firm belief, strong morals and sound Islamically based customs. A generation that grows up surrounded with destructive doubts, immorality, disbelief and obscenity will never discover real manhood.

The world did not see real manhood in its finest and definitive form except in the unique generation that

was nurtured by the great Prophet, *sallallaahu ‘alaihi wa sallam*. That generation experienced great fear; they were not materialistic; they were not deceived or seduced by temptation; they were not scared by warnings or threats from others; nor were they proud and arrogant after victories and they would never give up after suffering setbacks.

A young boy entered into the palace of one of the Umayyid Caliphs to address him on behalf of his tribe. The Caliph said: “Let an older man come forth to represent your people!” The boy said, “O leader of the believers, if leadership was gained by virtue of age, then there would have been many others worthier than you for the Caliphate.” These are fine examples of maturity and manhood despite tenderness of age and we Muslims have had many such examples throughout history.

BUILDING THE QUALITIES OF MANHOOD IN OUR CHILDREN

The following are some of many Islamic points that will help develop manhood in a child’s personality:

*Nicknames: Calling the child Abu so and so or Umm so and so increases their sense of responsibility and makes them feel older. The Prophet, *sallallaahu ‘alaihi wa sallam*, used to give nicknames to children as Anas Ibn Maalik, may Allah be pleased with him, said: “The Prophet, *sallallaahu ‘alaihi wa sallam*, had the finest manners; and I had a brother who was called Abu ‘Umayr who was just weaned; whenever he was around the Prophet, *sallallaahu ‘alaihi wa sallam*, he would say: “O Abu ‘Umayr, what did the Nughayr do?”

• Taking the child to the gatherings of adults also develops manhood in their personalities. It adds richness to their understanding and improve their way of thinking. This was the practice of the companions, may Allah be pleased with them, who used to take their children to the gatherings of the Prophet, *sallallaahu ‘alaihi wa sallam*.

• Relating to children historical stories, Islamic battles and heroic victories builds courage and bravery in them, which is one of the most important factors of manhood. ‘Urwah Ibn Az-Zubayr said: “Az-Zubayr Ibn Al-‘Awwaam (his father) had two children. He took one of

them to some of the battles and the other would play with the battle-wounds on his father’s shoulder (when he returned)”

• Teaching children to respect elders also develops manhood in the child. Abu Hurairah, may Allah be pleased with him, narrated that the Prophet, *sallallaahu ‘alaihi wa sallam*, said: “The younger ones (should) greet the elders...”

• Respecting them in public. Sahl Ibn Sa’d said: “The Prophet, *sallallaahu ‘alaihi wa sallam*, was brought a cup to drink from and he had a child to his right and elders to his left. After he drank he said to the child, “Do you permit me to give this to the elders before you?”

• Teaching children manly sports like swimming, horse riding and shooting. ‘Umar ibn Al-Khattaab, may Allah be pleased with him, wrote to Abu ‘Ubaydah Ibn Al-Jarraah, may Allah be pleased with him, instructing: “Teach your children how to swim!”

• Avoiding things that would soften them up or make them resemble females, like music, dancing, wearing silk or gold and anything else that is feminine.

• Refraining from insulting them publicly, encouraging them to be participative and making them feel important.

• Greeting them with Salaam. Anas Ibn Maalik, may Allah be pleased with him, said: “The Prophet, *sallallaahu ‘alaihi wa sallam*, passed by a group of children and greeted them with Salaam.” [Muslim]

• Taking and valuing their opinions.

• Giving them responsibilities which are suitable for their ability and age and telling them secrets. Anas bin Maalik, may Allah be pleased with him, said: “The Prophet, *sallallaahu ‘alaihi wa sallam*, came to me while I was playing with other children and greeted me with Salaam, then he sent me on an errand which delayed me from getting to my mother on time. When I finally reached home, she asked: ‘What delayed you?’ I replied: ‘The Prophet, *sallallaahu ‘alaihi wa sallam*, sent me on an errand.’ She asked: ‘What was it?’ I replied: ‘It is a secret!’ She said, ‘Do not tell the Prophet’s secret to anyone!’” [Muslim]

• Instilling courage in them by means such as by delivering speeches.

• Attaching great importance to chastity and decency and avoiding fashionable clothes, stylish haircuts, and modern ‘mannerisms’!

• Keeping them away from luxury, laziness, unnecessary rest and idleness. ‘Umar ibn Al-Khattaab, may Allah be pleased with him, said: ‘Toughen up, luxury does not last for ever.’

• Keeping them away from sinful gatherings that involve music and other prohibitions because this contradicts manhood and integrity.

Article source: <http://www.islamweb.net/emainpage/>



Social System in Islam

It is an established fact that Islam is a comprehensive way of life, a complete guidance for the whole of mankind covering all aspects of life. Islamic law (*Shari’ah*) is not confined only to civil and criminal matters, but covers every aspect of life. The moral aspect, physical, psychic, economic etc. Nothing is left behind. It (*Shari’ah*) takes care of man from when he is in his mother’s womb until after death. It deals with every detail.

Shari’ah is the knowledge, the discipline, and the science of the rights and obligations of man, and what is good and evil for him individually and collectively.

Thus, the scheme of life, which Islam envisages consists of a set of rights and obligations, and every human being who accepts this religion has to live by them. Broadly speaking, the law of Islam deals with man’s life in the four following categories of rights and obligations, or relationships:

- (1) The relationship of man with his Creator, Allah the Almighty
- (2) His relationship with himself, or his own rights upon himself
- (3) His relationship with the other people
- (4) His relationship with his natural environment; in other words, the rights of those resources which Allah has placed within his power and has allowed him to use for his benefit

Creatures by the nature of their being created, have to submit to their Creator. Having established that Allah is in reality The Only One God to be worshipped, the Qur’an and Sunnah (the Prophetic traditions) explain the right way to worship Him. There must be unity between man’s worship and his attitude towards life. The God worshipped by man in his prayer and devotion is the same God addressed while studying, earning a living, and in attempting to better conditions on earth. It is the same God applied to while eating, drinking, while communicating with

his family, with other individuals, with other societies, peoples and states, whether in peace time or war.

