



**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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**BUSINESS | Page 1**

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**Qatar condemns explosion in Delhi**

Qatar expressed its strong condemnation and denunciation of the explosion that took place near a metro station in the Indian capital of New Delhi, which resulted in deaths and injuries. In a statement yesterday, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs renewed Qatar's firm stance rejecting violence, terrorism, and criminal acts, regardless of motives or reasons. The ministry also extended Qatar's condolences to the families of the victims and the government and people of India, wishing the injured a speedy recovery. **(QNA)**

**Minister opens The Pearl Int'l Hospital**

HE the Minister of Public Health Mansoor bin Ebrahim bin Saad al-Mahmoud inaugurated yesterday The Pearl International Hospital, located in the heart of The Pearl Island. The hospital offers state-of-the-art medical technologies, comprehensive specialised clinics, and a patient-centred, integrated care model. It also boasts outstanding facilities, including advanced diagnostic centres, specialised treatment units, and modern operating rooms, all developed to meet the needs of the community and support the growth of the healthcare system in Qatar. During a tour of the hospital, HE the Minister of Public Health was briefed by officials from United Development Company (UDC), the master developer of The Pearl and Gewan Islands, on the services offered by The Pearl International Hospital. **Page 3**

**Kahramaa acquires 'cyber' certificate**

The Qatar General Electricity & Water Corporation (Kahramaa) announced that it has obtained the National Information Assurance (NIA) certificate, in co-ordination with the National Cyber Security Agency, after fulfilling all the requirements and standards of the approved national certificate for the first phase. In a press release issued yesterday, Kahramaa said that this achievement comes as a culmination of its continuous efforts to enhance information security governance practices and raise the level of efficiency and reliability in protecting data and technical systems. **Page 4**

**Trump hosts Saudi crown prince**

President Donald Trump hosted Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman at the White House yesterday, with the Saudi defector ruler seeking to deepen ties with Washington. Making his first White House visit in more than seven years, the crown prince was greeted with a lavish display of pomp and ceremony presided over by Trump on the South Lawn, complete with a military honour guard, a cannon salute and a flyover by US warplanes. Talks between the two leaders are expected to advance security ties, civil nuclear co-operation and multibillion-dollar business deals with the kingdom. The meeting underscores a key relationship between the world's biggest economy and the top oil exporter. **Page 7**

## PM calls for collective action to address global challenges

**QNA**  
Moscow

**H**E Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani participated yesterday in the 24th session of the Council of Heads of Government of the Shanghai Co-operation Organisation (SCO), held in the Russian capital, Moscow.

In Qatar's address to the meeting, HE Sheikh Mohammed said that Qatar's presence at this constructive international forum reaffirmed its firm commitment to the principles of solidarity and co-operation on which the SCO was founded, and embodied the collective will of member states to enhance consultation and joint action in confronting growing challenges. He noted that over the years, the organisation has proven to be an effective platform for constructive dialogue and fruitful co-operation in the fields of security, economy, and cultural exchange.

His Excellency affirmed that Qatar's vision aligns with the principles and objectives of the Shanghai Charter, which call for strengthening mutual trust and mutual benefit, upholding equality and respect for cultural diversity, and working towards shared development. He emphasised that Qatar proceeds from a firm conviction that sustainable development and comprehensive security form the foundation for the prosperity and stability of nations.

In this context, HE the Prime



HE Sheikh Mohammed addressing the SCO session.

Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs stated that Qatar continues to implement its National Vision 2030, which aims to achieve balanced development based on economic diversification, investment in human potential, and environmental protection to ensure a dignified life for current and future generations.

His Excellency added that, consistent with this vision and reaffirming Qatar's commitment to partnership with the international community, Doha views the SCO as an important strategic partner with whom it shares the goal of achieving development, regional stability, and co-operation in confronting common challenges. He noted that Qatar is pleased to be a Dialogue Partner of the organisation and expressed hope that this partnership will develop further in ways that serve the interests of all peoples.

His Excellency also stressed that the world today is in urgent need of collective efforts to address pressing issues such as eco-

nomical slowdown, humanitarian crises, environmental challenges, and threats to international peace and security. In this regard, he highlighted Qatar's keenness to strengthen joint action within the organisation, whether in the field of development co-operation, support for civilizational and humanitarian dialogue, or the consolidation of security and stability.

His Excellency noted that Qatar regards mediation as one of its constitutional commitments, reflecting its established role as a proactive and trusted mediator contributing positively to the resolution of regional and international conflicts. He expressed his satisfaction in taking part in this important meeting of the heads of government of SCO member states, which brings everyone together to enhance co-operation, and he conveyed his sincere thanks to the friendly Russian Federation for its valued efforts in hosting and organising the meeting.

HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs also expressed appreciation to the secretary-general of the organisation for his sincere efforts in advancing joint work within the SCO framework, expressing confidence that the meeting would yield tangible outcomes that strengthen collective co-operation.

The meeting, held over two days, discusses strengthening co-operation among member states in the areas of trade, economy, investment, and social development, in addition to a number of issues of common interest. **Page 2**

### 11 people killed in Israeli strike on Lebanon's Sidon

An Israeli strike on the southern Lebanese city of Sidon killed 11 people, the Lebanese Health Ministry said yesterday. The Israeli military said that it struck members of the Palestinian movement Hamas whom it said were operating in a training compound in the crowded Ain Al-Hilweh Palestinian refugee camp near Sidon.

Elsewhere, Israeli strikes in the country's south killed two people yesterday, the latest deadly

raids despite a nearly year-long ceasefire between Israel and militant group Hezbollah. An "Israeli enemy drone strike on a car in the city of Bint Jbeil killed one person", the health ministry said in a statement, while the state-run National News Agency said the raid killed an employee of the Bint Jbeil municipalities union. The health ministry later said an Israeli drone strike on a car killed one person in Blida, elsewhere in south Lebanon near the border.

### Amir meets Korea National Assembly Speaker



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani received yesterday at the Majlis of Sheikh Abdullah bin Jassim in the Amiri Diwan, Speaker of the National Assembly of the Republic of Korea Woo Won-shik and his accompanying delegation on the occasion of his visit to the country. The meeting dealt with discussing bilateral co-operation between the two countries and the means to enhance them, in addition to discussing several regional and international issues of joint interest. The meeting was attended by Speaker of the Shura Council Hassan bin Abdullah al-Ghanem. **(QNA)**

### UN SC adopts Trump's Gaza resolution

**Reuters**  
Washington

**T**he UN Security Council on Monday voted to adopt a US-drafted resolution endorsing President Donald Trump's plan to end the war in Gaza and authorising an international stabilisation force for the Palestinian enclave.

Israel and the Palestinian resistance group Hamas agreed last month to the first phase of Trump's 20-point plan for Gaza - a ceasefire in their two-year war and a hostage-release deal - but the UN resolution is seen as vital to legitimising a transitional governance body and reassuring countries that are considering sending troops to Gaza.

The text of the resolution says member states can take part in the Trump-chaired Board of Peace envisioned as a transitional authority that would oversee reconstruction and economic recovery of Gaza. It also authorises the international stabilisation force, which would ensure a process of demilitarising Gaza, including by decommissioning weapons and destroying military infrastructure.



A Palestinian potter at work in Gaza City

Hamas, in a statement, reiterated that it will not disarm and argued that its fight against Israel is legitimate resistance, potentially pitting the group against the international force authorised by the resolution.

"The resolution imposes an international guardianship mechanism on the Gaza Strip, which our people and their factions reject," Hamas said in its statement, issued after the adoption of the resolution.

Mike Waltz, the US ambassador to the UN, said the resolution, which includes Trump's 20-point plan as an annex, "charts a possible pathway for Palestinian self-determination... where rockets will give way to olive branches and there is a chance to agree on a political horizon." **Page 7**

### QRDI, Diar to advance Lusail as a living innovation testbed

**Q**atar Research, Development and Innovation (QRDI) Council and Qatari Diar Real Estate Investment Company have signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) to further enhance Lusail City's position as a leading smart city.

Through this collaboration, Lusail will serve as a living innovation testbed, building on its existing smart infrastructure and sustainable urban solutions, to integrate emerging technologies and encourage a thriving ecosystem for research, development, and innovation.

The collaboration marks a strategic step in advancing Lusail's position beyond a real estate de-



Officials at the MoU signing.

velopment, reinforcing its role as a "district of innovation", a model for sustainable urban intelligence and national innovation excellence. Through this partnership, Lusail will further expand its ecosystem to host pilot technologies supported by key innovation clusters, spanning artificial intelligence, mobility, advanced digital infrastructure, and sustainable urban systems.

Omar Ali al-Ansari, secretary-general of QRDI Council, said: "Our collaboration with Qatari Diar represents a major step in enhancing Lusail's role as a living laboratory for innovation. We are connecting national capabilities, international expertise, and emerging technologies to create

a truly cognitive city, one that reflects Qatar's vision for sustainable, technology-driven growth. We aim to strengthen the link between research, industry, and impact, and advance Qatar's position as a global innovation leader."

By utilising Qatari Diar's expertise in smart city development and QRDI Council's mandate to accelerate innovation-driven growth, the MoU establishes a framework to develop flagship R&D projects, innovation testbeds. The initiative aims to drive new business and technology capabilities, strengthen Qatar's global innovation competitiveness and align with the Qatar's Third National Development Strategy 2024-2030 and QRDI Council 2030 Strategy.

## Al-Misnad in South Africa meetings



HE the Minister of State for International Co-operation, Dr Maryam bint Ali bin Nasser al-Misnad, met yesterday with CEO of Africa50 Group, Alain Ebobisse, in Johannesburg, as part of her visit to South Africa. The talks focused on strengthening partnerships between Qatar and African nations, particularly South Africa. Both sides stressed the importance of deeper co-operation to advance Africa's development priorities.



HE the Minister of State for International Co-operation Dr Maryam bint Ali bin Nasser al-Misnad met yesterday with President of the Women's Development Business (WDB) Zanele Mbeki during her current visit to South Africa. The meeting dealt with discussing bilateral co-operation and the means to enhance them, in addition to WBD's experience in supporting women through microlending and building capabilities. They also discussed implementing joint initiatives to empower women and enhance the participation of women in South Africa. **(QNA)**

## State minister for interior affairs attends opening of Milipol Paris



Representing HE the Minister of Interior and Commander of the Internal Security Force "Lekhwiya", Sheikh Khalifa bin Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani, HE the Minister of State for Interior Affairs, Sheikh Abdulaziz bin Faisal bin Mohammed al-Thani attended the opening of Milipol Paris 2025 in the French capital yesterday. HE the Minister of State for Interior Affairs joined French Interior Minister Laurent Nunez and senior officials for the opening of the event, which runs from November 18 to 21 at Paris Nord Villepinte. During a tour of the exhibition halls, HE Sheikh Abdulaziz reviewed the latest advances in security technology, defence solutions, and crisis-management systems. Qatar's participation reflects its commitment to strengthening global security co-operation and expanding its international presence. The Milipol Qatar Committee is showcasing preparations for Milipol Qatar 2026, underscoring the long-standing security partnership between Doha and Paris. **(QNA)**

## PM takes part in SCO council meeting in Moscow



HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani participated yesterday in the 24th session of the Council of Heads of Government of the Shanghai Co-operation Organisation (SCO), held in the Russian capital, Moscow. **(QNA)**

## Shura Speaker, Korea counterpart discuss bilateral parliamentary ties



HE the Shura Council Speaker, Hassan bin Abdullah al-Ghanem, met yesterday with the visiting Speaker of the National Assembly of the Republic of Korea Woo Won-shik. The two sides discussed parliamentary co-operation relations between the two countries, stressing the important role exchanging visits play in uniting positions during international parliamentary events and in supporting issues of joint interest. They also highlighted the important role legislative councils play in enhancing international co-operation, maintaining global stability, and addressing joint challenges. They praised the progress of the strategic partnership between Qatar and Korea, particularly in the fields of energy, industry, infrastructure, education, health, as well as co-operation within international institutions. They also said that they look forward to continue enhancing parliamentary co-operation to advance the interests of the two friendly countries and peoples. **(QNA)**

## Farewell to ambassador of Honduras



HE the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Sultan bin Saad al-Muraikhi met yesterday with the ambassador of Honduras Blanca I Zablah Bendeck on the occasion of the end of her tenure. HE al-Muraikhi extended thanks to the ambassador for her efforts in supporting and strengthening bilateral relations, wishing her success in her new duties. **(QNA)**



بلدنا ش.م.ع.ق.  
BALADNA Q.P.S.C.

# BALADNA'S BOARD PROPOSES A 24% CAPITAL INCREASE VIA RIGHTS ISSUE TO ACCELERATE INTERNATIONAL EXPANSION AND LONG-TERM GROWTH

**Doha, Qatar, 18 November 2025:** Baladna Q.P.S.C., Qatar's largest dairy and beverage company, today announced that its Board of Directors has proposed a 24% capital increase via a Rights Issue, subject to regulatory approvals and a shareholder vote at an upcoming Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM).

The proposed Rights Issue marks the next phase in Baladna's long-term strategic journey, as the Company looks to build on its success in Qatar and scale into a regional leader in vertically integrated dairy and beverage production. This aims to strengthen Baladna's capital base and preserve the strategic flexibility to pursue long-term value creation across high-potential markets.

**Mr. Marek Warzywoda, Group CEO, commented:** "We've built a resilient business model anchored in food security, operational efficiency, and disciplined execution. Baladna delivered record 9M 2025 operational and financial performance, and this proposed capital increase represents a strategic step to scale our international footprint and build long-term value. Our ambition is to transform Baladna from a national Qatari champion into a regional powerhouse, to become one of the top dairy and beverage producers in the MENA and international markets."

Baladna's strategy is built around a proven, scalable model that integrates large-scale farming, modern processing capabilities, and deep in-market distribution. Today, Baladna is taking its proven model to underserved markets across the region, supporting nations in building their own resilient food systems. The Company is now executing on several landmark initiatives to expand its footprint across priority markets through its strategy of "From Qatar to the World".

In Algeria, the Company is actively progressing one of the world's largest vertically integrated dairy projects, with a total investment of USD 3.5 billion. The project spans 117,000 hectares of leased farmland, is designed to house 240,000 Holstein cows, and is expected to produce up to 1.7 billion liters of milk and 198,000 tons of milk powder annually. Fully funded and already under construction, the project is majority owned by Baladna (51% equity stake) in partnership with Algeria's National Investment Fund (49% equity stake).

In Syria, Baladna's Board has approved a USD 250 million investment to establish an integrated industrial complex that includes dairy production, juice, plastic packaging, and water treatment facilities. The project positions Baladna as a first mover in a market with significant growth potential and limited local production capacity.

The Company is also actively evaluating expansion opportunities in selected African markets, where Baladna's scalable farm-to-shelf platform can serve fast-growing populations and support national self-sufficiency goals.

These initiatives reflect Baladna's ambition to evolve from a symbol of Qatar's capacity as a local champion towards a leader beyond its borders. As it looks to the future, Baladna aims to increase its EBITDA to QR 1.4B by 2030 compared to QR 0.4B in 2024 baseline year, representing a 3.5x improvement, underpinned by international expansion, continued operational efficiency, and innovation in high-quality food production.



The proposed Rights Issue follows the recent 7.1% capital increase via bonus shares approved on November 6, 2025, and marks the next step in Baladna's capital strategy by aligning shareholder value creation with the Company's growing international ambitions. For the first nine months of 2025, the Company reported record-breaking financial performance with strong profitability, with revenue of QAR 941 million (up 10% year-on-year "YoY") and net profit of QAR 381 million (up 170% YoY).

Further details on the proposed Rights Issue, including the issue price, subscription ratio, record date, and proposed use of proceeds, will be announced following Board and regulatory approvals.

