



Travel insurance
in 2 mins



Visit **qic-online**



Regulated by QIC

GULF TIMES



THURSDAY Vol. XXXXVI No. 13572

November 27, 2025
Jumada II 6, 1447 AH

www.gulf-times.com 2 Riyals

Published in
QATAR
since 1978



YOU DESERVE
To treat yourself to new delights, instantly!

NEW
UNLIMITED
PLANS



Enjoy exclusive Snoono
delivery discounts on
Vodafone World



ORIXIS POLYDEX
Durable waterproofing-
performance for roof protection

44601602/3

SILVER JUBILEE BONANZA
MEGA PRIZE - HAVAL - H9
10 IPHONE 17 Air 256 GB

SPORT | Page 1

Wenger hails
groundbreaking
U-17 World
Cup Qatar

GREAT DEALS
400+ Products on Offer
Jetour T2

Your free talabat pro is boarding now!
6 months of pro perks

SK PROPERTIES LLC

Where Visions Became Landmarks.

4418 0000 - 3335 5346

www.sk-properties.co

Amir invited to attend GCC summit in Bahrain

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani received a written message from King Hamad bin Isa al-Khalifah of the Kingdom of Bahrain to participate in the 46th session of the Supreme Council of the Gulf Co-operation Council (GCC), which will be hosted by Bahrain in December. HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani received the message yesterday during his meeting with ambassador of the Kingdom of Bahrain to the State of Qatar Mohammed bin Ali al-Ghatam. **(QNA) Page 4**

Cabinet okays rules for website-based trade

The Cabinet yesterday approved a draft decision of the Minister of Commerce and Industry to determine the conditions and controls for conducting commercial activities via websites that do not require a physical location to practice them. The preparation of this draft decision comes to establish the legal framework for practising trade via websites and to determine its controls in a way that allows for the creation of an attractive environment for investors and entrepreneurs while preserving the rights of traders and consumers. **Page 4**

Hong Kong fire kills at least 36, 200 missing

A huge fire engulfed a crowded Hong Kong high-rise complex, killing at least 36 people and leaving more than 200 unaccounted for in the city's worst blaze in decades. The fire, which started yesterday afternoon and was still burning in the early hours of Thursday, shocked the Chinese financial hub, which has some of the world's most densely populated and tallest apartment blocks.

2 US National Guard members shot

Two members of the National Guard were shot in Washington yesterday, US Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem said in a post on X but gave no other information. Police in Washington separately said there was a shooting one block from the White House yesterday, but gave no other details. President Donald Trump was in Florida ahead of the Thanksgiving holiday.

G Bissau rocked by coup d'etat

Military officials in Guinea-Bissau declared taking "total control" of the coup-prone west African country yesterday, arresting its president, closing its borders and suspending its electoral process three days after general elections. The officers' announcement followed heavy gunfire that rang out near the presidential palace earlier in the day, with men in military uniform taking over the main road leading to the building. In the early afternoon, General Denis N'Canha, head of the presidential military office, told members of the press that a command "composed of all branches of the armed forces, was taking over the leadership of the country until further notice".

Lawh Wa Qalam: M F Husain Museum opens tomorrow

Qatar Foundation (QF) will unveil Lawh Wa Qalam: M F Husain Museum to the public tomorrow (Friday), a new addition to the arts and cultural landscape of Qatar, celebrating the life and work of the iconic modern artist Maqbool Fida Husain.

The museum is described as a dynamic space where art meets learning, located in Education City. Jowaher al-Marri, manager of Communications Outreach at QF, said: "Lawh Wa Qalam: M F Husain Museum embodies what Education City stands for - a place where curiosity is encouraged, connections are made, and learning continues throughout life. By bringing Husain's work into our community, we are creating a space that is open, accessible, and collaborative - where art becomes a catalyst for dialogue and discovery.

"The museum reinforces Qatar's role as a regional and global hub for culture and creativity,



Lawh Wa Qalam: M F Husain Museum.

inviting people to explore ideas that inspire, challenge, and unite - and we look forward to opening its doors to the world and to audiences from all walks of life."

Syeda Deeba a fourth-year Interior Design student at Virginia Commonwealth University School of the Arts in Qatar said: "The opening of Lawh Wa

Qalam: M F Husain Museum feels incredibly inspiring. The museum enriches Qatar's cultural landscape by celebrating one of the most influential artists of the 20th century, and for young designers and artists, it offers a space to study the relationship between art, space, and culture."

Reflecting the openness and inclusivity of Education City, the museum complements existing cultural offerings across Qatar Foundation's ecosystem, as well as its schools, universities, research centres, and community initiatives. This creates a natural environment for cross-collaborative learning, where people can connect, interact, and collaborate in enriching, unexpected ways.

"Education City thrives on collaboration across fields design, engineering, science, medicine, and the arts. A museum dedicated to a major global artist adds a cultural anchor that everyone can access," Deeba says. **To Page 5**

Amir meets Saudi minister



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani met yesterday at his office at the Amiri Diwan with Minister of State and Member of the Council of Ministers of the sisterly Kingdom of Saudi Arabia Prince Turki bin Mohammed bin Fahd bin Abdulaziz al-Saud and the accompanying delegation, on the occasion of his visit to the country. At the outset of the meeting, Prince Turki conveyed the greetings of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Salman bin Abdulaziz al-Saud of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and Crown Prince and Prime Minister of Saudi Arabia Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdulaziz al-Saud, to His Highness the Amir, wishing His Highness good health and happiness, and the Qatari people further progress and prosperity. In turn, His Highness the Amir entrusted Prince Turki bin Mohammed bin Fahd bin Abdulaziz al-Saud with his greetings to King Salman bin Abdulaziz al-Saud, and to Prince Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdulaziz al-Saud, wishing them good health and wellness, and for the Saudi people continued progress and prosperity. During the meeting, the two sides discussed fraternal relations between the two brotherly countries and ways to support and develop them, in addition to exchanging views on several topics and issues of mutual interest. **(QNA) Page 4**

Doha designated as Arab Media Capital for 2027

At the conclusion of its 55th ordinary session held yesterday at the headquarters of the Arab League in Cairo, the Council of Arab Information Ministers decided to designate Doha as Arab Media Capital for 2027, and approved the designation of Rabat as Arab Media Capital for 2026 and Damascus for 2028.

Qatar Media Corporation (QMC) said Doha was selected as Arab Media Capital for 2027 in recognition of Qatar's pioneering role in developing the Arab and international media landscape. "This choice reflects Qatar's contributions in strengthening the role of media and serving Arab issues," QMC added.

In its final communique, the Council of Arab Information Ministers called on Morocco to put in

place the essential procedures to advance a comprehensive programme to celebrate Rabat as Arab Media Capital for 2026, ensuring that the programme includes dedicated activities and events for Al-Quds Al-Sharif.

The council further urged Arab media to give special attention to the issue of occupied Jerusalem and to implement the decision of the Council of Arab Information Ministers to treat this holy city as the eternal Arab Media Capital.

It hailed the efforts undertaken by Kuwait in celebrating Kuwait as Arab Media Capital for 2025, calling on the General Secretariat to be provided with a report on the efforts and activities conducted throughout 2025 so that it can be circulated to member states for reference in future experiences. **(QNA)**



HE Lolwah bint Rashid AlKhater, Minister of Education and Higher Education at the event along with other dignitaries.

The World Innovation Summit for Education (WISE) has launched the WISE Education Index at an expert consultation workshop attended by Her Highness Sheikhha Moza bint Nasser, Chairperson of Qatar Foundation.

The WISE Education Index is a framework to rethink how the effectiveness of the world's education systems is assessed. The Index was presented at WISE 12, the latest edition of WISE's global biennial summit, where leading researchers, economists, and poli-

cymakers convened to review and discuss the framework ahead of its pilot phase.

The workshop was also attended by HE Sheikhha Hind bint Hamad al-Thani, Vice-Chairperson of Qatar Foundation, and saw the participation of HE Lolwah bint Rashid AlKhater, Minister of Education and Higher Education.

The Index addresses a critical gap: while education systems across the world are adapting to rapidly shifting demographics, technological change, and eco-

PM chairs Smart Govt and Digital Leadership Committee meeting



HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani chaired yesterday the meeting of the Steering Committee for Smart Government and Digital Leadership. The meeting discussed several projects related to digital government and enhancing integration between ministries, government agencies, and public institutions. These projects aim to contribute to achieving the goals of Qatar's national digital transformation and to facilitate services and transactions for individuals and institutions across various sectors. Appropriate decisions were made regarding these projects. The meeting was attended by ministers - members of the committee, along with senior state officials. **(QNA)**

WISE launches education index

economic transformation, the many current global indicators that measure access, literacy, employability, and national performance fail to capture the full continuum of education from the conditions that shape early learning to long-term processes that influence well-being, workforce readiness, and lifelong learning.

Unlike traditional approaches that centre on static outcomes often correlated with national wealth, the WISE Education Index seeks to recognise that education systems do not begin from the same starting point. The Index will aim to offer a holistic and process-oriented, rather than input-driven, framework that helps explain not only what education systems achieve, but how they improve over time.

"The WISE Index has the potential to become a powerful tool

for policymakers, so long as it stays aligned with national priorities, remains clear and practical, and reflects the true purpose of education," said Nofe al-Suwaidi, secretary-general of the National Commission for Education, Culture, and Science, Ministry of Education and Higher Education, speaking at the high-level consultation workshop. "If designed thoughtfully, it can help us monitor where we stand, where we must go, and how to build systems that nurture learning, equity, and human values."

The Index aims to challenge the long-standing "data-rich but information-poor" reality of global education measurement and support more equitable, evidence-driven approaches to education reform. It aims to support governments and education leaders as they design policies that cham-

panion social-cultural integration, innovation readiness, equity and human flourishing.

Its multidimensional structure examines systems through the interconnected lenses of inputs, processes, and outcomes, enabling decision-makers to identify the conditions that exist, how resources are used, and which practices down to the classroom level generate the greatest impact.

"The Index introduces a new lens for a new era, one that measures education systems not by narrow outputs, but by the full continuum that enables human flourishing. This Index aims to redefine global understanding of what effective, equitable, and future-ready education truly looks like," said Selma Talha-Jebril, director of Policy and Research at WISE. **To Page 8**

WEEKLY PRICES

SPECIAL OFFERS • NEW PRICES • ON SELECTED ITEMS

Promotion valid from 27.11.2025 to 29.11.2025. Bulk purchase not allowed.