Allah Says (what means): {Say: “Indeed, my prayer, my rites of sacrifice, my living, and my dying are for Allah, Lord of the worlds...”} [Qur’an 6:162]

The regular worship during the span of life provides man with an extraordinary spiritual strength. The prescribed daily prayers, for instance, consist in repeating and refreshing five times a day the belief in which he reposes his faith. The times of prayer - dawn, noon, afternoon, sunset and night, correspond with the five periods of man’s life, namely childhood and youth, age of maturity, old age, death, and life after death until the Resurrection. Dawn of the next day signifies the Resurrection, so each day is a complete cycle of man’s whole life in parallel with the life of the world. During each time of worship, a Muslim dissociates himself from his worldly engagements for a few moments, cleanses himself and presents himself before his Lord, seeking audience before Him. By reciting from the Noble Qur’an, he is elevated into a state as if he were receiving it directly from the Lord of the worlds. He asks his Creator repeatedly to enable him to follow His Chosen Path, refreshes his belief in all the pillars of faith and enlivens his memory with the fact that he has to appear before his Lord and give an account of his entire life. He unburdens himself to Him and begs His succor for all the difficulties in which he is entangled in life. Thus, the daily prayers strengthen the foundations of his faith, prepare him for the observance of a life of virtue and obedience to Allah, and refresh the belief from which spring courage, sincerity, purposefulness, purity of the soul, and enrichment of morals. Allah Says in the Qur’an (what means): {Indeed, prayer prohibits immorality and wrongdoing} [Qur’an 29:45]

Then, again, a Muslim must perform his daily prayers in congregation and especially the congregational prayer on Friday (*Salat Al-Jumu’ah*). This creates among the Muslims a bond of love and mutual understanding. This arouses in them a sense of their collective unity and fosters among them the feelings of brotherhood. All of them perform their prayers in one congregation and this inculcates in them a deep feeling of brotherhood. Prayers are also a symbol of equality, for the poor and the rich, the ‘low’ and the ‘high; the rulers and the ruled, the educated and the unlettered, the black and the white, all together stand shoulder to shoulder in one row and prostrate before their Almighty Creator. They also inculcate in them a strong sense of collective discipline and obedience to the leader of the community. Prayers train the Muslims in all those virtues, which make possible the development of a rich individual and collective life.

Man as Allah’s vicegerent:

Islam regards man as Allah’s vicegerent and cannot tolerate his degradation by his submission to any kind of humiliation or oppressive powers. Islam is the real way to freedom and liberation. It is the religion, which invites man to struggle against oppression and tyranny for his freedom and dignity. So, by prostrating for Allah Alone, a Muslim declares that he does not bow down to anyone or anything other than Him. Islam is the way to real freedom, one which allows no serfdom, promises all men freedom, salvation and independence in thought, action, property and religion, and safeguards man’s integrity as well his honour and dignity. Islam also frees man from the captivity of his lusts; sensual pleasures should not tempt and corrupt him. Drinking alcohol, usage of drugs, permissiveness, gambling, night clubs, mixed social

activities, bad movies, homosexuality, fornication and adultery, sex outside marriage, pornography, overspending, conspicuous consumption, arrogance, greed, etc. are all the humiliating factors for him which take his honor and dignity away and have been used by all kinds of colonialism, exploitation and imperialism. It is the daily prayer and other forms of worship such as alms-giving (Zakat), which inculcate in man the will to struggle against all aspects of self-degradation.

Cardinal causes for social convulsions and disruptions:

As pointed out by a contemporary Muslim thinker, two cardinal causes for social convulsions and disruptions are: (1) the idea that “let everyone work so that I could eat” and (2) the thought that “it does not concern me if others die of hunger so long as I am full.” Islam eliminates the first of these vices through the ban of all kinds of transactions based on ‘interest and usury’, and the second through the command to pay Zakat. Zakat is the bridge between the various economic levels of the society.

Zakat (the right of needy people) is the Islamic obligation, which every Muslim whose financial situation is above a certain specified minimum must pay. The purpose of giving Zakat is to gain Allah’s approval, and this is possible by serving people.

The money that we pay in Zakat is not something Allah needs or receives. He is above any need or desire. He, in His benign mercy, promises the alms-givers manifold rewards, but there is one basic condition for being thus rewarded, and it is that when we pay in the name of Allah, we should not expect any worldly gains from the beneficiaries, nor aim at making our names as philanthropists. Allah Says in the Qur’an (what means): {Those who spend their wealth in the way of Allah and then do not follow up

what they have spent with reminders [of it] or [other] injury will have their reward with their Lord, and there will be no fear concerning them, nor will they grieve. Kind speech and forgiveness are better than charity followed by injury. And Allah is Free of need and Forbearing} [Qur’an 2:262-263]

Zakat is as fundamental to Islam as other forms of worship, such as the daily five-time mandatory Prayer (*As-Salat*), the obligatory Fasting of one full month (Ramadan) and the Pilgrimage to Makkah (Haj). Its fundamental importance lies, in addition to its economic and social function, in the fact that it fosters in the Muslim qualities of sacrifice and rids him of selfishness and avarice.