### About Baladna

Baladna Q.P.S.C. is Qatar's leading producer of fresh dairy and food products, publicly listed on the Qatar Stock Exchange. The Company operates one of the region's largest and most advanced vertically integrated dairy farms, delivering more than 270 high-quality products across dairy, juice, and food categories. Founded on a mission to contribute to national food security, Baladna has built a scalable and resilient farm-to-shelf model, supported by innovation, sustainability, and operational excellence.

With a strong foundation in Qatar, Baladna is expanding internationally through strategic partnerships and government-backed projects in high-potential markets such as Algeria, Egypt, Syria and other African markets. These efforts are aligned with its vision to become a major global dairy producer and to help build self-sufficient food ecosystems in emerging economies. Baladna remains committed to delivering long-term value to its shareholders while playing a transformative role in food and agricultural development across the region. Baladna is also a key contributor to Qatar's self-sufficiency ambitions and the country's National Vision 2030.

# Health minister inaugurates Pearl International Hospital

QNA  
Doha

**H**E the Minister of Public Health Mansoor bin Ebrahim bin Saad al-Mahmoud inaugurated The Pearl International Hospital, located in the heart of The Pearl Island. The hospital offers state-of-the-art medical technologies, comprehensive specialised clinics, and a patient-centred, integrated care model.

It also boasts outstanding facilities, including advanced diagnostic centres, specialised treatment units, and modern operating rooms, all developed to meet the needs of the community and support the growth of the healthcare system in Qatar.

During a tour of the hospital, HE the Minister of Public Health was briefed by officials from United Development Company (UDC), the master developer of The Pearl and Gewan Islands, on the services offered by The Pearl International Hospital.

The services encompass a wide range of medical specialities, including advanced diagnostics, women's health, paediatrics, cardiology, orthopaedics, general surgery, emergency services, and preventive healthcare programmes. The hospital features integrated digital systems and smart operating processes that enhance efficiency and ensure optimal patient outcomes.

The Pearl International Hospital is the result of a partnership between UDC and Ruzgar Health-



care Holding, which specialises in the planning, design, and operation of modern medical centres. On this occasion, Chairman of the UDC Board of Directors, Ahmed

bin Ali al-Hammadi, said the Pearl International Hospital is part of the company's strategy to make The Pearl Island a fully serviced community. In a statement to re-



porters, al-Hammadi added that The Pearl International Hospital is a comprehensive hospital offering a full range of services and is a medical institution serving

not only the residents of The Pearl Island but all residents of Qatar, thus contributing to the national development strategy and the country's healthcare system.



EAA Foundation organised a high-level panel discussion titled "Empowering Youth: Bridging Skills, Employment, and Sustainable Pathways" at COP30.

## EAA Foundation showcases global solutions for youth skills at COP30

**T**he Education Above All (EAA) Foundation, in collaboration with the World Food Programme (WFP), successfully concluded a high-level panel discussion titled "Empowering Youth: Bridging Skills, Employment, and Sustainable Pathways" at the Qatar Pavilion during the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP30).

The session brought together international experts, private-sector leaders, and youth voices to explore how integrated skills development, apprenticeships, digital learning, and cross-sector partnerships can unlock meaningful employment opportunities, especially for marginalised young people in the context of climate change.

The panellists underscored that the twin challenges of youth unemployment and climate vulnerability demand holistic and collaborative solutions.

The session opened with remarks from Mahmoud Abdulaziz al-Marwani, assistant director of the Climate Change Department in Qatar's Ministry of Environment and Climate Change, set

the tone for a discussion focused on resilience, opportunity, and youth empowerment.

Fahad Malik, head of engagement at the EAA Foundation's Silatech Programme, highlighted the strategic importance of integrating youth economic empowerment into climate-resilient development.

Contributions followed from Richard Choularton, director of the Climate and Resilience Service at WFP; Olga Petryniak, senior director for Africa Resilience Programmes at Mercy Corps; Mariana M Rocha, chief of field office at Unicef Belém; and Kevin Chalhouh, CEO of EV Lab and head of Brand at Chalhouh Group.

Together, the speakers emphasised that bridging policy with practice requires aligning education systems, labour markets, and climate adaptation strategies to create real, sustainable opportunities for marginalised youth.

Participants also showcased practical models that connect vulnerable youth to economic opportunities in climate-affected environments, illustrating

how climate-smart livelihoods, private-sector innovation, and community-based interventions can accelerate inclusive growth.

Personal reflections from Solange Sampaio dos Santos, a IMiO Programme beneficiary further demonstrated the transformative impact of skills development and tailored employment pathways in enabling young people to transition successfully into the workforce.

Mana al-Ansari, chief economic empowerment officer, EAA Foundation, said: "Today's discussion reaffirmed that young people are central to building more resilient, prosperous, and climate-smart societies.

When we invest in their skills, creativity, and opportunities, we unlock the potential of entire communities. Guided by EAA Foundation's mission to transform learning into real economic opportunity, from learning to earning, we remain committed, together with our partners, to ensuring that all young people, especially the most marginalised, are equipped to thrive in the green and digital economies of the future."

# MBDA confirmed as Gold Sponsor for ninth edition of Dimdex 2026

**T**he Organising Committee of the Doha International Maritime Defence Exhibition and Conference (Dimdex) 2026 has announced MBDA, a world leader in the field of complex weapon systems, as the Gold Sponsor for the ninth edition of the exhibition. Held under the patronage of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani, Dimdex will be taking place from January 19-22 at the Qatar National Convention Centre.

MBDA's Gold Sponsorship of Dimdex 2026 highlights the event's leading global position and the enduring relationship between the two parties, with Dimdex serving as a key platform for the company to showcase its latest innovations. It also underscores the significance of international co-operation in the field of advanced defence systems.

The signing ceremony took place at the Ministry of Defence, in the presence of HE Lt Gen (Pilot) Jassim bin Mohammed al-Mannai, Chief of Staff of Qatar Armed Forces. The agreement was signed by Staff Brigadier (Sea) Abdulbaqi Saleh al-Ansari, chairman of the Dimdex Organising Committee and Toby Broughton, general manager, MBDA Qatar.

HE Lt Gen (Pilot) al-Mannai said: "Today's security environment is defined by complexity, interdependence, and rapid transformation. In such times, col-



The signing ceremony took place at the Ministry of Defence, in the presence of HE Lt Gen (Pilot) Jassim bin Mohammed al-Mannai. The agreement was signed by Staff Brigadier (Sea) Abdulbaqi Saleh al-Ansari and Toby Broughton.

laboration and shared purpose are essential to addressing challenges that transcend borders. "The pursuit of stability is best achieved through dialogue, innovation, and enduring partnerships that strengthen our collective capabilities. We welcome these international collaborations that reinforce the foundations of security and prosperity."

Staff Brigadier (Sea) al-Ansari said: "MBDA's continued participation demonstrates the long-standing collaboration that underpins Dimdex's role as a platform for advancing international defence co-operation, while offering a valuable opportunity to

showcase their latest innovations and technologies directly to key decision-makers. Broughton added: "For over 50 years, MBDA has been a trusted and proud partner to Qatar and is privileged to have supported the Qatar Armed Forces with our world-leading missile system capabilities.

MBDA is the only European group capable of designing and manufacturing complex weapon systems for all three-armed forces: land, sea, and air. The company plays a vital role in securing national defence requirements and promoting technological excellence through collaboration and innovation.

## Ericsson to show future-ready connectivity and AI innovations at Mobile World in Doha

**E**ricsson will participate at Mobile World Congress (MWC) Doha 2025 between November 25-26 in Qatar to demonstrate how 5G and Artificial Intelligence (AI) are redefining connectivity and unlocking growth across industries.

At this year's event, Ericsson will showcase how differentiated connectivity, enterprise solutions and agentic AI are shaping the next phase of network evolution.

Visitors to the Ericsson booth will experience demonstrations that show how communication service providers can create new revenue streams, enhance network performance and unlock new use cases across both consumer and enterprise segments.

The experiences will also illustrate how digitalisation is transforming critical sectors such as public safety, utilities and transport through reliable and scalable connectivity.

Ericsson has been part of Qatar's connectivity journey for over three decades, contributing to the development of the nation's digital infrastructure. From early fixed networks to nationwide mobile modernisation and the introduction of 5G, Ericsson has supported Qatar in establishing globally recognised



Petra Schirren

**Ericsson's presence will highlight how differentiated connectivity, mission-critical networks and AI-driven automation are shaping the future of digital transformation**

network leadership. Today, Ericsson continues to work closely with Qatar's communication service providers, enterprises

and public sector institutions to advance the country's long-term digital ambitions in line with Qatar National Vision 2030

- enhancing network performance and scalability, supporting digital transformation across strategic sectors, strengthening resilience and mission-critical connectivity, and building local talent and expertise through sustained knowledge transfer and capability development.

In a press statement, Petra Schirren, president Gulf at Ericsson Europe, Middle East and Africa said: "For more than three decades, Ericsson has been part of Qatar's remarkable digital journey driving innovation, building resilience, and empowering the nation's connectivity ambitions. "As Qatar accelerates toward its National Vision 2030, we remain committed to delivering cutting-edge technology, global expertise, and sustainable capacity-building to shape one of the world's most advanced digital ecosystems."

Ericsson maintains a fully operational local presence in Doha, supported by experts in the field and long-term partner collaboration models. MWC Doha 2025 together global leaders, innovators, and policymakers to accelerate digital transformation and help build a more connected, intelligent, and sustainable economy. The Ericsson stand will be located at E43.

## QU researchers transform date palm waste into water-saving solution

**A**ddressing two of Qatar's most pressing environmental challenges, researchers at Qatar University (QU) have successfully transformed date palm agricultural waste into an innovative hydrogel technology that significantly reduces water consumption in farming while improving crop yields.

The research demonstrates how date palm leaves, which are often discarded or burned, can be converted into a valuable resource that helps soil retain moisture and supports plant growth even under severe drought conditions.

The project is led by Prof Syed Javid Zaidi, with postdoctoral fellow Dr Gamareldawla Agbna and the research team at the Unesco chair in Desalination and Wastewater Treatment at the Centre for Advanced Materials. By transforming agricultural waste widely available in Qatar into a solution for one of the region's most critical challenges, the team is contributing directly to sustainable water management. The innovation aligns with Qatar National Vision 2030 and advances several sustainability goals, including environmental protection, food security, and responsible use of natural resources.

Prof Aiman Erbad, vice-president, Research and Graduate Studies at QU, stated: "This achievement demonstrates how QU's research community continues to translate scientific innovation into practical and sustain-

able solutions that support Qatar's national priorities. By converting date palm waste into a hydrogel that conserves water and enhances crop resilience, our researchers are contributing directly to the goals of Qatar National Vision 2030, advancing food security, environmental protection, and the circular economy."

Prof Mohammad R Irshidat, director of the Center for Advanced Materials at QU, said: "We are deeply committed to research that drives innovation and serves the sustainability needs of our nation. This project demonstrates how interdisciplinary collaboration that brings together materials science and agricultural engineering can deliver meaningful benefits for Qatar's environment and economy. Transforming palm waste into a biodegradable and water-saving hydrogel is not only a scientific breakthrough but also an important step toward improving resource efficiency and environmental stewardship across the region."

In a study on growing peppers in the summer of 2024, plants that were treated with 2% concentration of date palm hydrogel lived for almost two months without water from September to November 2024. Under the same conditions, untreated plants did not survive. The treated plants not only remained alive but also demonstrated improved growth indicators despite experiencing extreme water stress.

### Amir sends cables of congratulations to King of Morocco

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani and His Highness the Deputy Amir Sheikh Abdullah bin Hamad al-Thani sent yesterday cables of congratulations to King Mohammed VI of Morocco on the anniversary of his country's Independence Day. HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani also sent a similar cable of congratulations to Head of Government of Morocco Aziz Akhannouch.

### Amir sends cables of congratulations to president of Latvia

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani and His Highness the Deputy Amir Sheikh Abdullah bin Hamad al-Thani sent yesterday cables of congratulations to Latvian President Edgars Rinkevics on the anniversary of his country's Independence Day. HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani also sent a similar cable of congratulations to Prime Minister Evika Silina. (QNA)

### Qatar, France talk security co-operation

HE the Minister of State for Interior Affairs, Sheikh Abdulaziz bin Faisal bin Mohammed al-Thani, held talks with French Interior Minister Laurent Nunez in Paris yesterday, on the sidelines of the Milipol Paris 2025 exhibition. The two ministers discussed security and police co-operation between Qatar and France and ways to strengthen partnerships, exchange expertise and develop security capabilities. Senior officials from both countries attended the meeting. (QNA)



### Top officials visit Qatar's National Readiness Exercise 'Watan 2025'

Qatar's national emergency-readiness exercise Watan 2025 received high-level attention yesterday as HE the Attorney-General Dr Issa bin Saad al-Jafali al-Nuaimi and UN Under-Secretary-General for Safety and Security Gilles Michaud visited the National Command Center (NCC) to review the ongoing drills. The two officials were briefed on the progress of field scenarios and the mechanisms used to manage emergency situations within Qatar's national response system. Michaud followed the implementation of several scenarios, while the attorney-general inspected co-ordination procedures across agencies. Their visits came as the Ministry of Interior confirmed the continuation of Watan 2025 field exercises for a second day. The ministry said the drills, conducted jointly by military, security and civilian bodies, displayed strong co-ordination, high efficiency and effective role integration among participating entities. (QNA)



## QRCS to resume humanitarian aid for El-Fasher refugees

QNA  
Khartoum

The representation mission of Qatar Red Crescent Society (QRCS) in Sudan has initiated emergency humanitarian interventions in Al-Dabbah, Northern State, in response to a humanitarian appeal issued by Sudan's Humanitarian Aid Commission (HAC) amid deteriorating conditions of about 95,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs) evacuated from the conflict zones in North Darfur and Kordofan.

A delegation headed by Dr Salah Daak, head of QRCS's office, visited Dongola and held a co-ordination meeting with the state's Ministry of Health (MoH). Attended by MoH's Director-General Khalid Abdelghani Abdelkarim and other relevant officials, the meeting focused on health intervention priorities and bilateral co-ordination

mechanisms. MoH affirmed their commitment to working together with QRCS's medical teams.

The director-general praised Qatar's humanitarian support and emergency measures to reduce pressure on health services in the region. QRCS announced the deployment of a mobile clinic to provide emergency medical services (EMS) and primary healthcare (PHC) at the Affat IDP Camp in Northern State.

Run 24/7 by doctors, nurses, and midwives displaced from El-Fasher, the clinic co-ordinates with Al-Dabbah Hospital to receive the referred patients who require advanced medical care, under a referral system that links the clinic to government health facilities. The purpose of the mobile clinic is to provide comprehensive healthcare services for some 95,000 IDPs, mostly women and children, including medical clinical, laboratory, pharmacy, and ambulatory



services. Regular visits are made by specialists to examine the patients and provide necessary medical consultations. (QNA) The location was chosen in a central area within the camp to ensure easy access. The clinic provides medical examinations and medications, health education, and psychosocial support (PSS). MoH in Northern State wel-

comed this initiative and appreciated QRCS's humanitarian role and permanent willingness to support affected communities.

The Ministry also reiterated its commitment to collaboration to strengthen the health response within the camp.

The IDP camp's management saw the mobile clinic as the main health services hub in Af-



fat, praised QRCS's rapid response and dedication to serving the most vulnerable displaced populations.

They called on other humanitarian organisations to act immediately to meet the needs of IDPs, in light of the worsening humanitarian situation. According to them, the crisis required concerted efforts to provide food, shelter, healthcare, and PSS services. In the same context, QRCS explained that the launch of the mobile clinic was part of a comprehensive response plan to support affected communities in Sudan, by providing health, humanitarian, and development interventions, in co-ordination with local and international partners, and in accordance with the universally accepted humanitarian principles.