استخدم الرمز لآخر الترويجي
SCAN THE QR CODE FOR LATEST
PROMOTION CATALOGUE
VIEW NOW

2 DAYS ONLY
27.11.2025 - 28.11.2025



ذرة حلوة
قطرية ١ باكيت
Sweet Corn
Qatar 1pkt
QAR 12.75
QAR 6.75



تفاح بينك ليدى
تشيلي ١ كيلو
Apple Pink Lady
Chile 1kg
QAR 9.50
QAR 7.75



كيوي ذهبي
نيوزيلندي ١ كيلو
Kiwi Gold
New Zealand 1kg
QAR 27.50
QAR 18.75



فطر المحار قطري
١ باكيت
Mushroom Oyster
Qatar 1pkt
QAR 7.50
QAR 5.75



حبات لكل عميل
2pcs Per Customer

حياة زيت نباتي 1.5 لتر
Hayat Blended
Vegetable Oil 1.5Ltr
QAR 8.75

2 DAYS ONLY
27.11.2025 - 28.11.2025



بطاطا حلوة
مصرية ١ كيلو
Sweet Potato
Egypt 1kg
QAR 2.75



بروكلي إسباني / مصري
١ كيلو
Broccoli Spain
/Egypt 1kg
QAR 12.50
QAR 8.75



سمك دنيس مزرعة عماني
١ كيلو
Farmed Sea Bream
Oman 1kg
QAR 39.75
QAR 31.50

2 DAYS ONLY
27.11.2025 - 28.11.2025



سمك قاروص
تونسي ١ كيلو
Seabass
Tunisia 1kg
QAR 49.75
QAR 37.75



5 kg

Najaat
TASTY
1121
Indian Basmati Rice
Long Grain Rice in the World
NET WT: 5KG
NET WT: 11.023 LBS
Specialty packed for Lulu Hypermarket LLC.
جودة ختمها في لولو هايبر ماركيت ذ.م.ج.
PRODUCT OF INDIA

2 DAYS ONLY
27.11.2025 - 28.11.2025



روبيان مزرعة كبير إماراتي ١ كيلو
Farmed Prawns Large
20/30 1kg UAE
QAR 42.75
QAR 26.75



لحم جاموس هندي
بدون العظم ١ كيلو
Buffalo Boneless
India 1kg
QAR 29.75
QAR 19.75

2 DAYS ONLY
27.11.2025 - 28.11.2025



لحم ماعز مقطع
باكستاني ١ كيلو
Mutton Cuts
Pakistan 1kg
QAR 47.75
QAR 38.75



أفراس شرائح صدر الدجاج
٥٠٠ غرام
Afras Fresh Chicken
Breast Sliced 500gm
QAR 8.75

نجات ارز بسمتي
٥ كيلو
Najaat Basmati
Rice XXXL 1121, 5kg
QAR 37.00
QAR 25.50



كريمة طازجة
قطرية ١ كيلو
Qatar Fresh
Cream 1kg
QAR 36.00
QAR 26.00



جبنة رومي مصرية خفيفة
١ كيلو
Egyptian Mild Romy
Cheese 1kg
QAR 34.00
QAR 24.75



أبو الولد جبنة ٣٢ قطعة
٤٨٠ غرام / ٢ باكيت
Regal Picon Cheese 32's
480gm X 2pkt
QAR 26.50
QAR 17.75

2 pcs



باسكين روبينز آيس كريم
٩٠ مل / حبتان
Baskin Robbins Ice Cream
Stick Asstd 90ml X 2pcs
QAR 20.00
QAR 15.00



برسيل منظف سائل للغسيل
منوع ٤.٨ لتر / ١ حبة
Persil Liquid Detergent
Asstd 4.8Ltr X 1pc
QAR 76.25
QAR 49.50



واي واي نودلز دجاج
٧٥ غرام / ١٠ حبات
Wai Wai Chicken
Noodles 75gm X 10pcs
QAR 9.50

4 pcs



كينكو نايس شيبس
منوع ٨٠ غرام / ٤ حبات
Kitco Nice Chips
Asstd 80gm X 4pcs
QAR 14.00
QAR 9.75



لوريال إلفيف شامبو
منوع ٤٠٠ مل / حبتان
Loreal Elvive Shampoo
Asstd 400ml x 2pcs
QAR 43.00
QAR 22.00

2 pcs



فازلين لوشن للجسم جلوتا هيا
منوع ٢٠٠ مل / حبتان
Vaseline Body Lotion
Gluta-Hya Asstd.
200ml x 2pcs
QAR 36.50
QAR 24.00

لولو
تنزيلات
LULU ON
SALE

20% TO 50% OFF

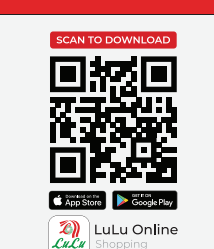
Readymade Garments, Sarees, Churidars
Footwear, Ladies Bags, Baby Accessories & Sunglasses.
Promotion valid from 19.11.2025 to 06.12.2025

Lulu
SUPER
FRIDAY

SUPER PRODUCTS • NEW PRICES
ON SELECTED ITEMS

Promotion valid from 19.11.2025 to 06.12.2025


LULU
HYPER
MARKET
COM
SHOP ONLINE



GET
5%
BACK

with your Doha Bank shopping Co-branded credit card
Type "LULU" & SMS to 92610 or visit any Doha Bank Branch

0% INTEREST
Buy now, pay over 6 months



Lulu
Where the world comes to shop

Carrefour كارفور

27-29 November

29-27 نوفمبر

CARREFOUR WEEK DEALS

أسعار جديدة على منتجات مختارة New Prices On Selected Products

Shop with Confidence
16001
License number: 17953/2025

0.75
QAR



Per KG

Zucchini, Local

0.50
QAR



Per KG

Pumpkin Green, Local

4.75
QAR



Per KG

Beans long, Local

2.75
QAR



Per KG

Honey melon, Oman

شمام، عُمان

3.50
QAR



Per KG

Banana, Vietnam

موز، فيتنام

4.50
QAR



Per Pack

Strawberry, Egypt

فراولة، مصر

5.75
QAR



Per KG

Clementine w/leaves, Turkey

كليمنتين مع أوراق، تركيا

19.75
QAR



Per KG

Beef stew, Pakistan

قطع لحم بقر، باكستان

Super Deals أفضل العروض



Per Pack

توت أزرق، الأرجنتين
جنوب أفريقيا
Blueberry 125g,
Argentina/South Africa

4.75
QAR

Super Deals أفضل العروض



Per KG

سلمون 1-2 كغ، النرويج
Salmon 1-2kg
Norway

37.75
QAR

Super Deals أفضل العروض



زيت دوار الشمس نوف 1.8 لتر
Noof sunflower oil 1.8L

15.00
QAR
9.75

Super Deals أفضل العروض



دجاج مجمد 1000 غم
Avia frozen chicken 1000g

13.00
QAR
8.50

26th of November to 2nd Of December 2025

26 نوفمبر إلى 2 ديسمبر 2025



Per PC

ستارة 140x160 سم
Window curtain 140x160cm

49.75
QAR
10.75

Shop with Confidence
16001
License number: 17953/2025



Per PC

بنطال رجالي للرجال
Men cargo pants

69.75
QAR
22.75

Shop with Confidence
16001
License number: 17953/2025



VIP

55CM
4 Wheel

179.00
QAR
79.00

حقية سفر متنوعة
Vip kart plus hard trolley
assorted

Shop with Confidence
16001
License number: 17953/2025



55"

4K HDR TV

Dolby Audio

HDR

HVA Panel

TCL

1199.00
QAR
849.00

Shop with Confidence
16001
License number: 17953/2025

24/7
DELIVERY

UNLIMITED FREE DELIVERY
On All Orders Above QAR 99



Don't miss out!
Get the best deals on your phone

Scan to
subscribe



Amir gets invitation from Bahrain's king

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani has received a written message from Bahrain's King Hamad bin Isa al-Khalifah to participate in the 46th session of the Supreme Council of the Gulf Co-operation Council (GCC), which will be hosted by Bahrain in December. HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani received the message yesterday during his meeting with Bahraini ambassador Mohammed bin Ali al-Ghatam. (QNA)



Amir meets Saudi Minister of State

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani met yesterday at his Amiri Diwan office with the visiting Saudi Minister of State and Member of the Council of Ministers Prince Turki bin Mohammed bin Fahd bin Abdulaziz al-Saud and the accompanying delegation. (QNA)



Minister of State for Interior Affairs meets Egypt diplomat

HE the Minister of State for Interior Affairs Sheikh Abdulaziz bin Faisal bin Mohammed al-Thani met yesterday with Egyptian ambassador Walid Fahmy al-Faqi. The meeting discussed topics of mutual interest and ways to enhance security co-operation between the two countries, in addition to developing work mechanisms in related fields. (QNA)



Minister of Interior chairs 3rd meeting of Supreme Council of Police Academy

HE the Minister of Interior, Commander of the Internal Security Force (Lekhwiya), and Chairman of the Supreme Council of the Police Academy, Sheikh Khalifa bin Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani, chaired the council's third meeting for 2025 at the Ministry of Interior headquarters. During the meeting, the council reviewed the agenda items, including the development of the academic system, curricula, and training programmes; operational strategies; and various initiatives to enhance the academy's performance. Appropriate decisions were adopted to further strengthen the academy's role in preparing qualified security personnel. (QNA)



Cabinet approves draft decision on doing trade via commercial websites

HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani chaired the Cabinet's weekly meeting yesterday at the Amiri Diwan.

Following the meeting, HE the Minister of Justice and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Ibrahim bin Ali al-Mohannadi stated the following: At the outset of the meeting, the Cabinet commended the participation of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani in the G20 Summit 2025, held on Nov 22 under the theme 'Solidarity, Equality, Sustainability' in Johannesburg, South Africa.

The Cabinet stressed that His Highness' participation in the summit reflects Qatar's distinguished position, and the global appreciation it enjoys at the international level, for its successful efforts in resolving conflicts and settling crises through diplomatic means, and for its effective role in



supporting peace and development issues, and defending the rights of peoples to justice, equality and a decent life.

The Cabinet also hailed the outcomes of the Amir's official visit to Rwanda on Nov 20-21, which was followed by a state visit to the friendly Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). The Cabinet affirmed that the constructive discussions that His Highness the Amir had held with Rwan-

dan President Paul Kagame, and President of the Democratic Republic of the Congo Felix Tshisekedi, as well as the agreements and memorandum of understanding that were signed, embodied the depth and strength of Qatar's relations with the two friendly countries, and opened new and promising horizons for developing and expanding co-operation with them in various fields.

The Cabinet then considered the topics on its agenda, as it approved a draft decision of the Minister of Trade and Industry to determine the conditions and controls for conducting commercial activities via websites that do not require a physical location to practise them. The preparation of this draft decision comes to establish the legal framework for practising trade via websites and to determine its controls in a way that allows for the creation of an attractive environment for investors and entrepreneurs while preserving the rights of traders and consumers.

The Cabinet also decided to approve a draft MoU on mutual co-operation in the field of diplomatic training between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the State of Qatar and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Paraguay, a draft MoU for co-operation in agriculture and food security between Qatar's Ministry of

Municipality and Uruguay's Ministry of Livestock, Agriculture and Fisheries, and a draft co-operation programme between the Qatari Ministry of Justice and the Iraqi Ministry of Justice for 2026-2030.

The Cabinet reviewed four reports and taking the appropriate measures in their regard. The documents included the third annual report on the outcomes of the work of the Civil Defence Department for 2024, the annual report on the activities of the Qatar Development Bank and its financial position 2023-2024, a report on the outcomes of participation in the third session of the joint financial and economic committee between Qatar's Ministry of Finance and Switzerland's Federal Department of Finance (Bern - September 2025), and a report on the outcomes of participation in the second regular session of the Arab Cybersecurity Ministers Council (Riyadh - September 2025). (QNA)

Qatar participates in GCC meeting of Food Security Committee

QNA
Kuwait

Qatar participated in the 37th GCC meeting of the Agricultural Co-operation and Food Security Committee, held yesterday in Kuwait. The Qatari delegation was headed by HE the Minister of Municipality Abdullah bin Hamad bin Abdullah al-Attayah.

During the meeting, the ministers discussed several topics on the agenda, including the Gulf Food Security Strategy, the Plant Genetic Resources Bank, and the International Consultative Group on Agricultural Research (CIGAR) program.

The meeting also discussed the project for consultancy services to



study and evaluate modern technologies and artificial intelligence in farm management and productivity enhancement, implemented in co-operation with the International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA). Other topics included amend-

ing the lists of prohibited and restricted pesticides attached to the Pesticides Law, approving amendments to the Pesticides Law, and discussing the executive regulations of the Law on Fertilisers and Agricultural Soil Amendments. The attendees reviewed a number



of joint Gulf legislations and regulations, including the adoption of the Law (System) of Preventive Measures against Infectious and Epidemic Animal Diseases, the adoption of the Executive Regulations of the Law (System) of the Practice of Veterinary Medicine,

the amendment of the Executive Regulations of the Veterinary Quarantine Law, in addition to the adoption of the Executive Regulations of the Law (System) of Veterinary Preparations, and the discussion of the Unified Law (System) for the Protection, De-

velopment and Exploitation of Living Aquatic Resources in the GCC countries, and the follow-up on the implementation of the decisions of the Committee on Agricultural Co-operation and Food Security issued by the 34th meet-

Education Ministry issues guidelines for schools during examinations in 2025-26

QNA
Doha

The Ministry of Education and Higher Education, through its Educational Affairs sector, has issued a circular regulating operations in public schools during the end-of-semester examination periods for the first and second semesters of the 2025-2026 academic year. The move is intended to provide a safe and supportive learning environment for students and to increase flexibility for administrative and teaching staff.