The Muslim society has immensely to gain from the institution of Zakat. It is the bounden duty of every well-to-do Muslim to help his lowly-placed, poor brethren. His actual wealth, and his share in it is very small when compared to the direct gifts of Allah such as the sun, rain, earth, and natural resources, so it is not to be spent solely on his own comfort and luxury - there are other rightful claimants upon his wealth, and they are the nation’s widows and orphans, the poor and the sick; those who have ability but lack the means to make their living, and those who have the faculties and intelligence but not the money with which they could become useful members of the community.

Islam regards it as a great injustice to fill up one’s own stomach and coffers while thousands die of hunger or suffer the agonies of unemployment. Islam is severely opposed to such selfishness and greed. By paying the obligatory Zakat, one shares a very small percentage of his wealth with others and helps them stand on their own feet and become productive members of the society.

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CHAIRMAN

Abdullah bin Khalifa al-Attiyah

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Faisal Abdulhameed al-Mudahka

Deputy Managing Editor

K T Chacko

- P.O.Box 2888, Doha, Qatar
editor@gulf-times.com
44350478 (News),
44466404 (Sport),
44466636 (Home delivery)
44350474
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GULF TIMES

California vote
boosts Democrats’
hopes for 2026

Democrats head into next year's elections with a fighting chance to win back the US House of Representatives, after victories that showcase sharply different visions of the party as it seeks to claw back some power in a Washington dominated by Republican President Donald Trump. The most critical win for Democrats' House hopes came in California on Tuesday, when voters approved a ballot measure to allow state lawmakers to adopt a new congressional map that could net the party as many as five new seats, offsetting a comparable move in Texas to benefit Republicans in a nationwide battle over redistricting.

Republicans are eager to seize on New York City's mayor-elect – democratic socialist Zohran Mamdani, a state representative with a sweeping progressive agenda – who Trump and his allies will seek to portray as the face of the Democratic Party in the November 2026 midterm elections that will determine control of the US Congress for the final two years of Trump's term. But two moderate Democrats elected governor, former Representative Abigail Spanberger of Virginia and Representative Mikie Sherrill of New Jersey, were also catapulted onto the national stage after winning their states by sizeable margins, presenting contrasting versions of the party. Tuesday's highest-profile contests occurred in Democratic-leaning territory that will play little role in the races that will determine control of Congress.

“I don't think we can use tonight as a total painted picture of what the next election cycle's going to be,” said Antjuan Seawright, a South Carolina-based Democratic strategist. “So I think we have to make sure we continue to motivate, educate and galvanise the constituencies that came out tonight to make sure we keep them in the Democratic column.”

To win the Senate, Democrats would need to defend seats in Georgia, Michigan and Minnesota while also making inroads in Florida and North Carolina

Republicans hold a 219-213 majority in the House and a 53-47 majority in the Senate. To win the Senate, Democrats would need to defend seats in highly competitive states including Georgia, Michigan and Minnesota while also making inroads in Republican-held states including Florida and North Carolina.

But the president's party historically loses House seats in the midterms. Democrats won the House majority in 2018, Trump's first midterm

election, netting 41 seats that first brought Spanberger and Sherrill into office. They used their power to conduct oversight on Trump's administration and twice impeached him. “I think it's vastly more important that moderates won in big states that often elect Republican governors than it is that a far-left candidate won in NYC,” said Matt Bennett, vice-president of Third Way, a Democratic centrist think tank.

In the lead-up to 2026, Trump has urged state lawmakers in Republican-led legislatures to redraw their congressional maps to maximise House Republicans' ability to maintain control of the chamber by minimising the number of competitive battleground districts. States typically create new maps each decade to reflect new census data. California's ballot initiative, Proposition 50, was a direct response to Republican-led Texas' redrawing of its congressional map to net as many as five more seats for Republicans.

“Passing Prop 50 is a big win for (California Governor Gavin) Newsom and Democrats in neutralising Texas, but the partisan fight is far from over,” said Kate Maeder, a California-based political strategist at KMM Strategies. “These five pickup seats, we're still going to have to fight for them. Not all five can be taken for granted, but we definitely have an advantage now.” The top Democrats in Congress, both from New York, have maintained an arm's-length distance from Mamdani. House Democratic leader Hakeem Jeffries withheld his support until October 24, the day before early voting began, and Senate Democratic leader Chuck Schumer didn't endorse Mamdani and declined to tell reporters on Tuesday whether he voted for him.

House Republicans' campaign arm pledged in an October 28 memo to “make Zohran Mamdani famous in battleground races next November,” outlining a strategy to nationalise the most competitive races in the country by tying Democrats to the mayor-elect.

On Tuesday, National Republican Congressional Committee spokesman Mike Marinella said voters will make House Democrats pay next year for surrendering to a “radical socialist ... and the far-left mob.”

Erin Maguire, a Republican political strategist at consulting firm Axiom Strategies, said Mamdani will be a prominent foil for Republicans over the next year. Republicans have similarly elevated former House Speaker Nancy Pelosi of California and Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez of New York to try to drag down Democratic candidates in competitive districts.

“It won't work in every district, because not every message works in every district, not every foil works the same in every district,” Maguire said. – Reuters

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What can Europe offer
a fragmenting world?

By Ngaire Woods
Oxford

At the recent Asean Summit in Kuala Lumpur, European Council President António Costa outlined Europe's strategic posture. “The European Union,” he said, “is proud to engage with Asean as a reliable partner in today's shifting geopolitical environment.” His remarks echoed those made four months earlier by European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, who proposed teaming up with the 12-member Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP).