## Qatar emphasises importance of establishing ME region free of nuclear weapons and WMD

QNA  
New York

Chairman of National Committee for the Prohibition of Weapons, Brigadier Engineer Hassan Mohammed al-Emadi delivered Qatar's statement during the general debate of the sixth session of the Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction on

Monday at the UN Headquarters in New York.

He explained that, within the framework of strengthening activities related to the deliberations of the Conference, the National Committee for the Prohibition of Weapons in Qatar, in co-operation with the UN Office for Disarmament Affairs, held a regional meeting titled 'Perspectives on the Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction'

on June 4-5, 2024, on the sidelines of the Third Arab Forum on Arms Control, Disarmament, and Non-Proliferation. He noted that this constituted a good opportunity for constructive dialogue among a number of government representatives, experts, and academics.

He said that Qatar affirms the importance of the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference's decision on the Middle East and the outcomes of the 2010 Review Conference as key references for achiev-

ing the goal of establishing the zone. He pointed to UN General Assembly resolution 73/546, which mandates the secretary-general to convene a meeting leading to a legally binding international instrument establishing the zone, thereby reinforcing the maintenance of regional and international peace and security and sparing the region the potential catastrophic consequences of the proliferation of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. He clarified that the interna-

tional community's collective responsibility toward establishing the zone requires joint and constructive work, emphasising the importance of nuclear-weapon states providing negative security assurances (NSAs) to the states of the region in order to encourage them to move forward with the arrangements for creating this zone, considering such assurances a motivating factor for achieving the desired progress.

He stressed that this collective international responsibility requires

affirming the need for Israel to accede to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) as a non-nuclear-weapon state and to place its nuclear facilities under the comprehensive safeguards system of the International Atomic Energy Agency. He noted that this would enhance the universality of the Treaty, especially since Israel is the only state in the region that has not joined any of the three treaties related to weapons of mass destruction.

### Kahramaa wins National Assurance Certificate in information security

The Qatar General Electricity and Water Corporation (Kahramaa) has achieved a new milestone as the corporation has obtained the National Information Assurance (NIA) certificate, in co-ordination with the National Cybersecurity Agency, after fulfilling all the requirements and standards of the approved national certificate for the first phase. This achievement comes as a culmination of Kahramaa's continuous efforts to enhance information security governance practices and raise the level of efficiency and reliability in protecting data and technical systems, in line with the leadership's aspirations for safe and sustainable digital transformation. Abdulla bin Ali al-Theyab, chairman of Kahramaa, stated: "Obtaining the National Information Assurance certificate reflects our firm commitment to applying the highest national standards in the field of information security and confirms our keenness to protect our data and systems in support of the safe digital transformation journey in the country. This achievement is the result of the efforts and continuous cooperation of the working teams to achieve our strategic goals." Kahramaa's acquisition of this certificate aligns with Qatar's national vision for digital transformation.



### Qatar Red Crescent – Medical Affairs Division

Tenders Announcement: -

Sr. #	Tender No.	Description	Temporary Tender Bond	Documents Fees (Non-Refundable)	Closing Date
1	QRC/WHC/19-2025	Health Insurance for QRCS Employees	450,000 Q.R	4,000 Q.R	03-12-2025

The documents can be collected from Medical Affairs Division, Ain Khalid Area, Sunday to Thursday from 07:00 am to 01:00 pm till the closing date or by sending email along with the requested documents below.

#### Required Documents:

1. Authorization letter to receive tender documents + ID copy of the person will be receiving the documents.
2. Company's Commercial registration copy.
3. Bank deposit voucher with the value of documents (4000 QR) not refunded & account details:
  - Account Name: Qatar Red Crescent.
  - Bank: Al Rayan.
  - Account Number: 0011199970200
  - IBAN Number: QA83MAFR000000000011199970200

For more information: please call: (50044554), or Email whc.tenders@qrqs.org.qa

### QATAR FUEL ADDITIVES COMPANY LIMITED QAFAC

#### TENDER ANNOUNCEMENT

The Tender Committee of QAFAC invites qualified local suppliers to participate in the following Tenders in accordance with QAFAC tendering procedures:

No.	Tender No.	Description	Collection Fees	Tender Bond	Bid Closing Date
1	QTC/107/25	Three (3) Year Call off Contract for Supply and Installation of Office Furniture at QAFAC Plant, Mesaieed and Doha Office.	Qrs. 300/-	Qrs. 100,000/-	15 <sup>th</sup> December 2025

Interested companies are invited to collect the above tender document as follows:

- **Collection Date** : From **Wednesday, 19<sup>th</sup> October 2025** (QAFAC working days from Sunday to Thursday only)
- **Collection Time** : 08:00 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.
- **Location** : The Gate, Bay Tower 2, 13<sup>th</sup> Floor, West Bay, QAFAC
- **Tender Fees** : As shown above, (**non-refundable**) can be paid at QAFAC Doha Office
- **Validity** : Offers must be valid for 120 days from closing date.
- **Bid Bond** : Offers must include a Bid bond issued from a local bank and valid for 120 Days from closing date.
- **Authorization** : Tenders will be issued to authorized company personnel with the following:
  1. Official authorization on Company Letter Head
  2. Proper Identification
  3. Copy of Company's Commercial Registration
  4. Focal Point of Contact (**Name, Telephone, Mobile & Email**)
  5. Valid In Country Value (ICV) Certificate

Note: "Effective from 1st July 2023, bids received from Local Companies (established under the Laws of state of Qatar with local Commercial Registration) who are not in possession of an ICV score in the ICV portal by Bid Closing Date (or commercial bid submission date if separately mentioned/notified) will not be accepted. Local Company that have been established for less than 2 years and insurance companies are exempted from this requirement. For further details please visit ICV digital Portal :- <https://icv.qa/US>

### Qatar takes part in Francophonie council session

Qatar participated in the proceedings of the 132nd session of the Permanent Council of La Francophonie, which was held yesterday in the Rwandan capital, Kigali. Qatar's delegation to the session was headed by ambassador to France and its representative to the International Organisation of the Francophonie Sheikh Ali bin Jassim al-Thani. The meeting addressed the level of implementation of the commitments of the 19th Francophonie Summit, and the participants discussed preparations for the 46th Ministerial Conference of the International Organisation of the Francophonie in Kigali. The meeting addressed the level of implementation of the commitments of the 19th Francophonie Summit, and the participants discussed preparation for the 46th Ministerial Conference of the International Organisation of the Francophonie in Kigali. Qatar's participation in the work of the Permanent Council of the Francophonie comes within the framework of its keenness to support joint Francophone action and to strengthen channels of consultation and co-ordination among member states within the organisation. (QNA)



### HBKU Student Success Services earns international certification



The accreditation brings significant benefits to HBKU and its student support initiatives.

Hamad Bin Khalifa University's (HBKU) Student Success Services unit has been awarded Level 1 and Level 2 certified tutor training programmes by the College Reading and Learning Association (CRLA). With almost 1,300 members and over 2,000 certified training programmes worldwide, CRLA's International Tutor Training Programme Certification licenses projects that have demonstrated excellence in developing, designing, and implementing effective training procedures. The accreditation brings significant benefits to HBKU and its student support initiatives. For student tutors and learning assistants, it provides valuable career development opportunities. The programme teaches skills commensurate with best practices, increases confidence in content areas and public speaking, and strengthens resumes with an internationally recognised certificate. In doing so, the programme sets a benchmark for academic

support excellence across the institution, ensuring compliance with standard procedures in higher education tutorial services. Dr Ala al-Fuqaha, associate provost, Teaching and Learning, HBKU, stated: "The CRLA certification reflects the university's ongoing commitment to excellence in learning and student support. This recognition acknowledges the quality of our peer tutor training programme and dedication to fostering an environment where student tutors can grow academically and develop professional skills." Joelle Fadlallah, student success specialist, added: "We have worked hard to develop a tutor training programme that meets CRLA's rigorous standards and has successfully completed the ITTPC peer review process. Achieving this signifies that our programme fulfils selection, training, service delivery, and evaluation benchmarks, ensuring quality of our support services at HBKU."

### Qatar Charity constructs homes for Yemen IDPs



QC builds safe and sustainable housing for internally displaced persons in Yemen's Marib Governorate.

Qatar Charity (QC), in partnership with the Humanitarian Development Programme, is implementing the "Al-Khair Aat City" project in Yemen's Marib Governorate to provide safe, sustainable housing for internally displaced persons (IDPs). According to QC, the project, funded by Qatari donors, aims to replace tents with durable homes and integrated services. About 40% of the work is complete, with full delivery expected by year-end. The city will feature 250 climate-resilient housing units

(caravans), each 48sq m with two bedrooms, a living room, kitchen, and bathroom. Facilities include a school, mosque, health unit, vocational training centre, sports field, and camp administration. Infrastructure will cover water and sewage networks, solar power, child-friendly spaces, and green areas with 700 trees to promote environmental sustainability. Beyond shelter, the initiative focuses on education and skills training to help families regain self-reliance. Dr Khaled Nasser al-Shujani, assistant director-general of the

Executive Unit for IDPs in Marib, hailed the initiative as a "game-changing project," noting that Marib hosts the largest number of displaced families in Yemen. He thanked Qatari donors for their generosity and urged international charities and donors to support similar sustainable projects that go beyond temporary relief and lay the foundations for stability and dignity. QC implemented similar housing projects for displaced communities in northern Syria, Djibouti, and Somalia, reflecting its commitment to long-term humanitarian impact.



Zainul Abideen, along with other Safari officials, led the opening of the state-of-the-art Safari Club House.

### Safari Group inaugurates state-of-the-art Club House for employees



A modern and fully equipped Club House, designed to support the welfare and recreation of employees, was inaugurated by Doha's leading hypermarket group. The ceremony was held at the Safari Group's staff accommodation, where Safari Group deputy chairman and managing director, Zainul Abideen, officially opened the facility. Safari Group general manager Surendra Nath, along with other management representatives and employees, also attended the event. The Club House has been established with the aim of providing a joyful and relaxing environment for employees after work hours. Speaking at the event, Abideen said: "The success of an institution lies in the happiness and progress of every employee. It has long been my dream

to create a facility dedicated to the health and recreation of the 2,800-member Safari family. "But due to space limitations in previous accommodations, establishing such a large-scale facility was always a challenge. Now, with Safari's centralised staff accommodation built on our own land - capable of housing all our employees - we have finally been able to make this dream come true. I am extremely delighted." He addressed the employees not as staff but as "Safari family members," highlighting that caring for colleagues is one of Safari Group's core principles. The state-of-the-art Club House includes a spacious gym equipped with the latest high-quality fitness machines, a library and reading room offering educational and recreational books, an entertainment hall with a large television and

ample seating area, and a dedicated gaming hall fully equipped for indoor games such as chess and carrom. Additionally, a turf football ground with night lighting has been set up near the accommodation to allow employees to play even after dark. Separate recreational and fitness facilities have been arranged for male and female staff members. After the inauguration ceremony, Abideen led the official kickoff at the football turf ground, followed by a friendly match among employees. He said that this Club House would serve as strong motivation for employees to maintain physical fitness and mental well-being amidst their busy schedules. Employees with refreshed minds and healthy bodies, he added, will approach their work with renewed enthusiasm.

### QU seminar spotlights key role of cultural diplomacy

The Asjad Club for Politics, Society, and International Relations at Qatar University (QU) organised a seminar titled "Cultural diplomacy between East and West" at the university campus. The seminar featured a lecture by Spanish ambassador Alvaro Renedo Zalba, who addressed the importance of employing cultural diplomacy in building bridges of understanding between peoples and its role in supporting international co-operation to confront challenges related to security, sustainable development, and the preservation of cultural diversity. The seminar was opened by Club president Mohammed al-Kuwari, along with Club secretary Maha al-Badr, highlighting the Club's commitment to deepening students' political and social awareness and enhancing their participation in discussions of global issues. The event was also attended by



QU's Asjad Club for Politics, Society, and International Relations holds "Cultural diplomacy between East and West" seminar.

Dr Aisha al-Rashidi, head of the Department of International Affairs; Yasser al-Qawasm, head of the Department of Student Clubs and Organisations; and Nada al-Emadi, head of the Department of International Education and Student Exchange. The seminar focused on highlighting the concept of "bridges

between East and West" by discussing mechanisms for developing intellectual dialogue and cultural exchange between nations, and emphasising that cultural diplomacy has become one of the influential tools for bringing civilisations closer together and establishing values of mutual respect and human understanding.

### Ministry of Public Health marks Antimicrobial Awareness Week

The Ministry of Public Health (MoPH), in collaboration with all health sectors, is celebrating World Antimicrobial Awareness Week (WAAW) 2025 from Nov 18 to 24 under the global theme "Act Now: Preserve Our Present, Secure Our Future." The annual awareness campaign emphasises the urgent need for collective and timely action to preserve the effectiveness of antimicrobial medicines - life-saving treatments considered a

cornerstone of modern healthcare systems. Antimicrobial resistance (AMR) continues to pose a global public health threat, requiring co-ordinated and sustained efforts from all sectors of society. As part of the celebration, MoPH is organising a number of important activities and events, including a two-day workshop titled "Antimicrobial Use Surveillance", held in co-operation with the World Health Organisation Regional Office for the Eastern

Mediterranean. The workshop aims to strengthen national capacity and unify data collection, validation, and reporting processes across health facilities using WHO-recommended methodologies. It will also support the integration of antimicrobial use data into national digital health platforms and promote a culture of accountability, accuracy and compliance in reporting systems. Additionally, MoPH will host a virtual seminar on November 24

featuring national and international experts representing human health, animal health, environmental protection, and food safety sectors. The session will shed light on the importance of multi-sectoral collaboration to address AMR within the One Health framework and to promote responsible antimicrobial use across all related fields. Continuing efforts initiated last year, MoPH will expand community engagement by involving high

school students alongside key national partners from government, private, semi-governmental, academic, and professional institutions. The initiative aims to deepen understanding and encourage responsible antimicrobial practices among future generations. In support of the global movement, several iconic landmarks and major buildings across Qatar will be illuminated in blue to symbolise solidarity with international AMR awareness efforts. This initiative

highlights the significance of antimicrobial resistance as one of the world's most pressing health, social, and economic challenges affecting human health, animals, food systems, and the environment. MoPH calls upon all institutions, professionals and community members to take part in this national campaign by raising awareness, sharing knowledge, and adopting responsible practices to safeguard public health today and for future generations.

## Alfardan MINI, QM tie-up to support young creativity, sustainable motoring

Alfardan's strategic partnership with QM forms part of a long-term initiative to support Qatar's cultural engagement and youth empowerment

Alfardan has reinforced its commitment to support emerging local talent as a Strategic Partner with Youth Fest 2025. Organised by Qatar Museums (QM) and supported by Alfardan Automobiles, the official importer of BMW Group vehicles in Qatar, the festival celebrated youth culture, design, and creativity across the nation. As part of the partnership, Alfardan collaborated with renowned local artist, Jaber Henzab, to bring his creativity to life. Using MINI 3-Door electric model as his canvas, Henzab is applying his signature graffiti techniques to transform the wrapped car into artworks that connect mobility, design and environmental awareness. Henzab has been featured in several public exhibitions in Doha since 2022 and previously won the Qatar Foundation Innovative Art Challenge Prize in 2020. Alfardan's presence at QM's Youth Fest is further reflected in the display of three MINI Art Cars in Doha's Al Bidda Park. This open-air exhibition featuring electric cars is accompanied by test drive experiences, bringing MINI's playful spirit of design, individuality and driving fun



to new audiences. By giving members of the public the chance to drive the latest zero emissions models, they can enjoy the go-kart feeling and youthful exuberance of the MINI brand. By partnering with Youth Fest, Alfardan

has strengthened its ongoing relationship with QM, supporting more exciting cultural and creative initiatives planned for 2026. Alfardan Automobiles general manager Ayman Berjawi said: "We are incredibly excited to have collaborated with QM at



Alfardan's presence at QM's Youth Fest is further reflected in the display of three MINI Art Cars in Doha's Al Bidda Park.