In a statement, the ministry

said the circular supports schools' efforts to create an appropriate atmosphere for students taking exams and to ensure that assessment, grading and certificate issuance are conducted to the highest standards of quality and accuracy.

The circular allows students to leave school immediately after completing their exams to reduce crowding and improve movement within school buildings. It requires schools to complete grading, recording of marks and issuance of certificates within the specified timelines while maintaining rigorous quality controls in correction and review processes. School employees are permitted

to leave two hours before the official end of the workday during both examination periods, provided that these early departures are not combined with breastfeeding hours or other reduced-schedule arrangements and that total daily early departures and authorised absences combined do not exceed two hours while the circular is in effect.

The ministry stressed that the measures are designed to enable schools to carry out their duties efficiently during exam periods, while ensuring an educational environment that meets students' needs and preserves the stability and quality of the educational process.

MoI undersecretary meets Iraqi envoy

HE the Undersecretary of the Ministry of Interior (MoI) Abdullah bin Khalaf bin Hattab al-Kaabi met with Iraqi ambassador Mohammed Jaafar al-Sadr. The meeting discussed issues of mutual interest and reviewed co-operation in security fields and ways to support and enhance it. (QNA)



UDST conference explores technological innovations for cancer risk reduction

University of Doha for Science and Technology (UDST), in collaboration with the Qatar Cancer Society, successfully hosted the Technological Innovations for Cancer Risk Reduction and Detection conference, bringing together leading national and international experts to explore the integration of cutting-edge technologies aimed at enhancing cancer prevention, early detection, and community well-being.

With keynote presentations from experts at the World Health Organisation (WHO)'s International Agency for Research on Cancer (WHO-IARC) and the WHO Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean (WHO-EMRO), the conference served as a platform to advance applied research,

foster interdisciplinary collaboration, and support national and global health priorities.

The conference highlighted innovations in artificial intelligence and emerging technologies for cancer risk reduction and detection, while strengthening collaboration among key institutions, including WHO-IARC, WHO-EMRO, the Ministry of Public Health (MoPH), and leading healthcare and academic entities. The event also promoted community awareness and wellness were further promoted through the dissemination of the latest scientific evidence, national priorities, and practical strategies for cancer prevention and early detection, showcased through a dedicated poster exhibit.

Students actively participated



through research presentations, innovation showcases, and interactive sessions designed to cultivate future leaders in healthcare technology. President of UDST Dr Salem Al-Naemi said: "It was

inspiring to see so many experts, students, and community partners come together for this conference. Events like these allow us to turn innovative research into real-world solutions that can make

a difference in people's lives. At UDST, we are committed to supporting the next generation of leaders in healthcare technology and contributing to Qatar National Vision 2030 for a healthier future."

Commenting on the occasion, Founder and Chairman of the Qatar Cancer Society Sheikh Dr Khalid bin Jabor al-Thani said: "This conference represents an important model of institutional collaboration aimed at strengthening cancer prevention and supporting early detection efforts. The Qatar Cancer Society commends the national and international partnerships that contribute to the exchange of expertise and the development of evidence-based strategies. We reaffirm our commitment to continuing our work with our partners to advance community health and

enhance awareness, in alignment with Qatar National Vision 2030. This commitment stems from the society's vision of fostering a cancer-aware community and ensuring a better quality of life for those affected."

International keynote speakers included Head of the IARC Handbooks of Cancer Prevention Programme Dr Beatrice Lauby-Secretan, who presented global research efforts and evidence-based strategies for reducing cancer risk. Dr Lamia Mahmoud, Regional Advisor for Noncommunicable Diseases Prevention at the WHO-EMRO, discussed regional approaches to integrating technology and public health initiatives to enhance early detection and prevention of non-communicable diseases, including cancer. (QNA)

Lantern Festival lights up Al Bidda Park

By Shaima Sherif
Doha

Qatar's newest immersive experience, the Lantern Festival, is set to welcome visitors today at Al Bidda Park, featuring an array of glowing installations, interactive displays, cultural performances, and family-friendly activities.

"It is the first time that a Lantern Festival is happening here in Qatar. We are very proud of being the organiser of this and we have partnered with a well-known Chinese firm that specialises in doing lanterns and lantern festivals in China and around the world.

"We have more than 400 lanterns that have been placed in this area of 55,000sq m. It's a good family-friendly atmosphere," Safe Flight Solutions chief executive Hassan al-Mousawi told *Gulf Times* on the sidelines of a media preview yesterday. He said that 28 craftsmen worked for a month in preparing the venue.

Organisers noted that this large-scale event, running until March 28, is intended to be a warm, family-friendly celebration that



The first Lantern Festival in Qatar is showcasing hundreds of glowing installations and sculptures at Al Bidda Park. PICTURES: Shaji Kayamkulam

combines creativity, culture, and community. "The weather is fantastic. The park is very good. We hope that our community here in Qatar and our visitors are going to be coming here and enjoying the festival," al-Mousawi added.

This unique festival offers Qatar residents and visitors the opportunity to explore the various sections such as the Legends of Light, which features lantern sculptures inspired by folklore and cultural tales; The Glow Gardens, where

thousands of lights resemble a living garden; The Cultural Courtyard, which comes to life every day with music, dance, and storytelling; while children can have hands-on fun in the Family Play Zone. Visitors are encouraged to



stay and enjoy the evening by the festive atmosphere created by food stalls and an artisans' market. According to the organisers, the event

also offers an inexpensive and unforgettable night out, with early-bird tickets costing QR35 for adults and QR20 for children.



QF's Rasekh programme showcased at WISE 12

A Qatar Foundation (QF) initiative that supports schools to deliver education rooted in their local culture has been showcased to an international audience at the WISE 12 summit - as experts emphasised the value to learners of multilingual education that connects to their own societies.

Rasekh is an educational and accreditation framework established by QF to support high-quality education that is locally contextualised, helping to link curricula with local knowledge, innovation, language, cultural heritage, and values.

And at WISE 12 - the latest edition of the biennial gathering of education expertise hosted by QF's global education initiative WISE - QF's Pre-University Education presented Rasekh to delegates from around the world, outlining the model, standards, and resources it offers to support schools in implementing it.

Speaking at a session titled 'Rasekh and Beyond: Cognitive Research and Global Models in Dual Language Education', Sheikha Noof Ahmed al-Thani, vice-president, Strategic Educational Initiatives at QF's Pre-University Education, explained how Rasekh was created to nurture Qatari students who not only excel academically, but are rooted in their identity and embrace the Arabic language.

"We strengthen the Arabic language so it remains the language of thinking and creativity," she told the session. "We dedicate time across all grade levels for learning the Arabic language, and link learning Arabic to real-life daily applications.

"We adapt curricula so they

reflect our environment, culture, and heritage. This is supported through Rasekh's Knowledge Bank, which provides resources rooted in our national, cultural and historical context."

The session also heard from Professor Roberto Filippi, professor of psychology and neuroscience at University College London's Institute of Education, who has been studying multilingualism in education for almost 20 years.

"Even today, I often hear teachers and parents being told that raising a child with two or more languages could somehow confuse them, that it might slow down their speech, hinder learning, or even affect their academic success," he said. "This belief is deeply rooted, but it is also wrong.

"Children who grow up using more than one language often develop stronger attention, memory, and problem-solving skills, and these strengths can translate into better educational outcomes."

Sophie Roche, director of The Roche School in London - which offer a Spanish language learning option - explained how "this additional focus on language and culture certainly does not detract from pupils' learning; indeed, it enhances it."

And Jing Wang, head of the Chinese Programme at London-based Kensington Wade School told the session, told the session: "When children learn the same concepts in two languages, they naturally develop the ability to shift perspectives. So local knowledge becomes the anchor, and bilingual learning becomes the bridge."

QF's Akhlaquna ambassadors highlight role of ethics, values at WISE 12 summit

Youth ambassadors from Qatar Foundation (QF)'s Akhlaquna initiative took part in a panel discussion at the WISE 12 summit, which explored the impact of non-classroom learning experiences on shaping students' character and ethical values.

The summit - held every two years by QF's global education initiative WISE - saw the students share their personal journeys and key moments from their experiences both inside and outside the classroom, emphasising the role of non-classroom activities in building skills, strengthening confidence, and reinforcing ethical values, and how these experiences contribute to making a meaningful difference in learners' lives.

Moza Abdulla al-Fakhroo, 19, spoke about her experience in the session, saying: "I've learned that real education isn't limited to what we receive in the classroom, it's shaped by every experience we live outside of it.

"Being part of the WISE summit came with a strong sense of responsibility, as it gave us students, a platform to share our experiences. Over the course of my journey, I realised that what truly shaped my character wasn't grades or assessments, but the initiatives and volunteer work I pursued out of personal motivation and without any reward. These experiences refined me, strengthened my confidence,



and gave me the courage to take bigger steps in my path."

"I also realised that values and ethics are not lessons we simply learn from books, they are daily practices that reflect who we are and shape our impact on society. I hope everyone understands that a student is shaped by ethics, experiences, and opportunities just as much as by academics, and that true learning is what helps us discover ourselves and create positive change around us."

Fatima Saad al-Muhannadi, 18, said: "What distinguishes this edition of the conference is its focus on human values, values that are not secondary elements of society, but the foundation upon which we build our relationships, decisions,

and daily responsibilities." During the session, al-Muhannadi highlighted the practical role of ethics in everyday life, beyond theoretical concepts, saying: "Many of the behaviours we practice, whether at home, in school, or in our daily interactions, carry ethical values that influence us and those around us more than we realise. "Through the stories and experiences we shared, it became clear that even simple actions can make a significant difference in the lives of individuals and the wider community."

Al-Muhannadi emphasised that successful societal policies must be built on a strong ethical foundation, saying: "Young people are capable of contributing to and even leading the shaping of poli-

cies. When ethics form the basis of these decisions, their impact becomes far more positive and sustainable."

Abdulla Mohammad al-Biri, 14, spoke about the impact of student participation on building confidence and responsibility, saying: "I believe that initiatives and activities outside the classroom are not a luxury, but an essential part of a student's development.

"They provide us with skills we cannot gain from classroom learning alone, and introduce us to values such as commitment, respect, and responsibility." Registration for the 2026 edition of the Akhlaquna initiative is open until January 11. More information is available at www.akhlaquna.qa

Lawh Wa Qalam: M F Husain Museum opens tomorrow



Jowaher al-Marri

From Page 1

"The museum becomes a shared space where students from all disciplines can learn, reflect, and find inspiration. Whether someone is studying architecture, AI, business, or design, Husain's work opens conversations about history, innovation, identity, and storytelling. It will encourage more cross-campus interactions, workshops, joint projects, and cultural exploration."

Housed in a building inspired by Husain's own sketch - and brought to life by architect Martand Khosla - the museum offers a unique insight into the artist's creative vision and multidisciplinary approach. Visitors can explore one of the most comprehensive collections of Husain's later works, many of which draw on themes from Arab civilisation and Islamic culture, as well as his final masterpiece, Seeroo fi al ardh, which now forms part

of Lawh Wa Qalam: M F Husain Museum.

Alongside paintings, films, tapestries, and photography, the museum will host workshops, conversations, artistic programmes, and interdisciplinary encounters. In doing so, it reinforces Education City's mission to create opportunities that are accessible, inclusive, and meaningful for everyone, enriching the landscape as an active, living space.