European leaders' ongoing efforts to seek and strengthen “reliable” partnerships are largely motivated by US President Donald Trump's attempts to force allies to pay more for American security guarantees and military aid, as well as by his steep and often arbitrary tariffs. Trump himself underscored this strategic imperative the day before Costa's remarks, when he announced an additional 10% levy on Canadian goods in response to a provincial ad in Ontario quoting former President Ronald Reagan as saying that tariffs “hurt every American worker and consumer.”

This instability presents Europe with a unique opportunity to offer an alternative to overreliance on either the United States or China. Seeking to position his country as a counterweight to American assertiveness, Chinese President Xi Jinping has framed his foreign policy as a “clear stand against hegemonism and power politics.” Speaking at the Shanghai Co-operation Organisation summit in September, Xi – flanked by Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Russian President Vladimir Putin, and 17 other heads of state – pledged to “practice true

multilateralism” and promote a global order based on free and open trade.

Yet many leaders remain wary of Xi's assurances. China's bilateral offers have grown more conditional, and its bullying of the Philippines and other countries in the South China Sea has become increasingly overt in recent years. At the same time, the country's economic slowdown has curtailed the extensive overseas financing it once provided and dampened Chinese demand for commodities like iron ore and soybeans from developing and emerging economies.

To seize this opportunity, the EU must rethink its geopolitical comparative advantage. While an older generation of European leaders continues to tout the bloc's social model, shared values, and generous aid programmes, these once-powerful assets have lost much of their appeal – even within Europe itself.

Across the continent, younger people feel ill-served by social systems their countries can no longer afford. The postwar “European values” that long served as unifying ideals are now being contested in Germany, France, the United Kingdom, and beyond, as centrist parties lose ground to a resurgent far right.

Meanwhile, aid and humanitarian budgets are increasingly squeezed by rising defence costs and tighter fiscal policies, leading Europe's traditional partners to seek something more tangible.

Europe's future influence will hinge less on values and aid, and more on economic opportunity. Unlike China – and increasingly the US – the EU remains a vast and open market, welcoming foreign direct investment. Easy access to the UK, Switzerland, and Norway further strengthens its position.

Moreover, Europe's so-called “periphery” is far more dynamic

than many assume. European commentators frequently lament the continent's sluggish growth, but they tend to overlook the vitality of economies such as Malta, Ireland, Cyprus, Poland, Croatia, Spain, Greece, Slovenia, and Bulgaria, all of which are growing faster than the continental average.

The same is true of technology and finance. While the EU is often dismissed as a referee rather than a player in tech and private equity, emerging European startups are beginning to challenge that stereotype.

But there is much more to be done. For starters, policymakers must act on former European Central Bank President Mario Draghi's report on EU competitiveness, which called for up to €800bn (\$922bn) in additional annual investment to meet the bloc's defence, infrastructure, clean energy, and AI goals. A good start would be to offer Europeans a clear picture of the envisaged destination.

Fortunately, the EU has the resources to advance its strategic objectives. It can do so by harnessing its capital-markets union, by nurturing an innovation-friendly ecosystem, and by securing affordable, sustainable energy supplies. It could also make better use of the European Investment Bank, whose substantial capital and mandate remain underused.

Importantly, EU leaders must resist the temptation to pursue partnerships through regulation or moralising. Other countries are not attracted by a Europe that imposes rules unilaterally or mimics the heavy-handed tactics of major powers. Instead of threatening carbon tariffs or supply-chain exclusion, the EU should promote co-operative ventures – technology sharing, concessional finance, and joint clean-energy projects – anchored in mutually agreed

monitoring and accountability standards.

Europe's defence capabilities have long been constrained by fragmented decision-making, overreliance on Nato, and a balkanised industrial base unable to scale in wartime. But Russia's invasion of Ukraine has jolted Europe out of its complacency, uniting the continent, driving up military spending, and accelerating investment in new technologies.

Rearmament efforts must focus on innovation and efficiency rather than political patronage. That means reforming procurement systems weighed down by pressures to create jobs for key constituencies. Europe should also prioritise developing its own capabilities over awarding contracts to US firms. Only then can it position itself as a credible security partner.

Politically, the EU's greatest strength lies in its deep-rooted tradition of co-operation through law and institutions. This provides a robust foundation for stable, noncoercive, mutually beneficial partnerships and enhances the bloc's credibility as a defender of smaller states, both within and beyond its borders. For many midsize countries seeking reliability and consistency, that is precisely what makes Europe appealing.

Although it may seem dull, the EU's legalism is a strategic asset. Where governance in the US can hinge on personality politics, and in China on centralised control, Europe's rules-based systems provide a degree of stability few others can match. So long as the bloc upholds its commitment to the rule of law, its predictability will remain one of its most powerful competitive advantages. – Project Syndicate

• Ngaire Woods is Dean of the Blavatnik School of Government at the University of Oxford.



European Union flags flutter outside the EU Commission headquarters in Brussels, Belgium. (Reuters)

Can Africa ride critical minerals wave to economic boom?

• Africa holds about 30% of world’s mineral reserves
• With global demand surging, Africa wants more gains
• African leaders hope to push drive for value at COP30

By **Clar Ni Chonghaile** and **Kim Harrisberg**
London/Johannesburg

As global powers scramble for critical minerals, African countries are pushing for new investment to process more of their own raw materials and meet their people’s demands for economic growth and jobs, analysts say.

To capitalise on the burgeoning demand, the continent must address power shortages, skills gaps, trade barriers and limited industrial capacity.

“This is an unprecedented opportunity for Africa to get on the value-chain bandwagon,” said Hany Besada, senior fellow at the Firoz Lalji Institute for Africa at the London School of Economics and associate professor at the Wits School of Governance.

Africa has around 30% of the world’s mineral reserves, including cobalt, lithium and nickel.