Youth Fest 2025 - this was true cultural engagement with a forward-looking purpose. It was an opportunity for youth empowerment through the creative energy of art, design and a sense of fun, which is part of the MINI brand DNA.

"By combining the ingenuity of young artistic talent and the innovations of our electric models, Alfardan is proud to be involved in an event that supports sustainability and the bright future of Qatar's vibrant art scene."

## Msheireb Downtown Doha welcomes winter with culture, celebration and learning

Msheireb Properties announced the return of its celebrated Winter Season at Msheireb Downtown Doha (MDD), a citywide programme of entertainment, culture, and family experiences taking place from December 1-January 31.

Themed "In Msheireb, there is a vibe for everyone", this year's season showcases the best of sport, design, music, cinema, and national celebration in one walkable urban destination.

The winter activations will run daily from 4pm-10pm at Barahat Msheireb, Sikkat Wadi Msheireb, Msheireb Museums, Sahat Al Nakheel, and Al Kahraba Street.

The 2025-2026 winter season kicks off in early December with the Baraha Premium Fan Zone and Sikkat Wadi Msheireb activation, coinciding with the Arab Cup 2025. These opening activations capture the excitement of the tournament through live match screenings, football-themed experiences, vibrant entertainment, and community gatherings that transform the city into a celebration of sport and regional pride.

Sweet Sikka at Sahat Al Nakheel returns with the much-loved Candy Zone now in its second year. Barahat Msheireb will once again host Baraha Cinema in the latter part of December, offering outdoor screenings, themed dining experiences, and a relaxed winter setting



MDD's winter season will offer a citywide programme of entertainment, culture, and family experiences.

for families and film enthusiasts.

Dr Hafiz Ali Abdulla, senior director of Corporate Communication at Msheireb Properties, said: "Each year, we strive to curate experiences that celebrate our culture, creativity, and sense of community."

Festivities continue in mid-December with Qatar National Day celebrations across MDD. The city will host cultural installations, performances, and family-friendly experiences celebrating the nation's heritage and unity. A special performance by the Al Jazeera Orchestra and Choir (in partnership with U Events) at Barahat Msheireb will serve as a joyful highlight of the celebrations.

Msheireb Museums continues to anchor culture in MDD. This season, the "Identities of Perfection" exhibition, in collaboration with Al Markhiya Gallery, showcases the late Egyptian artist Hazem El Mes-

titakawy's works.

Resonant Bodies, developed with Virginia Commonwealth University in Qatar, highlights how art preserves memory, continuity, and identity through creative expression.

The season also features the Positive Impact Leadership Summit, Doha Film Festival Talks, Light-Box Installations, and a series of educational and children's workshops.

Doha Design District will present a rich lineup of design and creative events.

Highlights include the Hamad bin Khalifa University's Sustainable Islamic Urbanism course, and networking events like the FROMM Design Meetup, and JW Anderson Trunk Show.

Artistic contributions feature Rashmi and Youssef Ahmed artwork reveals, while workshops such as the Virginia Commonwealth University School of the Arts Qatar

(VCUarts Qatar) Design Thinking Workshop, InStudio Fashion Pop-up, and Arabic Calligraphy International Day provide hands-on experiences.

The winter programme continues into January 2026, with the return of Hosh Msheireb, a boutique glamping concept at the Company House Courtyard within Msheireb Museums.

Baraha Musical Concert will take place in mid-January while visitors can enjoy an intimate dinner beneath the open sky, surrounded by the architectural beauty of Barahat Msheireb, as classical and contemporary compositions fill the winter air.

M7 is featuring a number of exhibitions, including Threads of Impact, Houbara Haven, and Amazigh Hair Couture, each celebrating contemporary creativity and craft, while in collaboration with the Art and Culture Development Foundation of Uzbekistan, Woven Legacies: Uzbekistan's Living Heritage provides a captivating exploration of Uzbekistan's artistic traditions.

Visitors to MDD this winter are also invited to discover LifeHub Msheireb, the acclaimed educational initiative by Weill Cornell Medicine-Qatar.

The initiative is developed in collaboration with the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change and the Ministry of Municipality to support Qatar's sustainability goals.

## Doha Film Festival honours Qatar-Argentina and Chile 2025 Year of Culture with inspiring showcase

Doha Film Festival (DFF) will present a special showcase of short films from Argentina and Chile, and a live musical performance as part of the Qatar-Argentina and Chile 2025 Year of Culture activities.

The seven inspiring films have been selected to represent the rich cinematic traditions and contemporary voices from these South American nations. Two-time Oscar winning composer Gustavo Santaolalla will collaborate with the Qatar Philharmonic Orchestra for a special performance at the Qatar National Convention Centre (QNCC) as part of the festival's music line-up.

The Year of Culture programme highlights the commitment of Doha Film Institute (DFI) to foster cultural exchange and honour diverse storytelling traditions from around the world.

The selected films offer audiences a window into life in the two countries, exploring themes of migration, identity, family bonds and social transformation through evocative personal lenses.

Now in its 14th edition, the Year of Culture initiative developed by Qatar Museums under the leadership of its Chairperson, HE Sheikha Al Mayassa bint Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani, is a dynamic cultural exchange programme designed to cultivate deeper connections between Qatar and nations around the world.

In a press statement, Festival Director and DFI CEO Fatma Hassan Alremaihi said: "The Year of Culture programme reflects our shared belief that art and story-



Baisanos

telling can bridge even the longest distances between people. It provides us with an incredible opportunity to showcase distinct voices from two Latin American countries with rich artistic heritage and cultural diversity.

Films in the Qatar-Argentina and Chile 2025 Year of Culture showcase include: *Towards the Sun, Far from the Center* (Al Sol, Lejos del Centro) (Chile) by Luciana Merino and Pascal Viveros; *Sunset Over America* (Brazil/Chile/Colombia) by Matias Rojas Valencia; *The Canon* (El Canon)(Chile) by Martin Seeger; *The Look of Glass* (Argentina) by Tomás Murphy; *Lime* (Cal) (Argentina) by Santiago Dulce; *Echo and Reverberation* (Eco Y Reverberancia)(Argentina) by Fernanda Taleb; and *Baisanos* (Chile/Palestine/Spain) by Andrés Khamis Giacoman and Francisca Khamis Giacoman.

Taking place from November 20-28, DFF marks the bold next chapter in DFI's mission to nurture regional talent and champion urgent and authentic stories in cinema.

## QT completes first Desert Safari Guide Training Programme



QT honours 180 guides at a recently held ceremony following the completion of the inaugural edition of the Desert Safari Guide Training Programme.

Qatar Tourism (QT) announced the successful completion of the inaugural edition of the Desert Safari Guide Training Programme, honouring 180 guides at a ceremony held on November 13. An additional 50 participants are expected to finalise training in upcoming editions, according to QT. Developed in line with Qatar's commitment to service excellence, the training programme is designed to ensure that every Desert Safari Guide is fully equipped to deliver safe, seamless, and high-quality desert

experiences. It also reflects QT's dedication to enhance national tourism standards and elevate the overall visitor experience. Launched in May this year, the training programme targeted Desert Safari Guides working in collaboration with local tour operators and travel agencies. It provided participants with hands-on instruction in desert safety, customer service, environmental responsibility, and cultural awareness, aimed at fostering a workforce that embodies both technical expertise and

the authentic warmth of Qatari hospitality. Additionally, participants completed complementary certifications through QT's trusted training partners, including Basic First Aid with CPR and Off-Road Driving Skills Training, further enhancing their ability to manage challenging terrain and ensure visitor safety. QT noted that its long-term goal is to train more than 250 Desert Safari Guides, equipping them with the expertise required to deliver exceptional experiences throughout the upcoming winter season.

### ANNOUNCEMENT

I, VALIYAKATH KALLINGAL ABDULKADER

holder of

Indian Passport No. Y7589643  
QID No. 26035606617

hereby change my name

from

VALIYAKATH KALLINGAL ABDULKADER

to

MOHAMED ABDUL KADER  
VALIYAKATH KALLIYATH

Any objection, please contact  
THE PERMANENT COMMITTEE FOR  
NATIONALITY AFFAIRS  
within 15 days from the publication of this notice.

## Visit Qatar announces Brouq Season second edition details

Visit Qatar is set to launch the second edition of Brouq Season, its signature desert activation, offering families and visitors an immersive experience that blends adventure, culture, and relaxation.

Running from November 26-January 17, this year's edition will once again transform Qatar's unique desert landscape into a vibrant destination for exploration, entertainment, and outdoor discovery.

Located on Qatar's west coast, Brouq is known for its dramatic rock formations and scenic coastline. The 2025 edition will introduce several new features, including an Adventure Tower and expanded family areas, alongside a refreshed programme of cultural workshops, live performances, outdoor cinema, storytelling sessions, and roaming entertainment.

Visitors can also enjoy mini safari routes and dedicated family gathering areas designed to showcase the



desert's natural beauty. Premium experiences will include 250m zipline, a free-fall platform, climbing wall, hot air balloon rides, horse and camel riding, and fine dining concepts curated by W Hotel. Visitors wishing to extend their stay can pre-book a luxury seaside glamping experience operated by

Our Habitas Resort.

The event will feature three main zones, each offering a distinct experience. Film City will transform into a traditional souq experience, featuring retail, local cuisine and cultural acts.

The Wildlife Experience will offer guided routes allowing guests to

explore native desert habitats, while the Desert Escape will feature the new Adventure Tower alongside open-air dining areas and entertainment settings. Returning this year, the Glamping Zone will present upgraded seaside pods complete with private outdoor lounges, premium amenities, and uninterrupted coastal views.

General admission is priced at QR50 for adults and QR30 for children below 12 years old. Luxury glamping pods accommodating up to 10 guests are available for pre-booking, with standard pods priced at QR1,200 and premium pods at QR1,500, inclusive of enhanced furnishings and a food hamper.

Brouq Season will be open from 2pm-9pm on weekdays, 1pm-9pm on Fridays, and 10am-9pm on Saturdays. Due to limited capacity, guests are encouraged to pre-book tickets online in advance through the link <https://doha.platinumlist.net/event-tickets/102522/brouq>



## UK foreign minister plans sanctions relating to rights abuses in Sudan

Reuters  
London

Britain's foreign minister Yvette Cooper plans to introduce sanctions relating to human rights violations and abuses in war-torn Sudan, she said yesterday, stressing the need for sustained efforts for a ceasefire.

"I've instructed my officials to bring forward potential sanc-

tions relating to human rights violations and abuses in Sudan," Cooper told lawmakers, amid global efforts to end the war in the east African nation.

The conflict erupted in 2023 amid a power struggle between the Sudanese Armed Forces and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF). RSF's recent takeover of El-Fasher, one of Sudan's largest cities, has raised grave concerns about mass killings.

Both sides have increasingly

relied on drone strikes in recent months.

Cooper said that the international community had turned its back on Sudan for "far too long".

"We may need to make sure teams can get in to investigate these atrocities and hold the perpetrators to account," she said. Last year, Britain imposed sanctions on three businesses which it said were funding military groups behind the Sudanese war.

## Trump hosts Saudi crown prince at White House



US President Donald Trump and Saudi Crown Prince and Prime Minister Mohammed bin Salman hold hands during a meeting in the Oval Office at the White House in Washington, DC, US, yesterday.

Reuters  
Washington

President Donald Trump hosted Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman at the White House yesterday, with the Saudi de facto ruler seeking to deepen ties with Washington.

Making his first White House visit in more than seven years, the crown prince was greeted with a lavish display of pomp and ceremony presided over by Trump on the South Lawn, complete with a military honour guard, a cannon salute and a flyover by US warplanes.

Talks between the two leaders are expected to advance security ties, civil nuclear co-operation and multibillion-

dollar business deals with the kingdom.

The meeting underscores a key relationship - between the world's biggest economy and the top oil exporter.

Trump greeted bin Salman with a smile and a handshake on the red carpet, while dozens of military personnel lined the perimeter. The limousine was escorted up the South Drive by a US Army mounted honour guard. The two leaders then looked skyward as fighter jets roared overhead, before Trump led his guest inside.

Before sitting down for talks, the two leaders chatted amiably as Trump gave bin Salman a tour of presidential portraits lining the wall outside the Oval Office.

During a day of White House

diplomacy, bin Salman will hold talks with Trump in the Oval Office, have lunch in the Cabinet Room and attend a formal black-tie dinner in the evening, giving it many of the trappings of a state visit. US and Saudi flags festooned lamp posts in front of the White House.

Trump expects to build on a \$600bn Saudi investment pledge made during his visit to the kingdom in May, which will include the announcement of dozens of targeted projects, a senior US administration official said. The US and Saudi Arabia were ready to strike deals for defence sales, enhanced co-operation on civil nuclear energy and a multibillion-dollar investment in US artificial intelligence infrastructure, the official said on condition of anonymity.

## West Bank camp protest



Residents of the Nur Shams refugee camp, near Tulkarem in the occupied West Bank, protest at the entrance of the camp demanding the right to return to their homes, yesterday.

## Arab League hails UN resolution to end war in Gaza

QNA  
Cairo

The Arab League said the resolution adopted by the UN Security Council late Monday to end the war in Gaza reflects an international commitment to rebuilding the territory, which has suffered destruction rarely seen in modern history.

In a statement yesterday, Ahmed Aboul Gheit, the secretary-general of the Arab League, said that the resolution marks "the beginning of the road, not its end", noting that extensive work on all fronts will be required in the coming phase to translate its provisions into tangible improvements in the lives of Palestinians.

He added that the resolution contained a key reference to a credible path toward establishing a Palestinian state, expressing hope that all parties supporting a two-state solution would work to

turn this commitment into concrete progress towards an independent Palestinian state and an end to the Israeli occupation, as the core of the problem and the source of instability in the region.

Aboul Gheit also voiced hope for a swift move to the second phase of the 20-point plan on Gaza, and said the Security Council's decision should ensure that the occupying power allows the entry of humanitarian aid and essential materials needed for reconstruction.

### JORDAN APPEALS FOR DE-ESCALATION

Jordan called on the international community, to assume its legal and moral responsibilities in compelling Israel to halt its dangerous escalation in the occupied West Bank and the racist statements made by its officials, QNA reported from Amman.

In a statement, the Jordanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs called for upholding the legitimate rights

of the Palestinian people to establish an independent, sovereign state on the June 4, 1967 lines with East Jerusalem as its capital, the only path to achieving a just and comprehensive peace that guarantees security and stability in the region.

The ministry condemned the incendiary remarks made by Israel's extremist National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir, which incite against Palestinian leadership and reject the establishment of a Palestinian state, a clear undermining of efforts toward the two-state solution.

It reaffirmed its absolute rejection of the continued racist and inflammatory statements made by this extremist Israeli government's ministers and officials against the Palestinian people, warning of the consequences of such actions, which threaten to further inflame the situation and endanger the security and stability of the region.

## Syria opens trial over violence after Assad's fall

Reuters  
Aleppo/Amman

Syria yesterday began the first trial of suspects in a wave of bloodshed in March during which pro-government fighters killed hundreds of members of the Alawite minority - a case seen as a test of President Ahmed al-Sharaa's promise of accountability.

Judicial sources said the group of a dozen defendants was evenly split between people alleged to have taken part in attacks on Alawite communities, and others accused of taking part in attacks on government forces by militias loyal to ousted former president

Bashar al-Assad, which sparked the violence.

The bloodshed marked one of the worst eruptions of violence since rebels led by al-Sharaa toppled Assad, in December, ending 54 years of autocratic rule by the Assad family.

The defendants went on trial in a public session at the Aleppo Court of Justice in northern Syria. The judicial sources said they faced charges that included fomenting civil war, secession, premeditated murder and looting.