MoPH organises key activities during Qatar Infection Prevention and Control Week 2025

The Ministry of Public Health (MoPH), in collaboration with healthcare institutions across Qatar, recently organised a wide range of important activities and events as part of Qatar Infection Prevention and Control Week 2025.

This year's campaign embraced the theme "Stand UPPP for Infection Prevention" as a unifying call for collective action. The UPPP acronym stands for Unite, Protect, Prevent, Prevail – four fundamental principles which underscore what it takes to stop the

spread of infection and build safer, healthier environments for all.

The Ministry emphasised that these pillars highlight the importance of collaboration and integration between all healthcare professionals to achieve the shared goal of reducing infections and protecting both patients and staff.

As part of the celebrations, the MoPH organised a CPD-accredited virtual symposium that explored crucial topics such as outbreak management, the role of artificial intelligence and modern

technologies in infection control, environmental protection, and the importance of multidisciplinary teamwork.

The event featured an array of international, regional and local speakers, and attracted over 700 participants from diverse healthcare facilities throughout Qatar – demonstrating the sector's strong commitment to knowledge sharing and advancing expertise in this vital field.

The Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) and Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) Section,



Healthcare Quality Department, also hosted a creative competition for designing social media messages and materials. This initiative aimed to foster innovation and effective engagement in spreading infection prevention awareness across the country. Nearly 40 entries were received from over a dozen healthcare institutions, reflecting the dedication and creativity of healthcare

workers in promoting the culture of infection control.

Throughout the week, healthcare organisations conducted internal events – including educational lectures, awareness exhibitions, and competitions – to further enhance staff awareness, encourage ongoing adherence to IPC practices, and raise standards in healthcare settings.

The IPC and AMR team at

MoPH also conducted site visits to several health facilities, joining staff in their celebrations and reaffirming the core value of unity in advancing sustainable infection control efforts. These visits served to promote co-operation and integration among various institutions, ensuring the development and implementation of effective infection prevention strategies.

Sixth Int'l Primary Health Care Conference commences today

The Sixth International Primary Health Care Conference hosted by the Primary Health Care Corporation (PHCC) commences today at Ritz-Carlton Hotel, under the patronage and attendance of HE Mansoor bin Ebrahim bin Saad al-Mahmoud, Minister of Public Health.

The conference will gather a wide range of leaders, experts, and representatives of health and research organisations from around the world. This event aims to solidify Qatar's standing as a recognised leader in global dialogue on the future of health and to strengthen international co-operation in medicine and primary care.

Hosting this conference in Doha reflects Qatar's steadfast commitment to building strong, integrated, and resilient health systems capable of meeting the needs of its population while keeping pace with global advances in medicine, technology, and scientific research. The conference brings together a diverse global community of healthcare professionals, policymakers, researchers, and educators – united by a shared mission: to safeguard health and improve quality of life.

As the world undergoes rapid transformations that bring increasingly complex challenges – from pandemics and their social and health impacts, to climate change and its implications for human well-being, to shifting economies and the evolving needs of societies – primary healthcare remains the heart of health equity and the foundation of community well-being. It is where care begins, trust is built, and lives are touched every single day.

The conference aims to explore the latest scientific



developments and international best practices in primary healthcare, showcasing innovative experiences from various countries that contribute to developing mechanisms for prevention, diagnosis, treatment, and health promotion. It also seeks to strengthen global partnerships and facilitate the exchange of knowledge, expertise, and scientific research among medical and academic institutions.

More than a thousand specialists – including physicians, researchers, experts, and policymakers – will take part in the conference, alongside strong representation from regional and international health organisations, making it one of the largest specialised scientific gatherings in the region. The programme features an extensive range of scientific sessions, interactive lectures, and workshops focused on quality of health services, workforce empowerment, the future of artificial intelligence in medicine, innovation in chronic disease management, as well as research presentations and scientific posters by scholars and students from Qatar and beyond.

PHCC continues to advance Qatar's global position in the health sector by investing in human capital, supporting scientific research, developing healthcare infrastructure, and expanding preventive and educational services. This conference offers a valuable platform for building new collaborations, exchanging future visions, and strengthening continuing professional education in support of national health strategies.

HMC services achieve JCI reaccreditation

Hamad Medical Corporation's (HMC) Long-Term Care and Residential Services at Rumailah Hospital have successfully achieved reaccreditation from the Joint Commission International (JCI) for the fourth time, following a detailed survey conducted in October 2025.

This important milestone covers HMC's Long-Term Care facilities, including the Enaya and Daam Specialised Care Center and the Residential Care Compound-1, reaffirming HMC's commitment to providing safe, high-quality care. The reaccreditation serves as a strong endorsement of the quality and safety standards embedded in every aspect of service delivery.

The Enaya and Daam Specialised Care Center and Residential Care Compound-1 provide 24/7 care and rehabilitation for long-term patients with complex and chronic medical conditions. These specialised centres are the only facilities of their kind in Qatar, offering comprehensive, multidisciplinary care to improve patients' quality of life.

The JCI survey, conducted under the 2nd Edition of the JCI Accreditation Standards for Long-Term Care, evaluated all aspects of operations, from clinical care and patient safety to leadership and management systems. The successful outcome confirms HMC's full compliance with international best practices in long-term healthcare delivery.

GU-Q graduate wins Rhodes Scholarship

Class of 2024 Georgetown University in Qatar (GU-Q) graduate Fatima Yunusa has won the 2026 Rhodes Scholarship – the world's oldest and most competitive international scholarship. A Nigerian public policy researcher, Yunusa is one of three recipients of the 2026 Rhodes Scholarship in West Africa. She is also among more than 30 other Georgetown students and alumni who have received the scholarship, and the third graduate of Georgetown's Qatar campus to receive the award in the past five years, joining the likes of Khansa Maria (SFS'21), and Asma Shakeel (SFS'24).

The scholarship selects promising young people from around the world who demonstrate integrity, leadership, character, intellect and a commitment to service to study at the University of Oxford. "Fatima's commitment to uplifting others combined with her focus on public policy and public service exemplifies Georgetown's highest ideals, and we look forward to seeing



Fatima Yunusa.

what she will accomplish," said Georgetown Interim president Robert M Groves. As a Rhodes Scholar, Yunusa wants to build on her skills through public policy and public policy research graduate programmes in order to advance her home country's national development. "I'm concerned about poverty eradication, poverty, and how it prevents people from living a life of dignity. My interest in development comes from recognising that high-quality jobs and opportunities are

the most sustainable way for poverty alleviation," said Yunusa, adding: "It's a huge opportunity. I'm excited to learn from people who know public service from around the world."

Yunusa grew up moving across different parts of Nigeria. Along the way, she noticed how highly skilled individuals often lacked meaningful employment opportunities. She also saw people she loved struggle with these challenges in professions that hardly made ends meet. Her experiences made her question what she could do to empower communities to maximise their skills and talents.

"While talent development initiatives exist in the country, they are not sustainable enough to yield the scale of transformation necessary to secure the country's future. Existing initiatives are fragmented across sectors, often outdated, or tied to political administrations rather than lasting institutional mandates," she said. "Nigeria must align its talent, market needs, and position within the international economy to advance."

Franzen brings a global playbook to Bürgenstock Resort Lake Lucerne

By Joey Aguilar
Doha

For three decades, Chris Franzen worked at the forefront of the global hospitality boom, managing sprawling portfolios in India and launching ultra-luxury landmarks in the Middle East.

But when he took the helm as managing director of the Bürgenstock Resort Lake Lucerne on April 1, 2024, it wasn't just a new appointment, it was a homecoming that closed a 30-year circle.

Franzen, a third-generation hotelier, has returned to Switzerland with a unique mandate: to apply the agility of the Middle Eastern market and the service ethos of Asia to one of Europe's most historic alpine destinations. Stepping into the role at Bürgenstock, he sees a seamless transition from his recent tenure opening the Waldorf Astoria Lusail in Qatar.

Speaking to *Gulf Times* on the sidelines of the Qatar Travel Mart 2025 in Doha on Tuesday, Franzen says, "The managing director role at the Bürgenstock fits perfectly into my career profile because it's a very international resort."

With a guest list covering the United States, the UK, rising markets in Thailand, and a huge clientele from the Arab world, the demographics mirror the global portfolios he managed in India and the Gulf Co-operation Council region.

However, he says the synergy goes deeper than that. The resort is owned by Katara Hospitality, the Qatar-based global hotel owner and developer. Franzen's extensive experience in Doha, witnessing the city's meteoric rise from the 'Old Airport' era of 2012 to the gleaming metropolis that hosted the 2022 World Cup, gives him a distinct advantage. He speaks the language of the owners, understanding their strategic vision in a way few European managers can.

"I'm extremely lucky that I work for Katara Hospitality," Franzen notes, citing their stewardship of iconic assets like the Raffles Singapore and The Savoy Hotel in London. "Having an owner who has a very clear strategy... helps a lot. This money is not invested in a building, it's invested in brand building."

While Franzen respects the heritage of Swiss hospitality, he is keeping a keen eye on the future. He identifies two diverging trends that will define the next era of the Bürgenstock Resort: Artificial Intelligence (AI) and "well-aging".

Franzen argues that while luxury will always require a high-touch, human element, "looking each other in the eyes", AI has a critical role to play in the back of house. By automating confirmations and calls, he aims to free up staff to engage more deeply with guests.

Simultaneously, he is turning the resort's wellness strategy toward longevity: "I want to stay away from the word fitness or well-being because it's overused,"



Chris K Franzen

he says. Instead, he envisions the hotel as a sanctuary for an aging, affluent demographic that seeks to age gracefully in a five-star environment.

For Franzen, the return to Switzerland was driven by a desire to be closer to his aging parents, but it has sparked a personal rediscovery of his homeland. After years in the flat, arid landscapes of Qatar, where he gave up his passion for motorbiking, the Swiss Alps have reawakened his love for the road.

"I didn't realise until I went back how much I missed motorbiking. Sitting on a bike and going up a hill... the fresh air and having a helmet on without having to answer the phone," he recalls.

This appreciation for the seasons, specifically the crisp Swiss autumn, contrasts sharply with the perspective of his peers who never left. Franzen observes a stark difference in mindset between himself and childhood friends who remained in Switzerland.

"They have not been exposed to other cultures... their mindset has not changed," Franzen reflects. "Sometimes I think, wow, I must be much younger than they are. Not physically, but mentally."

Despite his global outlook, Franzen says his leadership style remains rooted in the lessons learned from his father and grandfather. Whether managing 13 hotels in India or a single luxury resort in the Alps, his philosophy focuses on discipline and the democratisation of respect.

"For me, it never made a difference how I treat employees or guests if it's a privately owned hotel or a big corporate chain," Franzen says. "An employee for me was always a colleague, someone to listen to"

ANNOUNCEMENT

I, MUHAMMED ZAYAN
holder of
INDIA Passport No. V7097678
QID No. 31135600550
hereby change my name
from
MUHAMMED ZAYAN
to
MUHAMMED ZAYAN ZUBAIR

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

ANNOUNCEMENT

I, AAHANA SACHIN PUSHPARAJ TALWALKAR
holder of
INDIA Passport No. AB118626
QID No. 31135601461
hereby change my name
from
AAHANA SACHIN PUSHPARAJ TALWALKAR
to
AAHANA SACHIN TALWALKAR

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

QNB Visa summer campaign concludes with Gewan Island apartment handover



The campaign rewarded QNB Visa credit cardholders with exceptional prizes, including two Sea Ray boats and the grand apartment on Gewan Island, reaffirming QNB's commitment to delivering exceptional experiences and innovative rewards.