The International Energy Agency expects lithium demand to grow fivefold by 2040, graphite and nickel demand to double and demand for cobalt and rare earth elements to increase by 50% to 60% by 2040.

Africa needs to “build local value chains that integrate mining with refining and manufacturing and innovation, and this goes

hand-in-hand with the green transformation of the continent’s economies,” Besada said.

For example, Zimbabwe, Africa’s top lithium producer, has been nudging mining companies to process the minerals in the country to help lift its economy.

“We are creating new jobs, not only in the mining sector, but in the value addition of our minerals,” Evelyn Ndlovu, minister of environment, climate and wildlife, told the Thomson Reuters Foundation. “We have got a lot of people coming in to invest in Zimbabwe.”

China’s Zhejiang Huayou Cobalt said in October it would start producing lithium sulphate during the first quarter of 2026 from its new \$400mn plant in Zimbabwe.

At the United Nations’ COP30 climate talks in Brazil in November, African countries hope to win support, especially from the Global South, to ensure demand for the minerals fuelling the digital economy and clean energy transition translates into growth, jobs and development.

Africa “wants to be a meaningful participant and beneficiary of the green economy,” said Ibrahim Aidaara, deputy Africa director at the National Resource Governance Institute.

“That means an industrial policy that creates jobs, protects rights



and enables countries to climb the value chain and not be trapped at the bottom.”

What stands in the way

Aidaara pointed to the Democratic Republic of Congo, which supplies 70% of the world’s cobalt, as an example of a country where mineral wealth has led to child labour, displacement and armed conflict.

Across Africa, barriers to mineral processing – called beneficiation – include a lack of electricity, high tariffs between African countries, infrastructure gaps and

cumbersome customs procedures.

“Addressing barriers to trade is critical ... If you don’t do that, efforts towards (mineral) beneficiation and industrialisation remain aspirational,” Besada said.

Regional co-operation is also key, including initiatives like the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), designed to unify all 1.4bn people in more than 50 nations into a single market.

US President Donald Trump’s imposition of tariffs could give momentum to the AfCFTA, which was officially launched in 2021

but has less than half of member states actively trading under the framework.

The African Union’s Green Minerals Strategy, launched this year, and the Lobito Corridor railway, which connects Zambia’s copper belt to Angola’s Atlantic coast, are examples of co-operation that can help make Africa more than a mere supplier.

In West Africa, the minerals boom has sparked a resurgence of resource nationalism, with countries, particularly military regimes like the one in bauxite-rich Guinea, imposing conditions on foreign mining companies to force value addition.

But Aidaara said this approach might not ensure lasting benefits to local communities.

“This problem ... is bigger than individual countries. We believe at (the) national level we need ... well-defined and evidence-based strategies to leverage minerals and create more economic and industrialisation opportunities.”

Listening to Gen Z

The demand for better use of resources is also coming from Africa’s streets.

Over the past year, so-called Gen Z protests from Kenya to Madagascar have seen young Africans express their frustration over everything from corruption to power cuts. Demonstrations in Madagascar led to the fall of the president in October.

“Civil society groups and large populations, including the young,

hunger for change. With digital proliferation, they see how things have changed in neighbouring countries,” Besada said.

Governments, even dictatorial ones, are mindful that this engaged population may no longer accept that only rich elites, whether they are foreign or local, benefit from national resources.

Growing African middle classes also play a role.

“They pay taxes, they have more of an interest in how economies are shaped and run. They have more to lose if things go badly, and governments understand this,” Besada said.

At COP30, the drive to ensure the energy transition benefits local populations will be on the agenda.

More than 100 civil society groups, including Amnesty International and rights organisations from Brazil to Indonesia, want governments to put transition minerals, and communities affected by mining, at the centre of climate action.

They urged the United Nations and governments to work with Indigenous peoples and civil society, among others, to strengthen governance of the sector.

“Without a drastic shift, the transition will exacerbate and entrench unjust practices and repeat the exploitative patterns of the past,” the groups said in an open letter. (Reporting by Clar Ni Chonghaile and Kim Harrisberg; editing by Jack Graham and Ayla Jean Yackley.

— Thomson Reuters Foundation

Vietnam’s push for ‘chip-to-ship’ conglomerates raises red flags

By **Francesco Guarascio**
Hanoi

Two days after Vietnam’s top leader called on local private companies to help build infrastructure, listed conglomerate Vingroup stepped forward to develop a \$70bn nationwide high-speed railway and build the trains to run on it. Communist Party leader To Lam’s request was part of a broader call for a stronger private sector in Resolution 68, a party development blueprint issued in May that some analysts labelled ‘Doi Moi 2.0’ after the 1980s reforms that opened the Southeast Asian nation’s economy.

Six months on, views on Resolution 68’s possible impact range from upbeat to worried, but the thrust of the initiative has become clearer: It is less about liberalisation and more about boosting national champions, according to a dozen business advisers and economists.

The high-speed railway, Vietnam’s most expensive infrastructure project, has emerged as a test case – and a source of financial stability concerns flagged in rare instances of explicit criticism by the central bank and finance ministry in documents seen by Reuters.

Railway plan raises alarm

Vingroup, whose core business is property, in October set up a subsidiary to produce steel for civil works, after bidding for the railway. Under its proposal, the state would cover land compensation and fund 80% of the project via interest-free loans with decades-long maturities.

Vietnam’s central bank warned of Vingroup’s high leverage and lack of rail experience, saying the project needed special state guarantees “to ensure the safety of banking operations,” it wrote in an opinion dated May 19 that was reviewed by Reuters.

The finance ministry said the proposed 0% interest rate amounted to a state subsidy that could affect Vietnam’s credit ratings. It also flagged the 30-year repayment schedule – with debt serviced only at maturity – as “very risky,” according to a government document.