Defendants from both sides were questioned on charges of killing civilians and forming militias that carried out attacks on army checkpoints and govern-

ment installations, according to a source in court and a televised broadcast of the proceedings.

The prosecutor general has pressed charges against around 300 people linked to armed factions affiliated with the army, and around 265 who belonged to Assad-era paramilitary groups, Jumaa al-Anzi, head of a fact-finding committee appointed by al-Sharaa, said in comments carried by Syrian media reports of the trial. It is unclear how many are currently in detention.

A Reuters investigation published in June found that Syrian forces killed nearly 1,500 Syrian Alawites from March 7-9. The attacks came in response to a day-old rebellion organised by

former officers loyal to Assad that left 200 members of the security forces, according to the government. A Syrian government fact-finding committee reported in July that 1,426 people had died in March in attacks on security forces and subsequent mass killings of Alawites.

Officials say the authorities are committed to accountability in a new era that ends a dark phase of secretive authoritarian rule, noting it was previously unheard of in Syria to put members of the security forces on trial for crimes.

Anti-government activists and Alawite lobbyists say the process is not independent and amounts to a sham by the authorities.

## Mali army killed 31 villagers in attacks on insurgent area, HRW says

Reuters  
Bamako

Mali's military and allied militias killed at least 31 people in attacks on two villages in the central Segou region where the main insurgent group linked to Al Qaeda operates, Human Rights Watch said in a report yesterday.

The first attack took place on October 2 in the village of Kamona, where the army and militia forces killed at least 21 men and burned homes, the HRW report said. The second, it reported, occurred in the village of Balle about

55km away, where at least 10 people including one woman had been killed. The report said witnesses described army and militia forces executing villagers after accusing them of collaborating with JNIM. The Al Qaeda-allied group has expanded operations in the south of the West African country.

The witnesses included a local herder who survived after hiding in an abandoned home with his nine-year-old daughter, and later found 17 bodies riddled with bullets, HRW said.

The African Union and a spokesperson for Mali's army did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

## Brazilian 'Superman' cheers child cancer patients in Ghana

AFP  
Accra

The three-storey Child Health Department of the Korle Bu Teaching Hospital in Ghana's capital Accra is a place with hushed corridors, laboured breathing and parents clutching on to hope.

But on Friday, the gloom gave way to shrieks of joy as children with drips taped to their arms sat upright for the first time in days.

Others, too weak to stand, managed faint but determined smiles. Nurses paused mid-rounds, phones raised in the cancer ward. Even exhausted mothers lit up.

The reason was nearly six feet seven inches (2.03m) tall, dressed in the iconic blue-and-red Superman suit and cape.

In real life Leonardo Muylaert is

a lawyer specialised in civil rights who needs reading glasses to work.

Muylaert - known worldwide as the "Brazilian Superman" - was rounding up his one-week maiden visit to Ghana, his first trip to Africa, and the cancer ward erupted into life.

Everywhere he walked, children reached for his hands. Parents scrambled for selfies. Medical staff crowded the hallways.

"He moved from bed to bed, giving each child attention," a nurse whispered. "For some of them, this is the first time we've seen them smile in weeks." For 35-year-old Regina Awuku, whose five-year-old son is battling leukaemia, the moment was miraculous.

"My son was so happy to see Superman. This means a lot to us," she said. "You saw my son lying quietly on the bed, but he had the energy to wake up as soon as he saw him." "I



Leonardo Muylaert, known as the Brazilian Superman, poses with patients and their relatives during a visit at the Korle Bu Teaching Hospital in Accra, recently.

chose Ghana to visit for my birthday," Muylaert, who studied in the US on a basketball scholarship, said. "I feel I identify with the culture, with the heritage, with the happiness."

His sudden fame began in 2022 at the Comic-Con convention in

Sao Paulo when a stranger surreptitiously shot a cell phone video of him, amazed at his resemblance to Superman film star Christopher Reeve. "Am I seeing Clark Kent?" asked the star-struck comic book fan, in a clip that soon racked up thousands of views on TikTok -

unbeknownst to Muylaert, who did not even have a social media account at the time.

Weeks later, Muylaert learned through friends that he had become an online sensation.

"It was funny and crazy to read that so many people think I look like Superman," he told AFP then.

That's when an idea took root in the back of his mind, he said: get a Superman suit and try the alter ego on for size. He ordered an old-fashioned costume online, and started travelling around Brazil as Superman. Muylaert visits hospitals, schools and charities, poses for pictures with commuters on random street corners, and generally tries to be what he calls a symbol of kindness and hope - all free of charge.

He now visits vulnerable people worldwide.

In Accra, after leaving the hospital, he went to a prosthetics work-

shop on the city's outskirts, where amputee children screamed "Superman! Superman!" as he joined their football match.

For Akua Sarpong, founder of Lifeline for Childhood Cancer Ghana, the impact was immediate.

"It has been a fun-filled day," she said. "I have seen so many children smiling and happy, even children undergoing treatment sitting up that I haven't seen in a long time. He has brought such positive change." Muylaert said the visit reinforced his belief in small acts of kindness.

"Everybody can be a hero... you don't need a cape," he said.

"The smile on their faces changes the world." As he prepared to fly back to Brazil, he said "the idea is to spread happiness all over."

"Maybe we won't change the whole world, but as long as we inspire one person, that person inspires the other."



# Seoul-US sub deal will trigger 'nuclear domino' effect: N Korea

AFP  
Seoul

North Korea denounced an agreement between Seoul and Washington to build nuclear-powered submarines, saying in a state media commentary yesterday that the deal would cause

a "nuclear domino" effect.

South Korean President Lee Jae Myung announced the finalisation of a long-awaited security and trade agreement with the US last week, including plans to move forward with developing atomic-powered vessels.

Seoul said it had secured "support for expanding our author-

ity over uranium enrichment and spent-fuel reprocessing".

In its first comments responding to the deal, the nuclear-armed North fired back that the submarine programme was a "dangerous attempt at confrontation".

The agreement is a "serious development that destabilises the military security situation in the

Asia-Pacific region beyond the Korean peninsula and causes the situation of impossible nuclear control in the global sphere," said the commentary carried by the official Korean Central News Agency (KCNA). South Korea's possession of nuclear submarines "is bound to cause a 'nuclear domino phenomenon' in the region and spark a hot arms

race", Pyongyang added. It also said "the DPRK (North Korea) will take more justified and realistic counter-measures", due to the two countries' "confrontational intention". North Korean state media said in October that it had fired the ninth and final test of a ballistic engine, indicating that a full launch of a new ICBM could be conducted in coming

months. The commentary comes just a day after Seoul proposed military talks with Pyongyang to prevent border clashes, the first such offer in seven years. President Lee has also offered to hold broader discussions with the North without preconditions, a sharp reversal from the hawkish stance taken by his conservative predecessor.

# Japan warns citizens in China over safety amid Taiwan row

Reuters  
Beijing/Tokyo

Japan has warned its citizens in China to step up safety precautions and avoid crowded places amid a deepening dispute between Asia's two largest economies over Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi's comments on Taiwan.

The advisory issued by Japan's embassy in China came as a senior Japanese foreign ministry official travelled to Beijing to hold talks with his Chinese counterpart to try and tamp down tensions. China has urged its citizens not to travel to Japan, in what could deal a sizeable blow to Japan's economy given Chinese currently make up nearly a quarter of all tourists there, according to official data. Tourism-related stocks in Japan have plunged.

Takaichi sparked the most serious diplomatic clash in years when she told Japanese lawmakers this month that a Chinese attack on Taiwan threatening Japan's survival could trigger a military response. In response, a Chinese diplomat in Japan posted a threatening comment aimed at Takaichi on social media. That drew a strong rebuke from Tokyo but has failed to stem a wave of vitriolic commentaries aimed at her in Chinese state media.

"We have made judgments based on comprehensive consideration of the security situation in the country or region, as well as its political and social conditions," Kihara said yesterday about the safety notice. Noting the media

coverage in China, the Japanese embassy there had on Monday reminded citizens to respect local customs and be careful in their interactions with Chinese people. It asked citizens to be aware of their surroundings when outside, advising them to not travel alone and urging extra caution when travelling with children.

"If you see a person or group that looks even slightly suspicious, do not approach them and leave the area immediately," the embassy notice said.

Film distributors have also suspended the screening of at least two Japanese films in China amid the deepening dispute between Tokyo and Beijing, in what Chinese state broadcaster CCTV said was a "prudent decision" that took into account souring domestic audience sentiment.

Some Japanese films including the animated "Crayon Shin-chan the Movie: Super Hot! Scorching Kasukabe Dancers" and manga-turned-movie "Cells at Work!", originally slated for release in the coming weeks, will not begin screening in mainland China as scheduled, CCTV said, citing checks with film importers and distributors.

Beijing claims Taiwan as its own and has not ruled out using force to take control of the island. Taiwan's government rejects Beijing's claims and says only its people can decide the island's future.

Taiwan sits just over 110km from Japanese territory and the waters around the island provide a vital sea route for trade that Tokyo depends on. Japan also hosts the

largest contingent of US military overseas.

On Sunday, Chinese coast guard ships sailed through waters around a group of East China Sea islands controlled by Japan but claimed by China. Japan's coast guard said it drove the Chinese ships away.

The US does not formally recognise the islands, known as Senkaku in Tokyo and the Diaoyu in Beijing, as Japanese sovereign territory but since 2014 has said it would be obliged to defend them if attacked under the Japan-US security treaty. "In case anyone was in doubt, the US is fully committed to the defence of Japan, which includes the Senkaku Islands. And formations of Chinese coast guard ships won't change that," US ambassador to Japan George Glass said on X.

This week's G20 summit in South Africa provided a potential forum to help ease tensions but China said its premier has no plans to meet Takaichi on the sidelines of the gathering.

Kihara said nothing has been decided about bilateral meetings during G20, but that Japan remains open to conducting "various dialogues" with China.

As well as tourism, Japan is heavily dependent on China for supply of critical minerals for everything from electronics to cars.

"If we rely too heavily on a country that resorts to economic coercion the moment something displeases it, that creates risks not only for supply chains but also for tourism," Japan's Economic Security Minister Kimi Onoda told a press conference yesterday.

## Japan, Indonesia ministers meet



Indonesian Defence Minister Sjafriz Sjamsoeddin and Foreign Minister Sugiono, Japanese Defence Minister Shinjiro Koizumi and Foreign Minister Toshimitsu Motegi get together after their joint press announcement at Iikura Guest House in Tokyo, Japan, yesterday. Japan and Indonesia held a two-plus-two meeting to reaffirm maritime security co-operation.

## TPG Telecom links customer's death to outdated phone

Reuters  
Sydney

Australia's TPG Telecom yesterday said a customer died after their Samsung mobile phone running out-of-date software failed to connect with the Triple Zero emergency services, and there was no network outage at the time.

The incident comes two months after two back-to-back emergency call outages at Optus, the country's second-biggest carrier, affected thousands of people and were linked to four deaths, sparking a parliamentary inquiry into the Singtel-owned

company. The incidents have increased pressure on telecom providers to guarantee uninterrupted access to Triple Zero.

TPG Telecom, the country's No 3 telecoms firm, said a Sydney customer using its "Lebara" service on November 13 could not make Triple Zero calls on their Samsung device.

Local media reported that the call was made on behalf of a relative, who later died.

TPG was informed of the incident by the state's ambulance service on November 17, it said.

"Early investigations indicate that the failed calls were due to the customer's Samsung device operating on software that was

not compatible with making Triple Zero calls on the network," TPG said in a statement.

Samsung Australia did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

The Australian Communications and Media Authority is gathering information to investigate whether any Triple Zero rules were breached, the regulator said in a statement.

Late last month, ACMA disclosed that certain older Samsung devices failed to switch to an alternative mobile network when the primary network was unavailable, resulting in unsuccessful attempts to reach emergency services.

## Aussie inmate says Vegemite a human right

Simply tasting Australia's Vegemite spread might seem like cruel and unusual punishment to some, but one prison inmate from the land down under argues he should be allowed to enjoy the toast topping as a basic human right. Convicted murderer Andre McKechnie has sued the prisons commissioner in the state of Victoria in a novel bid to eat the quintessentially Australian condiment.

McKechnie argued that he had a right to eat Vegemite because it was "his culture as an Australian", according to court documents released. Vegemite has been banned inside Victoria's jails since 2006 over fears the yeast-laden spread could be used to brew makeshift alcohol. Inmates can also smear sticky Vegemite paste across contraband to mask its smell from sniffer dogs, according to an official list of banned prison items. McKechnie's complaint pointed to Victoria's human rights charter, which states no one should be denied the opportunity to "enjoy their culture".

## Kimchi making festival



People take part in a kimchi making festival at Garak Market in Seoul, South Korea.

## Tuvalu treasures 'special relationship' with Taiwan

Reuters  
Taipei

The prime minister of tiny Tuvalu yesterday said his country treasures its "special relationship" with Taiwan, making a visit to Taipei at a time of growing geopolitical competition in the Pacific between China and the US.

Tuvalu is one of just 12 countries, three of which are in the Pacific, to maintain formal diplomatic ties with Chinese-claimed Taiwan, and Beijing has redoubled its efforts to win over Taiwan's remaining friends.

Tuvalu Prime Minister Faleto Teo, speaking at a welcome ceremony with Taiwan President Lai Ching-te outside the presidential office in Taipei, said he had always been deeply impressed with the warmth of his

reception whenever he visits.

"Tuvalu indeed treasures its special relationship with Taiwan, a relationship that is built on shared democratic values, mutual trust and unwavering cooperation," Teo said.

"A relationship that has stood the test of time, and a relationship that has proven to be durable and sustainable for over the past 46 years."

Tuvalu has said it will sign its first treaty with Taiwan during the visit, as part of its diplomatic drive to secure formal international recognition of its perpetual statehood, including lucrative fishing grounds, even as sea levels rise and its land is submerged.

Tuvalu's national election last year was closely watched by China, and after a leadership candidate said Taiwan ties would be reviewed.

# Japanese tourist village battles to keep bears at bay

Reuters  
Shirakawa, Japan

Shiroki Mitsunari does not remember seeing bears in the picturesque Japanese mountain village of Shirakawa when he was a child.

But since a cub attacked a Spanish visitor there last month, protecting residents and the throngs of tourists who flock to his home town to see its Unesco-listed thatched-roof cottages has been his top priority.

"There are a lot more bears coming," said Mitsunari, 40, a local official overseeing efforts to deter bears in the village, located in a remote

valley in central Japan, roughly halfway between Tokyo and Osaka. He attributed the surge to a growing bear population and a shortage of their natural food sources.

While the tourist escaped with minor injuries, authorities have captured six bears near the historic Shirakawa-go site using honey-laced traps since then, he said. Bear sightings this year have topped 100, compared to around 35 last year, he added.

Across Japan, a record 220 people have been injured in bear attacks since April, according to public broadcaster NHK. Thirteen have died, including seven last month - a peak time when bears forage inten-

sively before hibernating.

Many attacks were in far-flung towns rarely visited by overseas travellers. But the Shirakawa incident, and sightings near tourist hotspots like Kyoto's Arashiyama bamboo grove, show it is not a risk visitors can ignore.

The US, China and Britain last week issued travel advisories about the dangers of bear attacks in Japan.

The US alert warned about attacks near populated zones, noting that a park adjacent to its consulate in the city of Sapporo was closed for two weeks following a bear sighting.

In addition to honey-laced traps, authorities in Shirakawa have also chopped down fruit trees that might

draw the hungry creatures, and issued warnings to visitors to walk in groups, wear bear bells and avoid certain areas.

"When we were preparing for this trip, we saw on social media that there were a lot of Japanese news reports of bear sightings," said Cornelia Li, a 25-year-old e-commerce industry worker from Shanghai.