QNB Group has officially handed over the grand prize of its QNB Visa summer campaign — a luxurious apartment on Gewan Island to the lucky winner at an exclusive handover ceremony. Held at The Oyster (UDC Office, The Pearl), the event brought together representatives from QNB, Visa, and UDC. Following the ceremony, the winner was welcomed to their new home on Gewan

Island. This milestone marks the conclusion of one of QNB's most exclusive and rewarding campaigns, which ran from July 15-October 30. The campaign rewarded QNB Visa credit cardholders with exceptional prizes, including two Sea Ray boats and the grand apartment on Gewan Island, reaffirming QNB's commitment to delivering exceptional experiences and innovative rewards.

Qatar University and Microsoft sign MoU on AI-driven learning solutions

Qatar University (QU) has signed a wide-ranging memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Microsoft to collaborate on AI-driven learning solutions, leading research tools, and foundational digital infrastructure, a statement said.

The agreement, inked on the sidelines of the Mobile World Congress Doha 2025 Conference, outlines a shared vision to accelerate QU's transformation into a digitally-empowered academic institution equipped for the future of higher education.

This collaboration supports Qatar's national priorities for nurturing advanced digital capabilities, investing in research excellence, and cultivating technology-ready talent for tomorrow's workforce. Dr. Omar al-Ansari, president of QU, said: "This collaboration with Microsoft reflects our commitment to equipping our academic community with advanced digital tools and laying the groundwork for innovative teaching, scientific inquiry, and operational agility. It reinforces QU's role as a na-



Ahmad El Dandachi and Dr Omar al-Ansari at the MoU signing ceremony.

tional driver of knowledge creation and a regional centre for digital advancement."

Ahmad El Dandachi, general manager of Microsoft Qatar, said: "By integrating AI powered tools across teaching and learning, we're equipping students with the practical skills they'll need to lead in a digital economy — while preserving the human centred values of education."

The MoU encompasses four principal collaboration areas: AI for Teaching, Learning and Academic Enhance-

ment: The parties will explore deploying Microsoft's M365 Copilot ecosystem to assist with instructional design, content creation, and personalised learning support. The goal is to introduce practical, human-centred AI tools that elevate academic productivity and advance modern learning practices throughout the university community.

Strengthening Research Capabilities and Innovation Output: QU and Microsoft will work to expand the research ecosystem through access to AI platforms, HPC resources, and cloud-based scientific tools. The collaboration also includes planning for a new AI Lab that will support applied research, digital experimentation, and interdisciplinary partnerships.

Transforming Infrastructure through Azure-Driven Cloud Modernisation: The agreement outlines a framework for migrating key university systems and services to the Azure environment, enabling enhanced scalability, faster digital service delivery, and improved technical resilience. This transformation will create a flexible foundation for future data-driven initiatives and institutional growth.

Doha Film Festival 2025 amplifies today's most important voices in cinema

Doha Film Institute (DFI) underlined the impact of Doha Film Festival (DFF) on audiences, artists and the industry, and announced ambitions for 2026 through stronger collaboration, wider reach, and more opportunities for emerging talent from Qatar and the region.

In a press statement, festival director and DFI CEO Fatma Hassan Alremaihi said: "DFF builds on our 15-year legacy of nurturing talent and fostering cultural dialogue while bringing fresh perspectives and opportunities and represents the next step in Qatar's journey of cultural leadership." "We are not here to compete but contribute by creating opportunities that will benefit not just our region but the entire global film community. Our unique strengths lie in our legacy of amplifying Arab voices, our deep community roots, and our unwavering focus on authentic storytelling, and we will continue to focus on our strengths," she added.

Noting that collaboration remains central to DFI's strategy, Alremaihi said: "We collaborate with other festivals to expand opportunities for filmmakers to reach more

screens, more audiences and more partners. Recent announcements, such as the Film Committee's collaboration with Cairo Film Festival, reflect a complementary approach that serves the wider creative community."

DFF's community-centric programming also reached new heights. Geekdom welcomed over 7,000 visitors, underscoring the Institute's commitment to communities across film, gaming, comics, design and music.

"We are focused on strengthening relationships with content creators, game developers, illustrators, writers and expanding workshops year-round," said DFI's Chief Administrative Officer, Abdulla Jassim al-Mosallam.

Programming at DFF 2025 balanced cinematic innovation with audience connection, said filmmaker and DFI programmer Majid al-Remaihi.

He added that Ajyal's impact continues year-round through Ajyal Film Club, school initiatives, and Ajyal Film Competition at DFF, ensuring young voices remain central to the Institute's mission.

Doha Film Institute launches specialised vocational training programmes

Doha Film Institute (DFI) announced a new milestone in its commitment to nurturing regional creative talent with the launch of specialised vocational training programmes, in partnership with two of the world's leading film and creative arts schools, La Fémis and Gobelins Paris.

Designed with support from Institut Français du Qatar and Qatar Museums, the programmes form a core pillar of DFI's long-term strategy to expand access to industry-ready education and create alternative pathways for emerging filmmakers, animators, and creative professionals.

The initiative is designed to support the advancement of the regional ecosystem while contributing to the growth of Qatar's creative economy through intensive labs and specialised workshops throughout 2026.

The La Fémis Cinematography Certificate Programme is an intensive four-month training session dedicated to young talent who wish to deepen their artistic and technical understanding of cinematography. Designed with La Fémis and delivered through a clear progression of theory, practical exercises and online and in-person sessions, the programme guides participants towards a strong foundation in the craft of cinematography.



Doha Film Institute empowers creativity through collaboration and continuous learning.

Selected participants will learn the creative and technical responsibilities of a Director of Photography and gain the tools they need to progress in the industry with confidence.

The programme is planned for June 2026. The Gobelins Paris Animation Certificate Programme introduces emerging artists to the fundamentals of animation, character

animation and visual storytelling with structured 9-month training workshops.

Through three pedagogical modules combining lectures, practical workshops in Doha and online follow up sessions, participants advance step by step toward learning the essential principles of 2D animation. Each module concludes with a final project, and graduates receive a Gobelins Certificate of Achievement.

The programme also complements the DFI ToonBoom Certificate, creating a complete learning pathway for animators in the region and is planned for September 2026.

Designed with a hands-on, project-based approach, the training will offer participants theoretical and practical training in cinematography and animation while connecting them with internationally acclaimed faculty and industry professionals.

With a strong emphasis on practice, mentorship, and real-world application, the initiative reflects DFI's mission to strengthen the region's creative industries by equipping young talent with the tools, discipline, and global exposure needed to excel. DFI CEO Fatma Hassan Alremaihi said: "Vocational training represents the future of learning. In a fast-changing world, we must empower young people with education that is practical, adaptable, and connected to real opportunities"



Doha Film Institute underlined the impact of Doha Film Festival on audiences, artists and the industry, and announced ambitions for 2026 through stronger collaboration, wider reach, and more opportunities for emerging talent from Qatar and the region.

Second edition of EU Youth Short Film Festival 2025 concludes

The delegation of the European Union (EU) to Qatar concluded the second edition of the EU Youth Short Film Festival on Tuesday, celebrating the power of youth storytelling, cultural dialogue, and creative exchange between Europe and Qatar. The festival also featured two masterclasses with award-winning filmmakers Jamillah van der Hulst and

Conrad Alleblas, hosted in collaboration with Virginia Commonwealth University School of the Arts in Qatar and Northwestern University in Qatar, inspiring over 200 students to pursue their creative aspirations. Dr Cristian Tudor, ambassador of the European Union to Qatar, described the festival as not only a celebration of cinematic creativity, but also a celebration of young voices and the bridges

that culture can build across continents. "The diversity and depth we witnessed this year are a testament to the extraordinary talent emerging from Europe and Qatar alike." Best Picture: *Fragile* (directed by Kholoud al-Ali), Best Screenplay: *Pema* (directed by Victoria Neto), Best Emerging Filmmaker: *We Will Keep Swaying* (directed by Jannat Malik). Honourable Mentions:

AirHostess-737 (directed by Thanasis Neofotistos), *Civilisation of Equality* (directed by Ibrahim Albainain), *Polio & Prejudice* (directed by Mahnoor Naveed). The jury comprised Noor al-Nasr (film programmer and curator), Angelos Lenos (deputy head of mission of the Delegation of the European Union to Qatar), Jamillah van der Hulst and Conrad Alleblas.



The delegation of the European Union to Qatar concluded the second edition of the EU Youth Short Film Festival on Tuesday, celebrating the power of youth storytelling, cultural dialogue, and creative exchange between Europe and Qatar.



Top five winners of Qur'an competition honoured

The Ministry of Endowments (Awqaf) and Islamic Affairs honoured on Tuesday the winners of the top five places for males in the three categories (citizens, elite memorisers, general memorisers) in the full Holy Qur'an category of the 30th Sheikh Jassim bin Muhammad bin Thani Noble Qur'an Competition, at a ceremony held at the Sheraton Doha Hotel.

The ceremony was attended by HE the Minister of Endowments and Islamic Affairs Ghanem bin Shaheen al-Ghanem, a group of scholars, preachers and reciters, a number of officials from state institutions and its scientific and educational sectors, and a group of state guests, including: Chairman of the Organising Committee of the Moscow International Holy Qur'an Competition Shaikh Dr Ruslan



Abbyasov, Grand Mufti of Slovenia Shaikh Nevzet Poric, Grand Mufti of Croatia Shaikh Aziz Hasanovic.

On this occasion, chairperson of the competition's organising committee, Malallah Abdulrahman al-Jaber, said that the competition represents one of the most prominent Qur'anic platforms in the Islamic world, thanks to the contin-

uous support and care of the wise leadership, and the great interest of the Ministry of Endowments (Awqaf) and Islamic Affairs. He noted that the competition, which was launched for the first time in 1993, has established its presence during the past three decades as one of the oldest Qur'anic competitions, the most diverse in branch-

es, and the highest in terms of the value of the prizes.

HE the Minister of Endowments honoured members of the Supreme Judging Committee, the winners, and the media organisations that covered the event.

The top five winners in the citizens' category for full Qur'an memorisation were Abdulaziz Ab-

dullah Ali al-Hamri securing first place and a prize of QR100,000. Ibrahim Mohammed Hashem al-Mashhadani came in second with an QR85,000 prize, followed by Mohammed Ahmed Mohammed Abdulrahman al-Haram in third place with QR70,000.

Mohammed Abdullah Mohammed Buleidah received the fourth-place award of QR60,000, while Hamad Abdullah Tayis al-Jumaili came fifth with QR50,000.

In the elite memorisers' category for full Qur'an memorisation, the United States' Hamza al-Habashi claimed first place with a prize of QR100,000.

Yemen's Mohammed Abdul Ahmed Qasim took second place with QR85,000, and Tunisia's Rasheed Abdulrahman al-Alani finished third with a QR70,000 award.

The fourth-place prize of QR60,000 went to Mahmoud Suleiman al-Mabruk Idris from Libya, while Egyptian contestant Magdy Abdullah Salem Ahmed earned the fifth-place prize of QR50,000.

In the general memorisers' category, Nasser Nahed Deeb from the US achieved first place with a QR100,000 award.

Khalid Hafiz Mohammed Fakhrul Huda from Bangladesh followed in second with QR85,000, and his compatriot Saad Abdulsattar Abu Saeed secured third place with QR70,000.

Abdulaziz Fahad Mohammed al-Hawsali from Yemen placed fourth with QR60,000, while Bangladesh's Ismail Hafiz Mohammed Elias finished fifth with a QR50,000 prize. (QNA)

MCIT and QT launch digital transformation roadmap for tourism

The Ministry of Communications and Information Technology (MCIT) and Qatar Tourism (QT) announced the launch of the digital transformation roadmap for the tourism sector during a joint press conference held yesterday as part of the MWC25 Doha conference, organised by GSMA in partnership with the ministry.

The announcement marks a significant step toward enhancing Qatar's tourism ecosystem and improving visitor experiences through the adoption of advanced technologies, the development of agile digital services, and greater integration between government platforms and the tourism industry.