Three people briefed on the matter said state officials encouraged Vingroup to bid and discussed possible real estate projects along the railway. One said support for Vingroup’s loss-making EV maker VinFast was also discussed.

They declined to be named because the conversations were confidential. Two months after the bid, the government announced a ban on fossil-fuel motorbikes in central Hanoi from mid-2026, citing pollution concerns, leading to a plunge in Honda sales and surging demand for VinFast’s electric models.

- Hanoi backs national champions with ‘preferential’ policies
- Vingroup encouraged to bid for \$70bn railway, sources say
- Central bank, finance ministry, Fitch flag financial risks
- Investors remain cautious, fear favouritism



General Secretary of the Communist Party of Vietnam To Lam leaves after attending a parade celebrating the 80th anniversary of independence in Hanoi, Vietnam. (Reuters)

Asked by Reuters, Vingroup said its debt level was “safe by international standards”; it had not discussed with authorities any privileged treatment and was conscious of its responsibility on strategic projects.

“Over-reliance on selected business groups to drive growth and funnelling credit through them can exacerbate concentration risks in banks’ loan portfolios,” Willie Tanoto of rating agency Fitch told Reuters, noting the planned reforms might however improve capital allocation if properly supervised.

Shortly after Vingroup’s bid, local car assembler Thaco made a similar proposal for the railway.

Vietnam’s central bank, finance ministry and government did not respond to requests for comment. The government has not yet named a contractor but a draft resolution seen by Reuters largely confirms the funding strategy proposed by the two Vietnamese conglomerates.

Construction on the first line connecting Hanoi with Ho Chi Minh City, more than 1,500km away, is expected to start next year.

Party offers preferential policies to private firms

The Communist-run country aims to make the private sector the key “driving force” of the economy under the state’s “leading role”, according to a party document released in October.

To achieve that, it wants more private Vietnamese companies to have a global footprint and is willing to favour their involvement in strategic projects with incentives and “preferential policies”, such as “limited bidding or direct contracting”, according to Resolution 68.

Fostering national champions with supportive measures is a clear objective of the new policy, said Nguyen Ba Hung, senior economist at the Asian Development Bank, but added it was important to ensure large conglomerates did not acquire excessive influence.

Addressing corruption risks is mentioned only once in the 15-page document – a shift from the sweeping anti-graft campaign unleashed in recent years by late party leader Nguyen Phu Trong, which led to the arrest of multiple senior officials, at times paralysing the administration.

Investors remain cautious

Hong Sun, honorary chairman of the Korean Business Association in Vietnam, says the country wants “chip-to-ship” corporations, citing South Korean chaebols as models.

A senior foreign official, who asked not to be named as he was not allowed to talk to media, likened the strategy to less successful efforts in Southeast Asia where “politically-connected conglomerates operate inefficiently in protected sectors”.

Overseas investors have been cautious. Investment pledges fell 5% in the five months after Resolution 68 was issued compared to the same period last year, and foreign cash has continued to exit the stock market despite a rally, with foreign ownership of Vietnamese shares down to around 15% of the total from 16% in May.

Many investors express support for the party’s declared intention to boost the private sector, but others worry about transparency and favouritism.

Five Vietnam-based business consultants, who asked for anonymity to protect relations with their foreign clients, reported concerns about procurement practices and preferential treatment for large firms. One business executive and two economists echoed those concerns, also requesting anonymity to speak more freely.

“Recent policies tend to create a certain level of prioritisation for a few large, well-capitalised domestic investors,” said Thi Nguyen, counsel at Vietnamese legal firm bizconsult, noting that may be only a temporary outcome. — Reuters



A Vietnamese flag flies atop the State Bank building, near the Vietcombank and Bank for Investment and Development of Vietnam buildings, in central Hanoi, Vietnam. (Reuters)

Energy transition is achievable in emerging markets

By **Rakesh Mohan** and **Janak Raj**
New Delhi

Efforts to mitigate climate change have largely focused on the shift away from fossil fuels in energy production. As a result, most climate-finance assessments have studied the costs of such a transition and determined that large investments are required to deploy cleaner sources of power.

But in a new working paper, we found that shifting the energy sector to renewables is relatively affordable for emerging-market economies (EMEs) in the G20. Our study measures the climate-finance needs from 2022 to 2030 of Argentina, Brazil, China, India, Indonesia, Mexico, Russia, South Africa, and Türkiye to reduce carbon dioxide emissions in the power, road transport, cement, and steel sectors, which account for about half of such emissions in these nine EMEs.

For starters, we found that the clean-energy transition is advancing at a steady pace. The power sector accounts for about 27% of the CO2 emissions in these nine EMEs, which together account for 44% of global power-sector emissions. To meet increasing energy demand and climate targets, these economies have focused on incrementally phasing out the use of fossil fuels in power generation and replacing them with renewables. Between 2023 and 2030, the share of clean energy in their total installed capacity is projected to rise from 54% to 65%, while their total installed capacity of renewables should almost double, from 2,150 gigawatts to 4,220 gigawatts.

The largest shifts during this period are expected in India and South Africa, where the share of renewables is set to rise from 45% to 63% and from 25% to 42%, respectively. China is also making significant advances, with its share of renewables projected to increase from 55% to 65%. In seven of these EMEs (excluding Indonesia and South Africa), more than half of the total installed power capacity will come from non-fossil-fuel sources by 2030.

This is possible because rapid technological developments and China’s massive push into green manufacturing have dramatically lowered the cost of establishing solar and wind farms in recent years. Globally, the cost of installed solar PV and onshore wind decreased by 83% and 42%, respectively, between 2010 and 2022.