"We were a little (worried)," she said after affixing a bear bell to her four-year-old daughter's rucksack. Her family opted to book hotels in cities rather than rural areas due to the bear risk, she said.

Asiatic black bears are listed as a vulnerable species globally, but their numbers are estimated to have tri-

pled in Japan since 2012, helped by a decline in hunting.

Experts say climate change has reduced harvests of bears' natural food like acorns and beechnuts, while the depopulation of rural areas and the proliferation of abandoned farmland have emboldened them to seek food near human settlements.

The situation has gotten so bad in the country's rugged north that Japan this month dispatched the army to help authorities cull bears.

In Hida city, an hour's drive from Shirakawa, authorities are testing drones to stop bears ransacking apple and peach orchards. The drones are equipped with loudspeakers emitting the sounds of barking

hunting dogs and have firecrackers attached to them for an extra scare factor.

"We needed a rapid-response measure," said Naofumi Yoshikawa, an official at Gifu prefecture's environmental affairs department overseeing the trial.

There have been 78 sightings in Hida city this autumn, compared to 11 last year. "Working out here, that fear of bears is always there," said Masahiko Amaki, the head of the local orchard co-operative, as the sound of a dog-barking drone rang out across the valley. "You don't want to get hurt. And I've had a few close calls myself. They glare at you, and... yes, it's really scary!"

# India strikes 'significant' gas deal with US

AFP  
New Delhi

India said it had signed a "significant" deal that will see the US supply nearly 10% of the Asian giant's liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) imports, as it seeks to diversify its energy sources.

Relations between Washington and New Delhi plummeted in August after President Donald Trump raised tariffs on India to 50%, with US officials accusing the country of fuelling Russia's war in Ukraine by buying its discounted oil. Trump has claimed that Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi has agreed to cut its Russian oil imports

as part of a prospective trade deal – something New Delhi has not confirmed. India and the US remain in talks, despite disagreements over a range of issues including agricultural trade and the Russian oil purchases. Minister for Petroleum and Natural Gas Hardeep Singh Puri said India had signed the one-year deal for 2.2m tonnes per annum of LPG,

sourced from the US Gulf Coast, providing "close to 10%" of India's annual imports of the fuel. Puri said it was "the first structured contract of US LPG for the Indian market". "In our endeavour to provide secure, affordable supplies of LPG to the people of India, we have been diversifying our LPG sourcing," Puri said in a statement,

adding that "one of the largest and the world's fastest growing LPG market opens up to the US". In October, Indian state-backed refiner HPCL-Mittal Energy said it halted purchases of Russian crude after Washington imposed sanctions on Moscow's two largest oil companies. Reliance Industries, the privately owned main Indian buyer

of Russian crude, has also said it is assessing the implications of the US restrictions, as well as those imposed by the European Union. India's economy, the fifth-largest in the world, grew at its fastest pace in five quarters in the three months ending June 30, helped by higher government spending and improved consumer sentiment.

# India set for record wheat planting as prices rise

Reuters  
Mumbai

Indian farmers are set to expand wheat acreage by about 5% to a record high, aided by higher returns and October's untimely rains, which improved soil moisture and encouraged a shift from rainfed crops to the cereal, industry officials said.

The higher planting is expected to help the world's second-largest wheat producer boost output, ease local prices, and potentially enable New Delhi to permit limited exports of wheat flour.

"Given the higher soil moisture at this time due to increased rainfall, wheat sowing and production are expected to surpass all previous record highs," Nitin Gupta, senior vice-president at Olam Agri India, an agricultural commodity trader, said.

India's key wheat-growing north-western region was inundated with 161% more rainfall than average in October, contributing to the country's overall 49% surplus in the month. Wheat was planted across 6.62m hectares as of November 14, up 17% from a year earlier, according to data from the ministry of agriculture and farmers' welfare.

Planting for the 2025-26 season is expected to rise about 5% from last year's record 34.16m hectares, based on an average estimate from eleven industry officials.

Wheat acreage in the key north-

ern states of Haryana and Punjab, which benefit from reliable irrigation, is expected to remain steady, while farmers in Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, and Rajasthan are likely to shift from less-thirsty crops such as chickpea to wheat, industry officials said. Most of India's major wheat producing states are in the northern and western parts of the country. New Delhi's decision to raise wheat purchase price by 6.6% to Rs2,585 per 100kg for the new season crop is also expected to attract farmers to the cereal, said Ajay Goyal, managing director of Shivaji Roller Flour Mills.

Optimal wheat yield depends on cold weather through the critical January-to-March period, said Gupta of Olam. The La Niña weather pattern, historically linked to colder-than-normal winters across northern India, is likely to persist from December through February, according to India meteorological department. "The temperatures in northern and central India have been dropping over the past few days, which is great news for the wheat crop," said a Mumbai-based dealer with a global trade house. India banned wheat exports in 2022, extending the prohibition as extreme heat shrivelled crops again in 2023. The unfavourable conditions contributed to lower wheat reserves, pushing prices to record highs and fuelling speculation the country would need imports for the first time since 2017.

## India's foreign minister meets Russia president



Russian President Vladimir Putin shakes hands with Indian Foreign Minister Subrahmanya Jaishankar during a meeting at the Kremlin in Moscow, Russia, yesterday.

# Punjab farmers recycle crop waste, aim to cut pollution

Reuters  
Sangrur, India

To combat the worsening air in India's capital New Delhi, several farmers in the neighbouring northern state of Punjab are packing off crop stubble to factories for recycling instead of torching it.

Stubble burning every winter is a major contributor to New Delhi being one of the world's most polluted cities, with the smoke combining with vehicle exhaust and dust and remaining trapped in the atmosphere because of slow wind speeds in lower temperatures.

However, farmers in over 800 villages across Punjab are now adapting to the use of balers to stack the stubble, and send it to factories where it is turned into biogas, bio-fertiliser, and cardboard, among other commodities, according to the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) group.

Punjab has around 12,000 villages and stubble burning is also common in other northern states.

"While this has led to some reduction in stubble burning, the incentivisation and awareness of such initiatives is still limited compared to the intensity of response needed to tackle the problem in a comprehensive

way," said Sunil Dahiya, founder and lead analyst at Envirocatalysts, a New Delhi-based think tank.

CII says it is providing equipment and resources for the initiative.

"Due to stubble burning, we are exposed to smoke ... It's not an exciting activity for us, that's why we are stocking it and sending it to boilers to be sold," said Dalbir Singh, a 25-year-old farmer in Balwar Kalan village of Sangrur district.

Traditionally, stubble burning has been the quickest way for farmers to clear fields between rice harvesting and wheat sowing, typically in early to mid-November.

## Air India to resume flights to China after nearly six years

Air India said it will resume New Delhi-China flights starting February 2026, nearly six years after suspension, as recent diplomatic steps are seen as cautiously reopening bilateral links.

The carrier was also planning to launch a Mumbai-Shanghai route later next year, subject to regulatory approvals, it said. "The reinstatement of Air India's services to Shanghai follows recent India-China diplomatic agreements that restored the air links paused in early 2020," Air India said in a statement.

China's Guangzhou Baiyun International Airport announced flights between the two nations were set to resume.

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited China earlier this year, for the first time in seven years, to attend a meeting of the Shanghai Co-operation Organisation regional security bloc. Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping agreed that India and China were development partners, not rivals, and discussed ways to strengthen trade ties amid global tariff uncertainty.

## Delhi car blast suspect brought to court



Security personnel escort alleged car blast accused Amir Rashid Ali (second right) with his face covered in black cloth, at the Patiala House Court in New Delhi, India, after he was detained. Indian authorities said on November 16, that a deadly car blast near New Delhi's Red Fort earlier this week was an attack carried out by a "suicide bomber", announcing the arrest of an accomplice.

## Girls' education hit hard by India's drying wells

AFP  
Nandurbar, India

Each morning, 17-year-old Ramati Mangla sets off barefoot with a steel pot in hand, walking several kilometres to fetch water from a distant spring in India's Maharashtra state.

By the time she returns, school has already started. "I have kept my books," she said. "But what if I never get a chance to go back?"

In the drought-hit villages of Maharashtra's Nashik and Nandurbar districts, wells are drying up and rainfall has become increasingly erratic – forcing families to adapt to harsher living conditions.

As men migrate to nearby cities in search of work, girls like Mangla are left to take on the responsibility of collecting water.

It's a chore that can take hours each day and leaves little time for school.

Local officials estimate that nearly 2m people in these regions face daily water shortages.

A 2021 Unesco report warned that climate-related disruptions could push millions of girls worldwide out of classrooms.

It is a pattern already visible across India's rural heartlands.

Teachers say attendance among girls has sharply dropped in recent years, particularly during the dry months.

Many families, struggling to survive, see no option but to keep their daughters home or marry them early.

"Children living in drought prone areas, with family responsibilities for fetching water, struggle with attending school regularly – as collecting water now takes a longer time due to water scarcity and pollution," the UN children's fund wrote in a report.

For Mangla, and many other girls across India, climate change is turning the simple act of fetching water into a choice between survival and education.

# BBC 'determined to fight' Trump defamation claim

Reuters  
London

The BBC is determined to fight any legal action filed by US President Donald Trump and sees no basis for a defamation case over its editing of one of his speeches, its chair said.

Trump last week said he was likely to sue the British broadcaster this week for up to \$5bn after it spliced together separate excerpts of a speech on Janu-

ary 6, 2021, when his supporters stormed the Capitol. The edit created the impression he had called for violence.

BBC chair Samir Shah sent a letter to Trump to apologise for the edit, the BBC said on Thursday, but it said it strongly disagreed there was a basis for a defamation claim.

Trump told reporters he would sue for anywhere between \$1bn and \$5bn.

Shah told BBC staff in an e-mail there was speculation about

the possibility of legal action, including potential costs or settlements. "In all this we are, of course, acutely aware of the privilege of our funding and the need to protect our licence fee payers, the British public," Shah wrote.

"I want to be very clear with you – our position has not changed. There is no basis for a defamation case and we are determined to fight this."

The documentary, made by a third party, aired in Britain before the November 2024 US election.

It showed Trump telling supporters "we're going to walk down to the Capitol" and we "fight like hell", a comment he made in a different part of his speech. Trump had in fact said supporters would "cheer on our brave senators and congressmen and women".

The edit was made public after the *Daily Telegraph* published a leaked internal BBC report.

The report, written by an independent adviser, contained wider criticism of the BBC's news output and led to the resignation of

the director-general Tim Davie and head of news Deborah Turnes.

Trump's lawyers said the edit caused the president "overwhelming reputational and financial harm", according to a letter seen by Reuters.

They said they would sue in Florida, rather than in Britain, where the one-year limit to file a defamation case has expired.

Trump will face a tougher legal standard in the US given the protection of freedom of speech

in the constitution, lawyers have said. The BBC is likely to argue that the programme was not broadcast and was not available on its streaming service in the US, so voters in Florida could not have seen it.

The BBC, which is funded by a mandatory levy on TV-watching households, is also widely expected to challenge the reputational harm claim on grounds that Trump went on to win the election, and say the edit was not done in malice.

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## Trade threats and political turmoil weigh on Europe outlook

Europe is facing mounting concerns about the prospects for the economy due to the cumulative impact of trade threats and higher tariffs imposed by the US, along with the challenges of persistent weakness in Germany and political turmoil in France.

The eurozone economy will grow less than expected next year, the EU executive predicted on Monday, as risks from international trade and geopolitical tensions weigh on the single currency area.

The European Commission forecast the 20-country single currency area to grow by 1.2% in 2026, down from a previous forecast of 1.4%.

Output will rise 1.3% in 2025, 1.2% in 2026 and 1.4% in 2027, the European Union's executive arm said in its autumn outlook. That's an upgrade for this year compared with May's prediction, and a small downgrade for 2026.

Inflation is seen at 2.1% in 2025, as previously forecast, and should stick close to the European Central Bank's 2% target over the next two years.

The EU expects US trade policy moves and responses by "key players like China will dampen global trade", according to its EU economy chief Valdis Dombrovskis.

**The eurozone economy will grow less than expected next year, the EU executive has predicted, as risks from international trade and geopolitical tensions weigh on the single currency area**

Struck in July, the deal with US President Donald Trump means EU exports face a baseline US levy of 15%, rather than a threatened 30%, which would have wrought havoc on the European economy.

For the entire 27-country EU, growth of 1.4% is seen in 2026, slightly lower than the 1.5% predicted in May.

For Germany, trade uncertainty is just one part of the story.

Despite a spending binge on defence and infrastructure in Europe's biggest economy, what could have been the first meaningful year of growth since the aftermath of the pandemic is now looking less impressive.

The government's Council of Economic Experts has lowered its outlook for expansion in 2026 to below 1%.

But the Commission forecasts the export-driven economy to grow by 1.2% next year, slightly up from the 1.1% past prediction. In France, Europe's No 2 economy, political instability is an ongoing challenge.

While growth is proving resilient, uncertainty is shaving about 0.5 percentage point off expansion, with domestic political and budget turbulence accounting for at least 0.2 point of that, according to the Bank of France. In the Commission's forecast, France is faring a little better, with growth of 0.7% expected this year and 0.9% in 2026.

But while the outlook for this year improved from 0.6%, the commission cut its growth forecast for France for 2026 from 1.3%.

Over a decade of economic stagnation has seen Italy's economic growth fall far behind that of regional rivals, resulting in steadily declining goods output and exports and lower power consumption by many of the country's businesses.

Italy's gross domestic product in 2025 is roughly flat compared to 2008, at around \$2.4tn, according from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) data.

Europe is still lagging behind the US and China.

The IMF in October predicted the US economy would grow by 2.1% next year. Even though it anticipated that China's economy would slow this year, the IMF predicted the Asian powerhouse would grow by 4.2% in 2026.

For sure, Europe is facing significant economic challenges, including sluggish growth, high public debt in some nations, and a decline in global competitiveness, but it is generally considered resilient and stable rather than being in a state of overall "economic trouble" or collapse. The EU has also demonstrated strong political commitment to unity and has tools, such as the Next Generation EU recovery fund, to manage stress.

Looking forward, the European Commission believes that the ramping up of Europe's competitiveness paired with higher defence spending "focused on EU production" and new trade deals "could bolster economic activity more than projected".



## Clash over healthcare subsidies threatens to reshape midterms

By Nathan Layne  
Beckley (West Virginia)

For Larry Jackson, a Donald Trump-backing Republican hoping to unseat his party's incumbent in a West Virginia congressional primary next year, the fight in the US Congress over Affordable Care Act subsidies is both personal and political ammunition.

Jackson, 42, says steep ACA premium hikes facing West Virginians – estimated by one think-tank to average nearly 400% per enrollee next year – highlight the stakes of the expiring subsidies. It's an issue he plans to spotlight in a broader cost-of-living message for his campaign to unseat Representative Carol Miller, who has not committed to keeping them in place. The elevation of ACA subsidies as an electoral issue among Republicans in one of the nation's most reliably conservative states a year before Americans go to the polls for midterm congressional elections underscores the issue's potential potency.

Jackson, a business owner, has relied on the ACA to provide health insurance for his family of eight. Without the enhanced subsidies, due to expire at the end of December, his monthly premium is set to quadruple to \$1,850 a month. Democrats' refusal to approve discretionary funding for federal agencies until Republicans agreed to extend the subsidies triggered the longest government shutdown in US history. It ended on Wednesday without a deal to extend them.

Democrats are expected to campaign vigorously on the hikes as they seek to break the Republican grip on Congress in next November's elections.

"These tax credits cannot expire. It's going to hurt a lot of people in West Virginia," Jackson

told Reuters. "We can all agree there are problems with the Affordable Care Act, but the government needs to extend these credits as they work that out."

The subsidies, introduced during the Covid-19 pandemic, expanded federal assistance for Americans seeking health insurance through marketplaces created by the ACA, also known as Obamacare.