Speaking at the press conference, MCIT's Assistant Undersecretary for Digital Industry Affairs Reem Mohammed al-Mansoori described the collaboration as a new model for strategic national partnerships.

She highlighted the establishment of the tourism digital transformation office, a joint institutional platform aimed at fostering innovation and service development. Together, the two entities have crafted a comprehensive roadmap prioritising over



39 strategic digital initiatives, ranging from next-generation visitor experience platforms to AI-enhanced services and predictive analytics.

Al-Mansoori noted that these initiatives are designed to drive the tourism sector toward full digital transformation, structured around three core pillars: visitor experience and destination promotion, sector data management, and system operations and service delivery.

She emphasised that this approach aligns with Qatar's vision to build a competitive digital economy and increase the ICT sector's contribution to GDP by approximately QR195mn through improved productivity, service efficiency, and new growth opportunities.

Head of Tourism Development

at Qatar Tourism Omar al-Jaber affirmed that the roadmap, developed in partnership with the ministry, represents a qualitative leap in building a world-class tourism ecosystem.

He explained that the use of artificial intelligence and data-driven analytics will enable personalised experiences, attract more visitors, and strengthen Qatar's position as a leading regional destination.

He added that implementing the roadmap will allow the tourism sector to develop advanced services that completely reshape the visitor journey.

He pointed to the upcoming launch of an integrated visitor application in 2026, which will redefine the tourism experience by serving as a digital companion from exploration to interac-

tion and on-site services.

The collaboration between the ministry and Qatar Tourism includes a suite of projects such as developing an advanced visitor app, creating a smart platform for visitor data analytics to support planning and decision-making, building a unified portal for event licensing, establishing an AI-powered tourism marketing centre, implementing a sophisticated system for managing MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions) events, designing integrated tools for tourism asset planning, launching a portal to boost tourism investment, and deploying a comprehensive platform for sustainable tourism.

The roadmap is a product of the Digital Transformation Offices initiative led by the ministry, aimed at building integrated digital ecosystems across key sectors including tourism, transport and logistics, infrastructure, and healthcare.

These offices focus on driving innovation, empowering the private sector, enhancing user experience, and placing artificial intelligence at the heart of every sectoral roadmap, transforming service delivery, decision-making, and data management. (QNA)



Minister in meetings to discuss digital innovation

HE the Minister of Communications and Information Technology, Mohammed bin Ali al-Mannai, held several high-level bilateral meetings with ministers, industry leaders, and accompanying delegations participating in the inaugural edition of MWC25 Doha which is being held for the first time in the Mena region, organised by GSMA in partnership with the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology.

The meetings and discussions focused on enhancing co-operation in various fields, including developing technological innovation, fostering digital skills, and accelerating national digital transformation efforts. The meetings also explored potential joint

initiatives to drive the digital economy forward and equip talent with the capabilities needed for the future.

In this regard, HE the Minister of Communications met with Lebanese Minister of the Displaced Kamal Shehadeh. They discussed areas of co-operation.

He also met with the senior leadership of VEON Group, including CEO Kaan Terzioğlu. They explored opportunities for collaboration in digital innovation and future technologies.

HE al-Mannai met with Director General of the Arab ICT Organisation (AICTO), Engineer Mohammed Ben Amor, and several AICTO officials. They discuss joint efforts to support regional digital progress. (QNA)

Alecso designates Katara as Arab Opera City

QNA
Tunisia

The Arab Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organisation (Alecso) announced the designation of Katara Cultural Village as the Arab Opera City during a ceremony held yesterday in the presence of Qatar's ambassador to Tunisia Zayed bin Saeed al-Kumait al-Khayarin.

This designation is a recognition of Katara by the Arab and international communities for its pioneering role in supporting Arab opera and enhancing its presence on the regional and international stage.

Speaking on the occasion, Katara General Manager Prof Dr Khalid bin Ibrahim al-Sulaiti said that the selection of Katara as the Arab Opera City is a tribute to its efforts in supporting musical creativity and preserving Arab cultural identity.

This title, he added, represents a new responsibility that encourages continued work on presenting Arab operatic works that showcase the beauty of the Arabic language and culture, while contributing to the development of the Arab artistic scene on a global level.

Prof Dr al-Sulaiti noted that Katara will organise the first Arab Opera Festival from Dec 8-11, in co-operation with the Alecso, with the participation of 13 Arab opera houses, in addition to a selection of Arab artists and creators. He pointed out that the Cairo Opera House was chosen as the guest of honour for the festival's inaugural edition, being the oldest Arab opera house.

He confirmed that the festival will include numerous events, including the opening ceremony and a tribute to the renowned Arab composer Omar Khairat, as well as musical and operatic performances featuring the Cairo Opera Orchestra and the Qatar Philharmonic Orchestra. Furthermore, an online platform for Arab opera houses will be launched, enabling those interested in operatic music to access it. The festival will also feature information on the programs of each Arab opera house throughout the year, as well as workshops introducing the art of operatic singing and performance techniques. A model of Katara, the Arab Opera City, will also be unveiled.



Director-General of Alecso Dr Mohamed Ould Amar expressed pride in announcing the selection of the Katara Cultural Village as the Arab Opera City, highlighting its pioneering role in supporting musical arts and strengthening the presence of Arab opera on the regional and international cultural scene. The Foundation has demonstrated an exceptional model in promoting the fine arts, particularly opera, through programs, initiatives, and festivals that cultivate artistic awareness and expand opportunities for Arab talent.

He added that Katara's selection is a culmination of its distinguished journey in fostering creativity and providing ample spaces for cultural diversity. This well-deserved Arab recognition reflects its significant efforts to become a platform that brings together artists and creators from various Arab countries and contributes to highlighting Arab musical identity with a modern spirit that respects authenticity and embraces renewal.

Katara was previously honoured by Alecso by being designated the 'City of the Arabic Novel', in recognition of its support for the Arabic novel and the launch of the Katara Prize for Arabic Fiction. It also received the designation of 'Cultural Heritage City of Arabian Horses', in recognition of its role in highlighting the heritage associated with Arabian horses and organising accompanying festivals and events. Additionally, it was awarded the Babylon International Cultural Cities Award in Baghdad, in recognition of its cultural and creative leadership in the region. (QNA)

Katara to host 45 cultural, artistic, and heritage events during FIFA Arab Cup

Katara Cultural Village has announced an extensive programme of cultural, artistic, and heritage events accompanying the FIFA Arab Cup Qatar 2025, to take place from Dec 1-18.

The programme features more than 45 diverse activities across Katara's various venues, creating a vibrant atmosphere that reflects the cultural richness of the participating nations and celebrates the large audiences expected to attend the tournament.

Katara emphasised that these events align with its mission to promote intercultural dialogue, highlight Arab identity and local heritage, and create engaging spaces that blend art and sport offering visitors and fans a comprehensive experience throughout the tournament.

It stressed that the programme is designed to appeal to all age groups and nationalities, reinforcing its position as a global destination that brings together artistic excellence, rich heritage, and creative innovation.

The events will begin with a series of art exhibitions, including the Qatari Fine Art Exhibition, the Arab Cup Stamp Exhibition, the History of the Oud Exhibition, and the "Colours of Qatari Hospitality" Exhibition.

Visitors will enjoy a variety of daily activities along the Katara Corniche, featuring competitions, artistic performances, folk dance troupes, and theatrical productions from several Arab countries.

Musical performances will be a major highlight of the program, including shows by the Al Jahra Folk Arts Troupe, Kuwait's Nasser Bu awad Troupe, and folk-dance groups from five Arab



countries, along with the traditional Qatari Ardh. Moreover, Omani artist Mariam al-Munji will present a musical evening at Al Hikma Square from Dec 4-8, and the Algerian Orchestra will perform on Dec 18. Audiences will also enjoy a spectacular military musical display (Tattoo) on the Katara Corniche.

Additionally, Katara will host the Arab Opera Festival at the Katara Opera House, whereas Wisdom Square will screen live broadcasts of the tournament matches, while Creativity Square will host Language of the Letter Dhad events celebrating World Arabic Language Day on Dec 17.

Katara will also present a range of interactive art workshops and drawing competitions for children inspired by the cultures of the participating nations. The Drama Theatre will host the play King of the Stage from Dec 16-20, while the Outdoor Theatre will feature a puppet show and storytelling performances. (QNA)

WISE launches education index

From Page 1

A global Request for Proposals led to the selection of SUMMA, an education research and innovation lab, as WISE's research and statistical partner following a rigorous scoring and review process by seven international

experts, including representatives from Stanford University and Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

The roundtable brought together global experts to refine the Index's framework. Their insights will inform a 2026-27 pilot study, during which WISE and SUMMA

will collect primary and secondary data across a diverse group of countries. This will test the Index's domains, dimensions, and indicators and will form the foundation for the inaugural publication of the WISE Education Index publication in late 2027.

Protests continue against ban on Palestine Action

Protesters take part in a demonstration in support of "Defend Our Juries" and their campaign against the ban on Palestine Action, outside the Royal Courts of Justice, Britain's High Court, in central London yesterday. The co-founder of activist group Palestine Action challenged a UK government ban under anti-terror laws that has led to mass arrests, sparking free speech and civil liberties concerns.



UK eases opposition to new oil, gas permits, holds firm on taxes

Reuters
London

Britain will allow some new oil and gas production on or near existing fields, the government said yesterday, easing its stance on new licences while dashing oil and gas producers' hopes for an early end to windfall taxes on their sector.

From an output of around 4.4mn barrels of oil equivalent per day (boed) - similar to Opec heavy-weight Iraq - at the start of the new millennium and a position as a net exporter, Britain now produces around 1mn boed, with a decline to under 150,000 boed seen by 2050, according to UK oil and gas regulator North Sea Transition Authority (NSTA).

US President Donald Trump has been outspoken in his criticism of the UK's energy policy and efforts to reach net-zero greenhouse-gas emissions by 2050. Trump has called on the British government to drill more oil from the North Sea and criticised the country's wind-farms.

The Labour government had pledged during its 2024 election campaign that it would stop awarding new oil and gas licences to move towards net zero.

Wednesday's move allows the government to hand out new oil and gas licences if they do not require new exploration and link back to existing fields and infrastructure, the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero said. Presenting its budget on Wednesday, the government announced no changes to one of the world's toughest tax regimes for oil and gas producers, which includes a wind-fall levy of 38% when prices exceed government-set thresholds, bringing the overall tax burden in such circumstances to 78%.

Industry had hoped for an early end to the EPL, which is due to expire in March 2030. "The future of North Sea energy depends

Key takeaways from UK's tax-raising budget

Britain's Labour government unveiled a tax-raising budget costing billions of pounds to curb debt and fund public services, as the country faces lower economic growth in the coming years. Finance minister Rachel Reeves struck a fine balance between shoring up Labour's credibility with voters as it trails badly in polls and convincing investors that the government is fiscally prudent. Below are the key takeaways from the high-stakes annual budget.

Tax rises

Reeves announced billions of pounds worth of tax rises through to 2030-31, or one year after the next general election is due. The tax hikes will raise nearly £30bn (\$40bn) in 2030-31 and £26bn in the previous fiscal year, official figures showed. It brings "tax take to an all-time high of 38% of GDP in 2030-31," Britain's budget watchdog said in its report. The bulk of the extra funds will come from a freeze on income-tax thresholds beyond 2028-2031, pushing more workers into higher brackets. The extension is a U-turn on Reeves's pledge to uprate thresholds in line with inflation. The budget also included higher levies on gambling and homes worth more than £2mn, along with a mileage-based charge on electric cars. Local mayors were given powers to levy a 'tourist tax' on visitors, while tax benefits for employee contributions to private pensions were capped. Banks, long considered a potential target, were spared from tax increases.