In addition, the cost of batteries has also fallen – by about 90% between 2010 and 2023 – driven by innovation and lower raw-material costs. Pumped-storage hydroelectricity projects are also more affordable now, especially in China and India, owing to favourable topographic conditions, low labour and material costs, and

relatively streamlined regulatory and permitting processes.

Given the falling costs of renewable energy, the G20’s EMEs will need only \$121bn in climate finance for power generation – the amount over and above the investment required in a business-as-usual scenario – between 2024 and 2030. According to our estimates, capital expenditure for fossil-fuel-based power plants will decline by \$156bn over that period, while spending for clean power will increase by \$277bn. Most notably, India and China will save \$43bn and \$52bn, respectively, on capital expenditure for fossil-fuel-based power sources but will need to increase such spending on renewables by \$90bn and \$102bn, respectively.

Storage costs (both battery and pumped storage) for renewables will likely entail additional capital expenditure of \$28bn for these EMEs, bringing the overall climate finance needed for 2024-30 to \$149bn, or \$21bn annually. Excluding China, the remaining eight EMEs will require \$94bn, or \$13bn annually, in cumulative climate finance (including storage costs) to shift to renewable sources of power.

These estimates do not account for the additional costs of adapting electricity grids to cleaner energy sources. Large-scale growth in AI and data centres may also increase energy demand more than envisaged.

Of the nine EMEs we studied, India is projected to need the largest amount of climate finance – \$57bn, or 38% of the total estimate – to continue decarbonising the power sector, while China will require slightly less, around \$55bn, because the increase in renewables’ share of installed capacity is expected to be more pronounced in India than in China. Climate finance as a percentage of GDP will likely be largest in South Africa, at 0.25%, followed by India (0.13%) and Mexico (0.09%).

A decade or so ago, a consensus emerged that financing the energy transition would require massive amounts of capital. But, in the intervening years, the cost of renewables has fallen dramatically. Compared to road transport, cement, and steel in the nine EMEs we studied, the power sector will require the least amount of climate finance for the foreseeable future, even after accounting for storage costs and low renewable load factors. Now that decarbonising the energy system is much more affordable in EMEs, there is no excuse not to do so. — Project Syndicate

• Rakesh Mohan, a former deputy governor of the Reserve Bank of India, is President Emeritus and Distinguished Fellow at the Centre for Social and Economic Progress.

• Janak Raj is Senior Fellow at the Centre for Social and Economic Progress.

UDST in QSW beach cleanup initiative

University of Doha for Science and Technology (UDST) co-organised a beach cleanup initiative at Al Wakrah Public Beach, as part of Qatar Sustainability Week (QSW) and its commitment to environmental sustainability and community engagement. Held in collaboration with the Ministry of Youth and Sports, the Ministry of Municipality, and the Friends of the Environment Center Qatar, and sponsored by Qatar Petrochemical Company (Qapco) and energy sector partners supporting the campaign, the event brought together 150 students to participate in marine conservation efforts. The primary objective of the cleanup was to raise awareness among students about the sources and impacts of marine pollution, particularly plastic waste, on coastal and marine ecosystems. Participants gained



hands-on experience in environmental protection, reinforcing the importance of preserving Qatar's natural resources for future generations. By engaging in this initiative, students developed a stronger sense of responsibility toward their communities

while understanding the role of proactive environmental stewardship. Speaking about the significance of the event, Dr Salem Al-Naemi, president of UDST, said: "We believe in promoting a culture of sustainability through applied education and hands-on learning experiences. This beach cleanup initiative serves as a powerful platform to

educate our students on the importance of marine conservation and to inspire them to take action toward a cleaner and more sustainable future. By collaborating with key stakeholders, we continue to contribute to Qatar's environmental goals in alignment with Qatar National Vision 2030." During the event, participants worked

alongside environmental experts, learning about waste classification, recycling techniques, and the impact of pollutants on biodiversity. The cleanup was followed by an interactive discussion where students reflected on their experiences and explored innovative solutions to reduce marine pollution, a statement added.

Second Edition of Qatar Boat Show opens at Old Doha Port

Under the patronage of HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani, the Qatar Boat Show 2025 officially opened Wednesday at Old Doha Port, drawing a large crowd that included dignitaries, guests, and maritime enthusiasts from around the world.

The opening day showcased Qatar's growing leadership in the regional maritime sector and its capacity to host world-class events that blend innovation, craftsmanship, and celebration of maritime heritage along Doha's iconic waterfront. The four-day event promises an exceptional experience marked by excellence and creativity.

In a press statement, CEO of Old Doha Port and Chairman of the Organising Committee Engineer Mohammed Abdullah al-Mulla said: "The Qatar Boat Show stands as a testament to our nation's growing influence in the maritime world"

"By bringing together industry leaders under one roof, we continue to position Qatar as a hub of innovation, investment, and sustainable growth in the yachting sector. This gala dinner not only celebrates our collective achievements but also sets the stage for a world-class event that reflects the very essence of Qatar's maritime heritage and modern ambition," he added.



This year's edition saw record-breaking participation, with 505 regional and international brands, 85 exhibitors, and over 65 luxury yachts from 25 countries, marking a 25% growth compared to the inaugural edition and solidifying its status as the fastest-growing marine exhibition in the region.

More than 50% of exhibitors represented Qatari companies, underscoring the country's advanced position in marine industries and innovation. Notably, 55% of the yachts on display are 2025 models, featuring cutting-edge global technologies in the maritime sector.

The marina hosted several global

unveilings, including the 74-metre Ultra Voltra yacht and the Ultima 55, alongside standout launches from leading Qatari companies.

This year's show is backed by a distinguished group of local partners and maritime leaders, reflecting growing trust in Qatar's vision for the sector.