With an aging, rural population and some of the nation's highest rates of poverty and chronic illness, the state of nearly 2mn people faces among the biggest proposed premium increases in the country. The subsidies have provided a crucial lifeline to tens of thousands of West Virginians previously priced out of Obamacare coverage.

A deal struck on Sunday between Republicans and a handful of Democrats in the Senate to end the 43-day shutdown left the fate of the subsidies in limbo. While Senate leadership promised a vote on the subsidies in December, Republican leaders in the House of Representatives have not committed to a vote on them.

Of the more than 30 people Reuters spoke to in West Virginia, a comfortable majority, including all Democrats and several Republicans, supported extending the subsidies until Congress could formulate a plan to make health insurance more affordable.

Republicans who opposed the extension expressed concerns about fiscal discipline or potential fraud in the programme, including one whose business was insuring its employees through Obamacare.

Keeping the subsidies would likely receive broad support nationwide, according to a poll conducted by health policy organisation KFF from October 27 through November 2. It found three-quarters of US adults backed their extension.

Simon Haeder, an associate professor of public health at Ohio

State University, said the issue is unlikely to move the needle enough in the midterms in a staunchly Republican state like West Virginia, where Trump won 70% of the vote in the 2024 presidential election. But it could make a difference in so-called purple states closely divided between the two parties.

"It's going to give Democrats something to run on," said Haeder, who has researched the intersection of health policy and politics. "If you're a Republican in a purple state, you're going to have to answer for people losing healthcare."

In an October Reuters/Ipsos poll, 37% of Americans said Democrats had a better approach to healthcare, compared with 27% who favoured Republicans. Brian Darling, a Republican strategist and former Senate aide, said inflation and the broader economy will likely be top of mind for voters next November, but healthcare policy could tip close races.

"Republicans need to have a health reform proposal drafted and ready to deploy in the enhanced subsidy debate or they will lose on policy and at the ballot box," he said.

The Center for American Progress, a liberal think tank, estimates ACA enrollees in West Virginia face an average 387% increase in their premiums without the subsidies, more than any other state.

According to KFF projections, a 60-year-old couple making \$85,000 in the state's first congressional district – represented by Miller – will see premiums jump by 654%, from \$602 to \$4,540, second only to Wyoming's lone district at 693%.

Tami White, who works at an insurance agency in West Virginia, said her firm has been renewing lower-income clients in new ACA plans, with premium hikes ranging from 20% to 100% for similar or downgraded plans. It has yet to

renew any clients with earnings above 400% of the poverty line due to the cost.

While households below the 400% threshold – \$84,600 for a couple – will still qualify for a lesser tax credit, those above it will receive nothing if the subsidies expire.

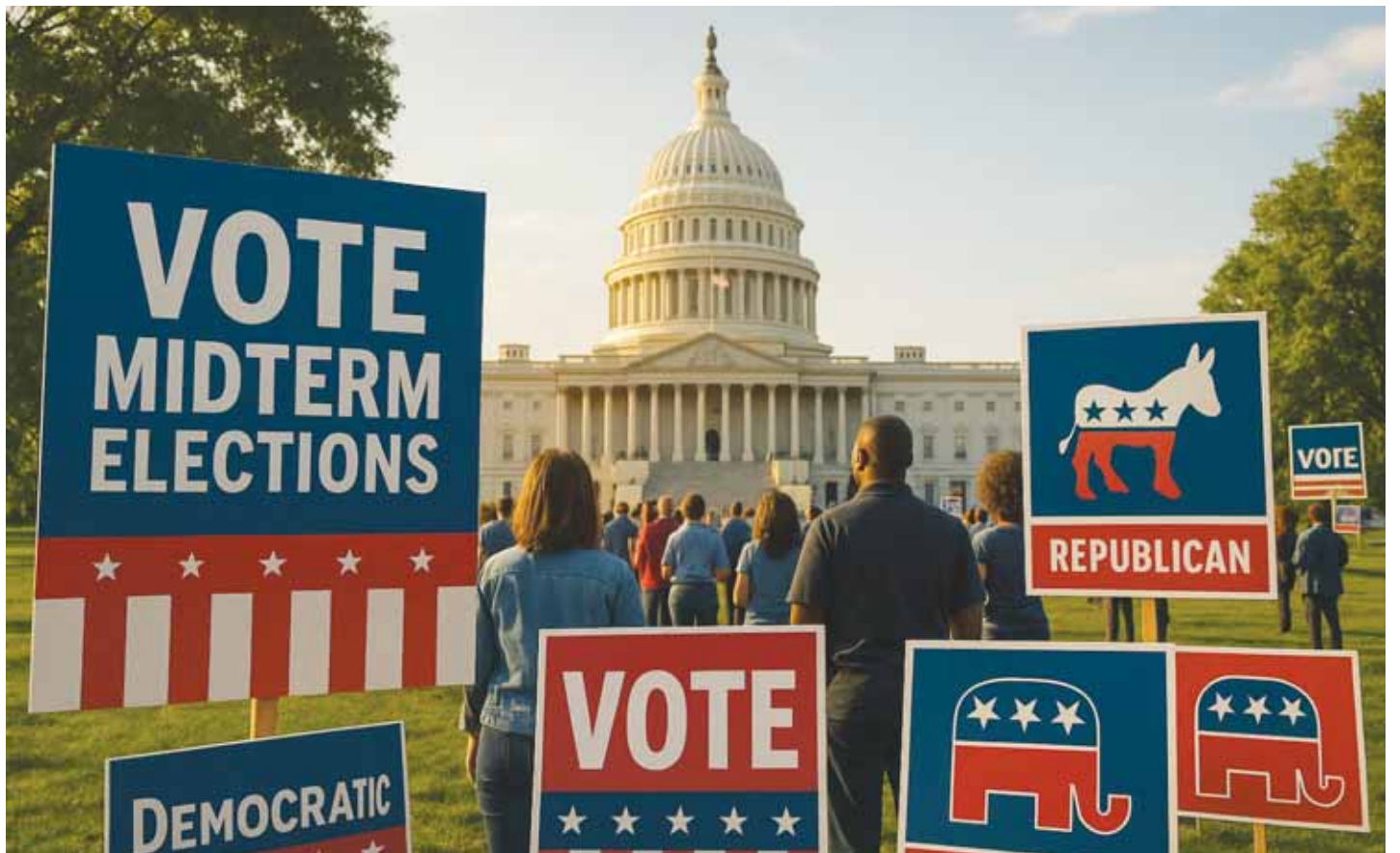
As many as 15,000 West Virginians are at risk of losing health coverage because they cannot afford the new premiums, according to the West Virginia Center on Budget & Policy, a progressive policy research group, potentially compounding the state's healthcare problems ahead of planned Trump administration cuts to Medicaid, the government health insurance programme for low-income Americans. The reductions are part of the sweeping package of tax and spending cuts Trump signed into law in July. Once those cuts are fully implemented, the state's hospitals, which rely heavily on Medicaid dollars, could lose \$1 billion per year, according to West Virginia Hospital Association CEO Jim Kaufman.

Miller, who is facing the primary challenge from Jackson and two other Republicans, did not respond directly to questions on whether she supported extending the tax credits. Republicans could negotiate on the credits once the government reopens, Nicolas Gray, a spokesman for Miller, said in a statement.

The issue has hit home for Jackson's campaign manager as well. Patrick Krason said he blamed both parties for his new premiums, projected to rise five times to \$2,200 a month.

"I am mad at everybody, at the legislative branch, Republicans and Democrats," he said.

"Greedy for myself, I would like (the subsidies) extended for a year," he said. "And, you know, maybe they decide they can actually come up with a plan!" – Reuters



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# What to know about Sarajevo's 'sniper safari' claims

AFP  
Sarajevo

Italian investigators last week reportedly opened a probe into decades-old allegations that foreigners paid to shoot civilians on a "sniper safari" during Sarajevo's siege in the 1990s.

For those in the Bosnian capital, it reopened old wounds from the 1,425-day blockade that saw its streets become a killing ground, and resurfaced dark claims about wealthy killers paying to shoot them for amusement.

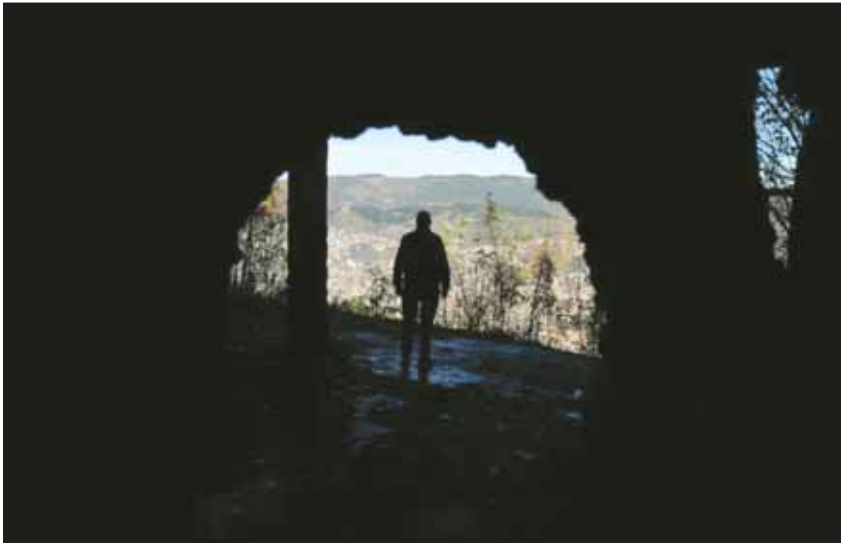
The Bosnian judiciary, which opened its own probe years earlier, says it is still verifying the allegations, and details in the current investigation remain scarce.

Here is what we know about the harrowing claims of the so-called "weekend snipers" during the war that killed more than 100,000 people and left Bosnia and Herzegovina deeply scarred.

In early April, 1992, Bosnian Serb forces encircled Sarajevo, starting what would become the most prolonged siege in modern European history.

Over the next four years, more than 11,500 people were killed in the city, including several hundred children, according to official Bosnian data.

Many were shot by snipers, positioned



A Bosnian worker looks out at Sarajevo through a hole in a war-damaged building that once marked the front line during the 1992-95 Bosnian War, in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, last Thursday. (Reuters)

on hills surrounding the city.

The Hague war-crimes tribunal found that the sniper campaign had a single aim — to terrorise Sarajevo's civilians.

However, no individual sniper was ever held accountable, with all convictions directed toward the commanders in charge.

The first report of the "sniper safari" emerged while the city was still under siege, published in the Sarajevo daily *Oslobodjenje*.

The front page of April 1, 1995, ran the headline *Sniper safari in Sarajevo*. Beneath it were the lines "Chilling tes-

timonies of war tourism" and "A Serbian officer offered an Italian journalist the chance to shoot at an elderly woman".

Another read: "They prefer to shoot at children".

The article cited Italian media reporting testimonies about "weekend warfare in Sarajevo", as well as claims raised before the People's Court in Trento.

No charges or criminal investigation were launched following the report but Bosnian intelligence reportedly alerted their Italian counterparts.

It would be decades before the allegations resurfaced.

In 2022, Sarajevo's mayor, Benjamina Karic, who had been a young child during the war, watched a documentary that shocked her.

Within days of watching the film *Sarajevo Safari* by Slovenian director Miran Zupanic, which aired at a festival in the city, she filed a criminal complaint with Bosnian state prosecutors, and then later with the Italian authorities.

In the film and subsequent interviews, former Bosnia and Herzegovina army intelligence officer Edin Subasic said he had first heard claims about paid sniper shoots from a captured prisoner during the war in 1993.

Subasic, writing in *radiosarajevo* earlier this week, said he had come across

notes from the interrogation with a Serb national who claimed Italian hunters had travelled with Serbian volunteers near Sarajevo.

"They are rich men who will pay the Serb forces in Sarajevo to let them shoot at some Muslims," Subasic said.

Following Karic's complaint in 2022, the Bosnian prosecutor opened a preliminary investigation, but no further details followed.

This August, Karic filed an updated complaint with the Italian courts through their embassy in Sarajevo.

Former judge Guido Salvini, who helped journalist Ezio Gavazzeni build the case, told Italian media that "a considerable amount of work has been done," largely by Gavazzeni, "drawing on local sources and witnesses from both sides".

Salvini said they had also obtained documents from the Italian intelligence, which had officers in Sarajevo during the siege.

"A whole team of dedicated people is working to ensure that the complaint does not remain just words on paper," Karic wrote on Facebook.

"We are not giving up!" she added.

The Milan prosecutor's office has not disclosed at what stage the case is at nor responded to AFP's requests for information.

## Trump will talk to Maduro, 'OK' with strikes on Mexico

President Donald Trump has said he will talk to Venezuela's Nicolas Maduro, as Washington's military buildup stokes tensions, and added that he would be "OK" with US anti-drug strikes inside Mexico.

Trump has dramatically increased the number of US forces in the Caribbean region to tackle what he calls drug traffickers based in a number of Latin American countries including Venezuela and Mexico.

"At a certain period of time, I'll be talking to him," Trump told reporters in the Oval Office when asked if he would speak to Maduro, while adding that the Venezuelan president "has not been good to the United States." Asked if he would rule out US troops on the ground in Venezuela, Trump replied: "No, I don't rule out that. I don't rule out anything. We just have to take care of Venezuela," he added. "They dumped hundreds of thousands of people into our country from prisons." Hours later, Maduro said on his weekly television show that he was ready to talk "face to face" with anyone in the United States "who wants to talk to Venezuela."

A contingent of US Marines is currently conducting military exercises in Trinidad and Tobago, the second such manoeuvres in less than a month between Washington and the small English-speaking archipelago located about 10 kilometres (six miles) from the Venezuelan coast.

But Trinidad and Tobago's leader said Monday that the small island nation would not allow its territory to be used to attack Venezuela, nor was it ever asked to.

"The US has NEVER requested use of our territory to launch any attacks against the people of Venezuela," said Prime Minister Kamla Persad-Bissessar, a close Trump ally, in a WhatsApp message to AFP.

"Trinidad and Tobago will not participate in any act that could harm the Venezuelan people," she added, emphasising that Washington and Caracas should resolve their differences through dialogue.

# Nato trials new anti-drone defences to ward off Russia

AFP  
Nowa Deba (Poland)

Polish troops yesterday launched a drone from the back of a pick-up truck as they trained some 100km from the Ukrainian border to use a new US-made system designed to counter the threat from Russia.

Guided by a pilot, the unmanned craft swooped through the winter sky on the hunt to destroy its target: a simulated version of one of the attack drones Moscow regularly uses to terrorise Ukraine.

The deployment of the Merops system is part of Nato's hurried efforts to shore up its eastern flank after the alliance in September scrambled jets to shoot down Russian drones over Poland.

That incident — followed by a string of unexplained drone flights that rattled other European countries — served as a wake-up call of the continent's vulnerabilities almost four years after Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine.

In response, Nato has bolstered its forces nearest Russia and the European Union has hastily drawn up plans to build a system of anti-drone defences.

On Nato's recommendation, Poland and fellow eastern flank country Romania have quickly acquired a handful of the Merops systems to help plug the gaps in the short-term.

The technology, produced by a firm backed by ex-Google CEO Eric Schmidt, has already proved its worth downing Russian drones in Ukraine.

"The system is one of the most effective killers of Russia's Shahed drones," US General Curtis King told journalists invited to view the training at a Polish military base, referring to Iranian-designed drones Russia is using massively.

"We estimate it is responsible for 40% of those drones killed in Ukraine."

Crucially, it is also relatively cheap.

Back in September Nato was forced to use its latest F-35 fighter jets firing missiles worth a million dollars each to down Russian drones costing tens of thousands of dollars.

That was clearly unsustainable given that the Kremlin has regularly sent swarms of hundreds of such drones into Ukraine.

In comparison the drones fired by the Merops system only cost some \$15,000 each.