Cost-of-living push

Tackling a prolonged cost-of-living crisis as UK inflation stays high was another key part of the budget. Reeves froze fuel duty, rail fares and prescription charges - and announced above-inflation rises to the minimum wage and pensions. A two-child benefit cap was lifted, expanding government spending after pressure from Labour politicians.

Growth outlook

Alongside the budget measures, the government amended its forecast for UK economic growth. Britain's economy is on target to beat growth forecasts this year but likely to slow more than previously expected between 2026 and 2029. Gross domestic product growth is set to hit 1.5% in 2025, up from the previous estimate of 1.0% given in March, the Office for Budget Responsibility said in a report accidentally released ahead of Reeves unveiling her annual budget to parliament. GDP growth is predicted to slow to 1.4% next year, while it is forecast to reach 1.5% between 2027 and 2029, the OBR added.

on investment, which won't come without urgent reform of the windfall tax," said David Whitehouse, head of the Offshore Energy UK industry group.

"If the levy stays in place beyond 2026, projects will stall and jobs

will vanish, no matter how pragmatic licensing policy becomes."

The government has vowed to use the revenue from oil and gas to raise funds for renewable energy projects. While oil prices have fallen below a government-set



Britain's Chancellor of the Exchequer Rachel Reeves speaking in the House of Commons in London as the government delivered its annual budget.

threshold for the so-called Energy Profits Levy (EPL), gas prices have been above it. The windfall tax is disabled once both fall below their thresholds, which are regularly updated.

Harbour Energy, a North Sea-focused producer, said it was disappointed in the announcement.

Environmental advocacy group Greenpeace UK applauded parts of the government's announcement but said it also did not go far enough in supporting North Sea energy workers to get new

jobs in renewable energy. "The government has shown genuine global climate leadership, making the UK the world's largest economy to call time on new fossil fuel exploration," said Areeba Hamid, Greenpeace UK's co-executive director.

The government said on Wednesday the EPL would be replaced in March 2030 with an Oil and Gas Price Mechanism at a rate of 35%, which would apply if oil and gas prices stay above certain thresholds.

Ireland looks to curb migration, population growth

Ireland plans to curb its high population growth with sweeping new migration and asylum rules, its justice minister said yesterday. "Our population last year increased by 1.6% which is seven times the EU average," Jim O'Callaghan told reporters.

The government believed the "rate of increase does require a policy response", he said, adding population growth was "extremely high" and putting pressure on the nation's ability to provide services and housing. Ireland has seen a dramatic surge in asylum applications - with a record 18,651 people applying for international protection in 2024 alone, up from 13,276 the previous year. The number of immigrants arriving in Ireland has pushed its population to an estimated 5.46mn in April 2025, reflecting 2024's highest annual increase in years. It has also brought tensions, with violent protests last month outside an asylum seeker hotel near Dublin.

The government moves on Wednesday mirror tough new rules being introduced in the UK to cut the number of immigrants, as public concern in Britain has led to swelling support for the far-right Reform party. A raft of new measures was approved by the Irish cabinet yesterday, including stricter rules on citizenship eligibility and family reunification for people from outside the European Economic Area (EEA), O'Callaghan said.

International protection applicants seeking citizenship will now have to live in Ireland for five years instead of three, he said. Asylum seekers in employment will also now have to pay a charge towards their state accommodation, with the amount depending on their weekly income, he said. Those who wish to be reunited with family members in Ireland must also show they can support them financially, he added. The government will also have the power to revoke a person's asylum status if they are found to be a "danger to the security of the state" or convicted of a serious crime, said O'Callaghan. —AFP

Floods in Thailand, Malaysia kill over 30,

AFP
Bangkok

Tens of thousands of people in Thailand and neighbouring Malaysia were displaced by widespread flooding, with streets submerged, homes inundated and at least 34 dead, officials said yesterday.

The Thai government declared a state of emergency in Songkhla province on Tuesday, with torrential rains since late last week drenching several southern provinces. An image yesterday published by AFP showed murky brown floodwater covering streets and ground floors of residential buildings in Songkhla's tourist hub Hat Yai.

One resident of the city told the Thai public broadcaster that the whole lower level of his building was submerged, with water reaching about three and a half metres (11.5 feet) at its highest point. "I climbed onto the roof to call for someone to bring us food," the man, identified as Yanyong, told the television channel. "It's now under a metre, but I still haven't received any help because my house is deep inside the (flooded) area."

Thai government spokesman Siripong Angkasakulkiat told reporters that 33 people have died across seven provinces, including from drowning and electrocution. Severe flooding has spread to seven southern provinces, home to several million people, according to the disaster prevention and mitigation department. The flooding since last week has stranded residents and travellers in their homes and ho-

tels, with rescuers using boats, jet skis and military trucks amid high floodwaters.

The military has deployed an aircraft carrier and mobilised helicopters to airlift patients to nearby hospitals, the army said. More than 10,000 people have been evacuated from their homes in Songkhla since last week, the province's public relations department said.

University campuses have been converted into shelters for displaced people.

The Songkhla provincial administration said yesterday that it had set up food centres capable of distributing up to 20,000 food boxes a day to flood victims. Thailand regularly records heavy rainfall from June to September, but experts say human-induced climate change has intensified extreme weather, making conditions increasingly unpredictable.

In neighbouring Malaysia, flooding from days of heavy rain swept through eight states, with forecasters predicting more rain in the region in the coming days. More than 27,000 people were evacuated to dozens of temporary shelters this week, with one death recorded in one of the worst-hit states, Kelantan, on the northeastern coast, according to rescue officials.

The Malaysian Meteorological Department has warned that thunderstorms will continue until Wednesday in the northern states of Perlis, Kedah, Penang and Perak. Floods are an annual phenomenon in the nation of 34mn people due to the northeast monsoon that brings heavy rain from November to March.

Thousands of workers protest India's new labour codes

AFP
Mumbai

Thousands of trade union workers across India protested yesterday against the government's rollout of new labour codes, saying they would lead to corporate exploitation and erode their hard-won rights.

The world's fifth-largest economy last week implemented long-awaited labour laws that will replace colonial-era legislation and simplify a maze of confusing regulation. The overhaul consolidates 29 existing labour laws into four key codes, with the number of rules being cut from more than 1,400 to about 350 but unions say the reforms will hurt workers' rights.

Gautam Mody from the New Trade Union Initiative said workers from across all sectors were protesting Wednesday outside factories and in many city centres. "Workers have been blindsided by the government," he told AFP. "We want fairness, justice and equity before the law which are being denied under the new codes," Mody said.

While the new regulations boost safety standards and mandate guaranteed social security benefits for gig workers, they also allow for longer factory shifts, make it tougher for workers to conduct strikes and easier for medium-sized firms to fire employees.



Trade Union members of the Communist Party of India stand beside party flags during a protest against the government's new labour laws in Kolkata yesterday.

A controversial key provision raises the threshold for firms that needed prior government permission for layoffs from 100 to 300 workers - which means companies with up to 300 employees can retrench staff without any approval.

The move has sparked worry among trade unions, aligned with parties opposed to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who have called it a "deceptive fraud" against the nation's working people. The Centre of Indian Trade Unions (CITU) said in a statement that the government wanted to portray these codes as "pro-worker" and "modernising".

But "in reality they constitute the most sweeping and aggressive

abrogation of workers' hard-won rights and entitlements since Independence, aimed at facilitating corporate exploitation, contractualisation and unrestrained hire-and-fire".

Modi has said the overhaul represented an opportunity to eliminate compliance-intensive labour laws, often seen as preventing the Indian economy from wooing foreign investors.

He has described the changes as "one of the most comprehensive and progressive labour-oriented reforms since Independence".

India remains the world's fastest-growing major economy, but a slowdown over the last year has left it short of the eight percent growth rate that most economists

say is needed to create millions of well paying jobs for its people. US President Donald Trump's tariff blitz, partly sparked by the White House's anger over Delhi's purchases of Russian oil, has also clouded the country's economic outlook and raised questions over its energy security.

Analysts at Nomura said in a recent note that the labour law reform was an "attempt to modernise disparate, arcane and compliance-intensive labour laws" that have emerged as one of the "major challenges to the ease of doing business". But they added it was "part of a broader trend by the government to hasten economic reforms, especially in the wake of the 50 percent Trump tariffs".



CHAIRMAN

Abdullah bin Khalifa al-Attiyah

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Faisal Abdulhameed al-Mudahka

Deputy Managing Editor

K T Chacko

- ✉ P.O.Box 2888, Doha, Qatar
- ✉ editor@gulf-times.com
- ☎ 44350478 (News),
- ☎ 44466404 (Sport),
- ☎ 44466636 (Home delivery)
- ☎ 44350474
- 📘 facebook.com/gulftimes
- 🐦 twitter.com/gulftimes_Qatar
- 📷 instagram.com/gulftimes
- 📺 youtube.com/GulftimesVideos

GULF TIMES

G20 declaration in defiance of US rare multilateralism win

Born of crisis but torn by years of tensions among its members, the Group of 20 major economies scored a rare victory last weekend for multilateralism after overcoming the boycott and objections of its most powerful member, the United States.

South Africa, this year's G20 president, rallied all but two member nations — the US and Argentina — to issue a declaration, ignoring Washington's warnings and quelling questions about the G20's future — at least for now. Many doubted Pretoria would secure a declaration, much less tackle issues such as helping poor nations cope with climate change and external debt.

That success strengthened a body which for years was struggling to reach meaningful agreements — and highlighted the power of multilateralism when it seemed in retreat, researchers and delegates said. The outcome infuriated the United States, next year's G20 host. The White House accused South Africa of weaponising its presidency to undermine the G20's founding principles on unanimous consensus. It said US President Donald Trump would restore its "legitimacy" while hosting next year. The White House had no immediate comment when asked if it planned to disinvite South Africa from next year's G20 events.

The declaration's final paragraph was carefully worded to commit to meeting in future G20 summits in Britain and South Korea, but only to "working together" under the US presidency, a South African delegate said. President Cyril Ramaphosa declined an American offer to hand over the rotating G20 presidency to a junior diplomat. That ceremony will now soon take place between equivalent diplomats. The summit had seemed hopelessly overshadowed by Trump's boycott over false allegations that South Africa's Black majority government mistreats its white minority.

But with the US taking up the mantle, there is a risk much of the work in Johannesburg could be undone

A South African delegate at the summit, who declined to be named because they were not authorised to speak, said Friday's agreement on a draft caused a visible ripple of relief among negotiators.

"News of the G20's demise is greatly exaggerated," said Josh Lipsky, the Atlantic Council's international economics chair and ex-aide to former president Barack Obama.

"In a crisis... it will be there — regardless of which leaders are present at any... summit," he said. The declaration tackled issues such as climate and renewable energy that often divide G20 members. It proposed the first global panel to address inequality.

"This is the first meeting of world leaders... which put the inequality emergency at the centre of the international agenda," Nabil Ahmed, Senior Director of Economic Justice at international charity Oxfam, told Reuters.

Faced with Trump's ire, G20 leaders had a choice. Michael Bociurkiw of American think tank Atlantic Council's Eurasia Center felt they chose to stand up to him.

"Leaders were getting fed up," he said. "This could set a new approach to dealing with Donald Trump," a view several delegates echoed. Saturday's show of unity was aimed at supporting the hosts and decrying the United States' refusal to engage in the G20's first African summit, one said.

Another said US actions brought together countries at odds with Trump, like India and South Africa, with others seeking to maintain good relations, like Britain and France.

But with the United States taking up the mantle, there is a risk much of the work in Johannesburg could be undone. Washington is expected to narrow the G20's focus during its presidency, which coincides with the United States' 250th anniversary, to just the leaders' summit and financial forum, jettisoning other working groups and ministers' meetings on energy, health and the environment. "The United States looks forward to emphasising economic growth, deregulation, and energy abundance as key pillars of its 2026 G20 host year," a spokesman for the US Treasury said. "A back-to-basics approach at the G20 is long overdue."