Key partners include the Ministry of Transport, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Visit Qatar, Ooredoo, and Al Kass Sports Channels, among other prominent public and private entities. The number of sponsors has doubled compared to the previous edition, reinforcing the show's position as a premier platform for luxury, in-

novation, and yachting.

The "Oshar" art gallery offered a unique opportunity to explore Qatar's rich maritime heritage through works by renowned artists and painters residing in the country. Live music, fireworks, and drone shows added a festive and entertaining atmosphere.

Visitors also enjoyed premium hospitality experiences, with over 30 local and international food and beverage outlets.

The Qatar Boat Show 2025 will continue welcoming visitors at Old Doha Port through Saturday. Opening hours are 4pm to 10pm today, and 4pm to 9pm tomorrow. (QNA)



Msheireb Museums, Sidra Medicine bring medical discovery journey to life

The fifth session of the Science Café 2025 series on Tuesday (November 4) brought together clinicians, researchers, students, and community members to examine how patient care, population data, and laboratory research converge to drive medical discoveries and enhance healthcare outcomes.

A collaborative initiative between Msheireb Museums and Sidra Medicine, the event was held at Bin Jelmood House, where participants explored "The Journey of Translational Medicine: From Bedside to Bench and Beyond."

The talk provided a comprehensive platform to understand the multi-faceted process through which observations made at a patient's bedside inspire rigorous laboratory research, which in turn leads to innovative treatments and therapies that ultimately benefit community health. Attendees gained valuable insights into how science transforms patient care and empowers healthier futures for all.

The expert panel featured Dr



Experts at the fifth session of the Science Café 2025 series held at Msheireb Museums.

Taskeen Khan, director of Research and Content at the World Innovation Summit for Health (WISH), who moderated the session, alongside distinguished clinicians and researchers from Sidra Medicine: Prof Ibrahim Janahi, chief medical officer and chair of Medical Education; Prof Khalid Fakhro, chief research officer and director of the Precision Medicine Programme; Dr Tawfeeq Ben-Omran, division chief of Genetic and Genomic Medicine; Dr Aboubakr Imam, division chief of Paediatric Nephrology and Hypertension; and Dr Ruba Benini, paediatric neurologist, epileptologist, and

medical director of the Neurodiagnostic Laboratory.

Experts outlined how clinicians and researchers examine diseases at the fundamental molecular and genetic level, demystifying the complex journey from initial patient observation to groundbreaking scientific discovery.

Particular attention was given to how genetic information and insights from populations help in identifying distinct disease patterns and unlock new avenues for treatment.

The session also explored how laboratory discoveries are subsequently translated into personalised treatment plans for

patients, highlighting a continuous cycle of innovation that offers new hope for complex medical conditions.

The programme was enriched by thought-provoking narratives on how patient experiences directly guide scientific inquiry, ensuring research addresses the most pressing health challenges facing communities today.

Abdulla al-Naama, general manager of Msheireb Museums, emphasised the significance of this collaboration, saying: "Translational medicine represents the very essence of how knowledge transforms into tangible impact on people's

lives. This session embodies our commitment to creating spaces where complex scientific concepts become accessible conversations that inspire and educate our community"

Dr Sahar Da'as, a research manager at Sidra Medicine and lead of the Science Café initiative, represents this translational journey in her own work. She leads a unique research programme that uses zebrafish models, which are transparent and allow scientists to see internal processes as they happen, to understand how genetic changes cause disease.

By introducing a patient's specific genetic makeup into these fish, her team can watch how a disease develops from its earliest stages and test potential treatments.

"What makes translational medicine so compelling is its circular nature, it begins and ends with the patient," said Dr Da'as. "Every discovery in our laboratories has its roots in a real person's experience, and every breakthrough ultimately returns to benefit individuals, families and the Qatari population.

Visit Qatar announces exclusive public experience with Steve Harvey

Visit Qatar, in collaboration with Melt Live, is set to host 'An Evening with Steve Harvey' on December 3 at Al Mayassa Theatre, Qatar National Convention Centre (QNCC).

The event will offer audiences in Qatar the opportunity to engage directly with global entertainer, entrepreneur, and thought leader Steve Harvey. The evening promises an inspiring and engaging experience filled with stories, insights, and lessons on success and personal growth. The event is open to attendees aged 12 and above. Designed as a premium experience, the event aims to inspire attendees through mentorship and meaningful dialogue, reinforcing Qatar's position as a growing hub for cultural, intellectual, and lifestyle experiences.

This event forms part of the broader collaboration between Visit Qatar and Melt Live to bring internationally recognised world-class experiences to the country, a statement added.



Qatar Chamber in beach cleanup for QSW

Qatar Chamber and the International Chamber of Commerce Qatar (ICC Qatar), in collaboration with Seashore Group, organised a 'Beach Cleanup Day' at Al Wakrah Public Beach as part of the '10th Qatar Sustainability Week' (QSW). The initiative was designed to encourage sustainable habits among staff and visitors while minimising the chamber's environmental footprint. The Beach Cleanup Day brought together 100 participants, who worked collaboratively to remove waste and recyclable materials from the beach, fostering a spirit of teamwork, environmental responsibility, and

community engagement. Qatar Chamber acting general manager Ali Saeed Bu Sherbak al-Mansouri said, "This initiative highlights the importance of preserving Qatar's coastal environment and reducing pollution through active community engagement. "It aligns with Qatar Chamber's ongoing commitment to corporate social responsibility and its support for Qatar's vision for a cleaner, greener, and more sustainable future. We extend our sincere appreciation to Earthna, Qatar Foundation, and Seashore Group for their invaluable support in ensuring the success of this initiative."