"The system is roughly a tenth of the cost of what it's costing Russia to build and employ a Shahed-type drone system," King said.

The Merops — which can use artificial intelligence to target enemy drones — is just one of numerous similar systems that Nato countries are testing as they seek to rush more capabilities into use.

Polish, Romanian and US troops underwent some 20 days

of training to be able to handle it.

"Once you get your hands on, it's pretty simple to catch on," said US sergeant Corey Myers.

"For our younger kids, as long as you're good with an Xbox controller, it's very intuitive."

Given the limited number of such anti-drone systems in Nato hands and the huge areas it has to defend, there is little chance of making the alliance's eastern flank airtight against Russian incursions.

"To defend such a vast area effectively, I think it might almost be impossible," said Robert Tollast, a military expert at the UK's RUSI think tank.

Instead officials and analysts say the systems could be best used deployed around key sites like power stations, airports and military bases.

That means they could help serve to deter the sort of drone disruptions seen recently in countries such as Denmark, Germany and Brussels.

With the EU's push to develop its own capacities likely to take time, Polish commanders said they see the US system as a stepping stone.

"This system is now battle-tested in Ukraine, and the results there are very encouraging — so we decided to get it as a gap-filler," said General Stanislaw Czosnek, deputy commander of the Polish armed forces.

"Then eventually we want to replace them with Polish products."



Spanish General Francisco Franco in the 60s. (AFP)

## Franco's long, brutal dictatorship

One of Europe's longest dictatorships will be thrust to the forefront of public debate in Spain tomorrow as the country marks 50 years since General Francisco Franco's death.

AFP looks back at the dictator's repressive 36-year regime, which continues to divide Spain. Franco rose to power during the Spanish Civil War, which began in 1936 when he led a coup against the country's left-wing Republican government.

A three-year battle ensued, pitting Franco's Nationalist rebels, backed by Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany, against the Soviet-backed Republicans. The Nationalists won the conflict, which ended in 1939 with hundreds of thousands of dead. Among the killing sites was the Basque town of Guernica, which was bombed by German warplanes — an atrocity immortalised in a haunting painting of the same name by Spanish master Pablo Picasso.

In his book *The Spanish Holocaust*, historian Paul Preston estimated that 200,000 people died in combat during the conflict, and another 200,000 were murdered or executed — 150,000 at the hands of the Nationalists. Atrocities were also committed by the Republican side.

After World War II broke out, Franco held talks with Adolf Hitler on joining the Axis powers but ultimately decided against direct military involvement. Franco ruled for another three decades with the backing of the military and the Catholic Church.

During his first five years in power, he executed tens of thousands of Republican prisoners and dumped their bodies in mass graves. Spain's prison population shot up and half a million people fled the country as their property was seized.

Newborns were snatched from opponents and poor families to be passed on to other couples, many of them close to Franco's regime. Campaigners estimate there were thousands of "stolen babies" over the decades.

After Franco's death on November 20, 1975, King Juan Carlos succeeded him as head of state and led the transition from dictatorship to democracy. The authorities opted for what became known as a "pact of forgetting" over the dictatorship's crimes, to avoid a spiral of score-settling between Franco supporters and opponents.

A major shift took place under Socialist Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez, who has driven efforts to commemorate those who died or suffered violence or repression during the civil war and dictatorship. One of his most controversial moves was to remove Franco's remains from a vast hillside mausoleum north of Madrid that drew right-wing sympathisers and move them to a more discreet family tomb.

# Russia's Saint Petersburg faces cultural crackdown

AFP  
Saint Petersburg

Russian bookseller Lyubov Belyatskaya sighed as she lamented the "climate of widespread anxiety" that has taken hold in her native Saint Petersburg amid the war in Ukraine.

Once dubbed Russia's "window to Europe", the city has long been the country's cultural capital, a hotbed of independent thinking, artistic expression and underground dissent.

But as authorities ratchet up repression, trying to stamp out any sign, no matter how small or subtle, of public opposition to the Kremlin or the Ukraine offensive, Belyatskaya said she senses the city retreating inwards.

"We can no longer write the way we used to, joke about certain things," she told AFP.

"Both our words and actions are severely restricted."

The effect is being seen on the shelves of her bookshop — called "Vse Svobodny" or "Everyone is free" — in the city centre.

"Every week we literally have to remove books for one reason or another," Belyatskaya said.

Since launching its offensive on Ukraine in February 2022, Russia has deployed a



full legislative arsenal to silence anyone who criticises the campaign.

Those who breach wartime censorship face decade-long prison sentences.

Some authors — like late opposition leader Alexei Navalny — are completely banned.

Others — those who are disliked by the Kremlin but not yet outlawed — have to be sold with a giant label naming them

as "foreign agents". The Soviet-era term applies to the likes of Lyudmila Ulitskaya and Boris Akunin, prolific, now exiled, Russian writers. The crackdown in Saint Petersburg — President Vladimir Putin's hometown — has a particular resonance.

The Tsarist-era capital has for decades been at the forefront of free thinking and dissent.

Nobel Prize-winner Joseph Brodsky

was forced to emigrate in 1972 after years of persecution for his non-conformist poetry.

It was from Saint Petersburg that the protest rock anthem "Changes" — by Kino, fronted by Viktor Tsoi — emerged, encapsulating the pent-up frustration at the end of the Soviet Union.

And since 2022, the city's rock legends Boris Grebenshchikov and Yuri Shevchuk have repeatedly railed against the offensive in Ukraine.

"We consider ourselves to be freer here, more liberated, less subordinate to fear, including the fear of repression," local rights activist Dinar Idrisov told AFP.

"In reality, I don't think that's true." There are signs that the screws are being tightened.

Most recently, locals have been shaken by the case of Diana Loginova, an 18-year-old street musician in jail for the last month over pop-up performances of anti-war songs.

Known by her stage name Naoko, she has been sentenced to three consecutive short-term prison terms — for disrupting public order, discrediting the Russian army and organising a mass gathering.

"To prosecute somebody for a song — seriously?" said Serafim, a 21-year-old music student who had come to court, alongside 20 other young people, to sup-

port Loginova at a recent hearing.

Despite sympathy, some criticised her for drawing attention to the underground music scene.

"They knew they were endangering everyone", after they posted the videos online, said one singer from the city who spoke on condition of anonymity.

"The authorities ignored us, but now I know that many people have stopped going out" to perform, they added.

Pavel, a 17-year-old singer, was performing next to one of the city's canals.

"There is now a crackdown on musicians," he told AFP, saying authorities have started placing bureaucratic obstacles to hinder performances.

Platon Romanov, another bookseller who runs the independent Fahrenheit 451 store, said there was no point to trying to protest against the current situation.

"You just need to understand what times we live in. Singing songs by banned musicians on the street. Why? For what purpose? It's pointless, and obvious they will come and shut it down," he told AFP.

In such a climate, what are the prospects for a city that prided itself on its reputation as a counter-cultural hub and bastion of artistic freedom?

"Many many people, many artists, poets and musicians have left," said Romanov. "Life has changed significantly!"

# QFSW honours staff at annual forum

The Annual Forum for Employees of the Qatar Foundation for Social Work (QFSW) and its affiliated centres took place on Monday, under the slogan "Thank You." The event was held in the presence of HE the Minister of Social Development and Family Buthaina bint Ali al-Jabr al-Nuaimi who is also the chairperson of QFSW; CEO of QFSW Rashid bin Mohammed al-Hamda al-Naimi; Their Excellencies members of the Board of Directors; strategic partners; executive directors; and employees of QFSW and its affiliated social centres.

The forum serves as a sincere expression of appreciation for the dedicated efforts made by QFSW and its affiliated centres' members throughout the year. The event reflects QFSW's belief that the achievements realised are the result of staff commitment and devotion to serving the community and its various groups, for a more cohesive society.

The event began with a welcoming speech addressing the importance of gratitude, followed by a video presentation titled "Thank You," showcasing QFSW's contributions and humanitarian work.

In his speech, CEO of QFSW Rashid bin Mohammed al-Hamda al-Naimi said that social work is a humanitarian mission before being a professional duty, noting that the QFSW's initiatives and services contribute to promoting family stability and human dignity.

Al-Naimi added that QFSW is guided by a system of institutional values that includes servant leadership, effective communication,



professional and social responsibility, teamwork, innovation and development, and empowerment of various groups to enhance their contribution to social development.

At the event, a group of QFSW's longest-serving employees and those from its affiliated centres were honoured, in recognition of their dedication and contributions.

Moreover, several supporting entities and success partners were recognised, including the Shati Al Bahar Group, the Social and Sport Contribution Fund (Daam), Qatar Charity, the Qatar Red Crescent Society, Qatar International Islamic Bank (QIIB), Dukhan Bank, AlRayan Bank, AhliBank, the Jassim and Hamad Bin Jassim Charitable Foundation, the Ministry of Endowments and Islamic Affairs, Mwani Qatar, Marble Medical Center, Shift WLL, and Ali Bin



Ali Luxury. QFSW also honoured the most impactful initiatives of the year, which included: the "Forsa" Initiative by the Social Development Center "Nama"; the "Is'ham" initiative by the Shafallah Center for Children

with Special Needs; the "Tamkeen Juniors" programme by Dreama Orphan Care Center in co-operation with the "Nama" Center; and the Dhakhr initiative by the Center for Empowerment and Care of the Elderly (Ehsan),



in recognition of their contributions to empowerment and social responsibility.

The event concluded with a tour by the minister and the forum's guests around an accompanying exhibition displaying

artworks created by members of the Shafallah Center and Al Noor Center for The Blind embodying the foundation's institutional values and showcasing the talents and creative abilities of both centres' members. (QNA)

# Katara spotlights essence of Portugal through culinary event

The Katara Cultural Village, in collaboration with the Embassy of Portugal in Doha, hosted a Portuguese culinary arts event on Monday, introducing visitors to the famous Portuguese dessert 'Pastel de Nata'.

The evening offered a rich culinary experience that highlighted the authentic character of this internationally renowned sweet - dubbed as a cornerstone of traditional Portuguese cuisine.

The event, held at Katara Hall 32, was attended by Mariam Maged al-Saad, CEO of Katara Global Public Diplomacy Centre and

manager of International Affairs; Portuguese ambassador Paulo Neves Pocinho; and several other ambassadors and members of the diplomatic corps, as well as culture and culinary arts enthusiasts.

The programme unfolded in an elegant setting, blending cultural flair with the traditions of Portuguese hospitality, giving guests a unique opportunity to explore a part of Portugal's heritage through flavour and taste.

In a press statement, al-Saad emphasised the importance of cultural co-operation between Katara and the embassies accredited



Portuguese ambassador Paulo Neves Pocinho speaking at the culinary arts event.

to Qatar. She noted that such events contribute to strengthening communication among peoples and open new horizons for cultural exchange through various arts, including the culinary arts, which form a universal language capable of uniting cultures without barriers.

She also commended the efforts of the Embassy of Portugal in organising the event and its role in providing an enriching experience of Portuguese heritage. She affirmed that Katara continues to support such initiatives, which reinforce its position as a hub of cultural diversity and a destination that brings the world together through arts and heritage.

Pocinho thanked Katara for

hosting the event, stressing that food serves as a true bridge of communication between people. He noted that Pastel de Nata is not merely a traditional dessert but an integral part of Portuguese identity - one that has spread globally and remains deeply intertwined with the history and culture of Portugal.

The envoy added that cultural co-operation with Katara helps present a vivid image of Portuguese heritage to the public in Qatar through refined experiences that appeal to discerning tastes and introduce participants to the historical richness of Portuguese cuisine. This event is part of a series of joint initiatives undertaken by Katara in collaboration with embassies accredited to Qatar.



Famous Portuguese dessert 'Pastel de Nata' showcased at the event.

## Swiss State Secretary visits Imam Mohammad Ibn Abdul Wahhab Mosque



State Secretary at the State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO) of the Swiss Confederation Valerie Berset Bircher paid the Imam Mohammad Ibn Abdul Wahhab Mosque a visit. It was organised by the Ministry of Endowments (Awqaf) and Islamic Affairs' Sheikh Abdulla Bin Zaid Al Mahmoud Islamic Cultural Centre. During the visit, the minister and the accompanying delegation were briefed on the mosque's authentic Qatari architectural style.

They learned about Islamic rituals performed there and went on a guided tour of the mosque's different sections, getting to know more about their religious and spiritual functions in a Muslim's daily life. Bircher praised the mosque's design and its details, which blend Qatari authenticity with Islamic identity, deeming it one of the most prominent architectural and cultural landmarks in Doha. She noted that the mosque reflects the state's interest in modern Islamic architecture with a local character. (QNA)

# QNL holds third edition of 'Memory of Private Collections in Qatar' series

Qatar National Library (QNL) hosted the third edition of its seminar series, 'Memory of Private Collections in Qatar,' highlighting one of the most significant private libraries, that of Sheikh Abdullah bin Ibrahim al-Ansari.

Sheikh Abdullah al-Ansari was a distinguished religious scholar, among the founding members of Qatar's first religious institute in 1954, and a pioneer in advancing knowledge and preserving Islamic heritage. In addition to his work in publishing the Hijri and Gregorian calendars as well as prayer times in Qatar, Sheikh al-Ansari was recognised for his devotion to learning and religious guidance, earning him the title of "Servant of Knowledge." The event honoured his lasting contribution to Qatar's intellectual and cultural heritage. His collection, which includes rare manuscripts, books, and historical documents, reflects the vibrant scientific and cultural renaissance that took place in Qatar throughout the 20th century.

HE the Minister of State and President of Qatar National Library Dr Hamad bin Abdulaziz



al-Kawari said the library does not view private collections as personal belongings, but as an essential source of Qatar's collective memory and an intrinsic part of its intellectual heritage. "The 'Memory of Private Collections in Qatar' series embodies our firm commitment to preserving this legacy and honouring its early pioneers," Dr al-Kawari said.

"Celebrating the library of Sheikh Abdullah al-Ansari is an expression of our gratitude to the figures of Qatar's cultural renaissance who shaped the consciousness of our generations and our

pride in Qatar's position and role as a beacon of knowledge and a bridge for dialogue between cultures. Transforming this private memory into public knowledge accessible to researchers is at the core of our mission to build a sustainable knowledge economy rooted in Arab and Islamic civilisation," he added.

In his remarks, Dean of the College of Sharia and Islamic Studies at Qatar University and Deputy Chairman of Sheikh Abdullah al-Ansari Complex Dr Ibrahim bin Abdullah al-Ansari addressed Sheikh Abdullah al-Ansari's up-



bringing, education, and efforts in seeking knowledge, and his participation in the early 50s of the last century in the beginnings of the educational renaissance in Qatar.

Dr Ibrahim al-Ansari commended the efforts of QNL in serving books and knowledge, and highlighted the importance of this seminar in shedding light on the scholarly legacy of prominent figures in Qatar. He urged future generations to draw inspiration from these achievements and to learn about the history of the country and the contributions of



its people. In his remarks, Ali al-Ansari highlighted the prominent role of books in Sheikh Abdullah al-Ansari's life, noting his special interest in editing, authorship, printing, and publishing. Sheikh Abdullah al-Ansari contributed to more than 250 printed, edited, or published works to the Arabic and Islamic library, representing an important addition to Arab and Islamic culture, Ali al-Ansari indicated.

"My father contributed to a large number of publications and writings, including approximately 29 books of his own. He also par-

ticipated in the editing of around 60 books, many of which are considered seminal works." Ali al-Ansari noted that Sheikh Abdullah al-Ansari also oversaw the printing and publishing of about 130 books on Islamic heritage, in addition to Qur'ans featuring various readings and calendars.

The 'Memory of Private Collections in Qatar' is a QNL initiative dedicated to recognising the critical role played by individuals and families in safeguarding knowledge and culture, preserving Qatar's collective memory for future generations. (QNA)