The International Monetary Fund and World Bank are still invited, but Washington plans to exclude United Nations organisations, a source familiar with the plans said.

Then again, it's only for a year. At worst, said one delegate who also declined to be named, countries could "lay low" during the US presidency then resume work later.

Despite the bitter differences, Washington's G20 agenda overlaps with South Africa's in key areas like development, economic growth and financial stability, notes Eric LeCompte, a UN adviser and executive director of non-profit Jubilee USA Network.

"I think there is going to be carry-over in certain areas with the US taking the mantle," he said. — Reuters

French training to meet Russia 'threat'



A military instructor provides guidance to participants during a laser shooting training session as part of the Defence and Citizenship Day (JDC) at Fort de Montrouge in Arcueil, south of Paris, yesterday. President Emmanuel Macron is set to announce that France is restoring military service on a voluntary basis in the face of the growing threat posed by Russia, just under three decades after compulsory national service was abolished in the country and replaced by the JDC. (AFP)

Norway lesson for Europe on wealth taxes: let some millionaires go

By Francesco Canepa and Terje Solsvik
Oslo

Sitting in his lakeside villa in the Swiss city of Lucerne, Borger Borgenhaug misses his grandchildren and the smell of the Nordic sea on a clear summer night.

The carpenter turned real-estate tycoon says that is the price he pays to escape Norway's beefed-up wealth tax — an annual levy that has driven hundreds of millionaires abroad while underpinning one of the world's most equal societies.

"The political climate in Norway has become increasingly hostile to business owners," Borgenhaug, who left in 2022, told Reuters.

With a wealth tax dating back to 1892 and a culture of openness that allows citizens to view the tax returns of others, Norway has more experience than most in squeezing the rich. Its model offers lessons for countries debating similar moves, from Britain to France and Italy, or even a city like New York.

The takeaway: a wealth tax will scare off some millionaires, but if set broadly enough, revenues can still be worth it.

The tax was a defining issue in Norway's election in September, which returned the Labour Party to power. The party had raised the levy and tightened exit rules during its previous term.

Individuals pay 1% on net wealth between kr1.76m and 20.7m (\$174,000-2m) and, since 2022, 1.1% above that. Exactly 671,639 people — about 12% of the population — paid in 2023.

Main homes enjoy a 75%

discount on assessed value; shares and commercial property get 20%. Assets abroad are included, but debt is deductible.

Leaving Norway triggers an exit tax of 37.8% on unrealised capital gains above kr3m — such as notional gains on shares that have gone up in value but are yet to be sold. Loopholes that allowed emigrants to defer payment indefinitely were closed in 2024.

The changes turned a trickle into a stream. Data from conservative think-tank Civita shows 261 residents with assets above kr10m (\$973,000) left in 2022 and 254 in 2023 — more than double the typical rate before the hike.

Business magazine *Kapital's* ranking of Norway's 400 richest people shows 105 now live abroad or have transferred wealth to relatives who do. Some of their pictures hang on a "wall of shame" in the offices of the small, opposition Socialist Left party.

Supporters argue the tax acts as a redistributive backstop in a country that scrapped inheritance tax in 2014 and ranks among the world's wealthiest thanks to oil, shipping and fisheries.

Norway funnels all proceeds from its oil and gas industry into a sovereign wealth fund and caps annual withdrawals at 3% of the fund's value under a self-imposed fiscal rule.

This means it needs to find other sources of revenue.

"The wealth tax makes the overall personal tax system more progressive than income tax alone," Deputy Finance Minister Ellen Reitan told Reuters.

Revenue from it has climbed despite the exodus and now sits at 0.6% of GDP — not a trivial sum. For context, Britain's Labour government is hunting for savings of a similar magnitude to help hit its fiscal targets.

Research by Norway's

statistics office shows entrepreneurs have enough liquidity to pay, and that the burden falls overwhelmingly on the richest. Another study suggests the tax may spur investment in human capital.

Norway remains among the world's most equal countries and ranks high for ease of doing business.

"These findings suggest that the wealth tax does not straightforwardly hinder firm-level investment or employment," said Roberto Iacono, professor at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU).

A poll by the Response agency for the daily *Aftenposten* taken just before September's election showed 39% of Norwegians wanted the wealth tax maintained or raised, while 23% wanted to see a reduction and 28% called for abolition.

Norway's Labour government wants a grand bargain on tax reform over the next two years, inviting all parties to the table. The catch? The wealth tax stays — in some shape or form.

Critics say the model penalises domestic ownership and risks hollowing out Norway's entrepreneurial base.

"The wealth tax system makes it harder for companies to compete with the rest of the world," said Knut-Erik Karlsen, who made his fortune in fish oil supplements and recently moved to Switzerland.

Norway taxes capital gains, unlike Switzerland, and imposes higher levies on labour than the OECD average.

Around 40% of emigrants are business owners, according to Princeton researcher Christine Blandhol, who estimates the latest tax changes will cut Norway's output by 1.3% over the long run. Others find the tax hampers firms' performance.

A wealth levy is especially painful for startup founders, who pay on capital long before profits arrive.

Are Traasdahl left Norway in 2000 to market Europe's mobile technology in the US, later founding and selling several tech firms including the app now known as iHeartRadio.

"There's no chance I would

have been able to build in Norway what I built in the United States," he said.

Norway has one of Europe's lowest levels of venture capital as a share of GDP — at half that of Sweden's and far behind the US, OECD data shows.

Heirs often leave before taking control of shares. Laurence Odfjell, now in Singapore, says staying may have cost him control of his shipping group during the downturn that followed the global financial crisis of 2008.

"I was not going to let our company sink on my watch due to not having the capital," he said.

So far, no new country is going down the Norwegian route.

French lawmakers binned a headline-grabbing 2% levy on fortunes above €100m, settling instead for a narrower charge on personal assets parked in holding companies — a measure forecast to raise barely €1bn.

Across the Channel, Britain's Labour government has ruled out a formal wealth tax but insists it will keep leaning on those "with the broadest shoulders".

Italy, for its part, remains allergic to inheritance hikes yet is quietly tightening its flat regime for wealthy foreigners.

Meanwhile, millionaires are still voting with their feet. Norway is on track to shed another 150 this year — a sizeable outflow for a country of just 5.6m — according to Henley & Partners, which advises wealthy clients on relocation, and New World Wealth, which draws on public sources including LinkedIn.

Britain tops the global list with 16,500 expected departures after scrapping tax breaks for foreign residents. The UAE, US and Italy are among the biggest gainers.

Norway's social cohesion and oil wealth may make its model hard to copy. But economists say it shows that any such levy involves a trade-off with economic and political dimensions.

"Not having a wealth tax leads to greater inequality, having one means less capital for startups," NTNU's professor Iacono said. "Politics needs to strike a balance." — Reuters



A general view shows Norway's parliament in Oslo. (Reuters)

To Advertise

✉ gtadv@gulf-times.com

Display

☎ 44466621
☎ 44418811

Classified

☎ 44466609 ☎ 44418811
☎ gtcad@gulf-times.com

Subscription

✉ circulation@gulf-times.com

Ukraine struggles to hold front as talks grind on

AFP
Kyiv

Miles away from the talks on ending nearly four years of war with Russia, problems have mounted for Ukraine where they matter most – at the front, according to soldiers and analysts.

While a US-proposed ceasefire breathed new life into negotiations, with officials from Russia, Ukraine, Washington and Europe ironing out conditions in talks spanning from Geneva to Abu Dhabi, Ukrainian troops were fighting to hold their strongholds in the east.

The Donbas industrial and mining area, comprising the eastern regions of Donetsk and Lugansk, is the Kremlin's primary target.

And after nearly four years of invasion, Russia – which occupies around one-fifth of Ukraine's territory – has never been closer to that goal.

"I can't remember the enemy advancing at such a speed for a long time," Maksym Zhorin, an officer in the Ukrainian 3rd Army Corps said on Telegram.

"The situation is only getting worse," he warned.

"The issue now is not the loss of certain settlements, but a significant improvement in the enemy's

operational capacity across all fronts."

This was echoed by Mykyta, a soldier interviewed by AFP.

"The situation on the front line is such that we are losing land and people every day," he said, expressing hope that those at the top will "negotiate faster and stop all this".

According to data analysed by AFP from the American Institute for the Study of War (ISW), Russian forces have conquered an average of 467sq km each month in 2025 – a step up from 2024.

Moscow's troops are currently fighting for four key settlements in the Donetsk region: Lyman, Siversk, Kostiantynivka, and Pokrovsk.

Their loss would weaken Kyiv's defences and supply lines, putting the last major settlements controlled by Ukraine in the region, Sloviansk and Kramatorsk, at risk.

Both fortified cities are part of Ukraine's "fortress belt" in the heavily embattled region, protecting Kyiv's sparser defensive lines to the rear.

Russian forces have also made swift advances in the less protected Dnipropetrovsk region, which they entered in the summer.

Just in October, the Russians captured about 150sq km there, an area comparable to the size of Paris, according to ISW data.



European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen (left) speaks with European Parliament President Roberta Metsola upon her arrival to attend a debate on the EU engagement towards a just and lasting peace for Ukraine during a plenary session at the European Parliament, in Strasbourg, yesterday. (AFP)

Other Ukrainian positions are also beginning to crack.

After months of stalemate, the Russian army started advancing again in the northeastern Kharkiv and the southern Zaporizhzhia regions.

Last week, they claimed to have taken Kupiansk in the Kharkiv region and are closing in on Guliaipole, a fortified logistics

hub in Zaporizhzhia.

On top of that, the Ukrainian army is struggling to keep up with Russia's superior manpower, despite Moscow's heavy losses since the start of the invasion.

While Russia does not publish official casualty statistics, an open-source investigation by the BBC and Russian media outlet Mediazona estimated that

nearly 150,000 soldiers have been killed so far. But those losses have slowed since April and the Kremlin has managed to bolster the army's ranks by offering recruits hefty paychecks.

By contrast, the Ukrainian army has struggled to recover its lost manpower, with many soldiers going absent without leave and a government mobilisation drive

failing to solve those issues. Military activist and blogger Sergiy Sternenko, who raises funds for the Ukrainian army, said Kyiv had "systemic problems" at the front.

"People are kept in positions for over 100 days," he told his 850,000 followers on Telegram last week, adding that "the already exhausted brigades become even more exhausted".

"This is total chaos in the troop management, and nothing good awaits us with such approaches."

Vasily Kashin, an expert from a government-owned institute in Moscow, said that Ukraine "has lost the small advantages it had in certain types of weaponry", notably drones, "and is beginning to weaken".

"Russian troops are achieving deeper breakthroughs and conquering increasingly vast territories each month," the director of the Centre for European and International Studies at Russia's Higher School of Economics, told AFP.

British researcher Jade McGlynn, who studies the Russia-Ukraine war at King's College London, predicted a "bloody, attritional winter" of fighting.

"While negotiations drag on without a definitive breakthrough," McGlynn said, "Ukraine hangs on but struggles with mobilisation, ammunition and domestic disillusion."



An undated artist's rendition depicts divers and an unmanned vehicle exiting the A26 submarine. (Reuters)

Poland in Sweden submarine deal

Reuters
Warsaw

Poland said yesterday it had chosen Sweden's Saab to supply it with three submarines, in a multi-billion-dollar deal that forms a key element of Warsaw's efforts to bolster its defences in the Baltic Sea.

Warsaw has been ramping up investments in the armed forces to counter what it sees as a growing threat from Russia after Moscow's 2022 invasion of Ukraine.

The deal with Sweden under the "Orka" programme to boost Poland's military exemplifies Warsaw's efforts to build a Baltic alliance, as its traditional Central European ties are pressured by divisions over Russia and approaches towards the European Union.

"Sweden presented the best offer in terms of all criteria, delivery time, and operational capability, especially in the Baltic Sea," Deputy Prime Minister Wladyslaw Kosiniak-Kamysz told a press conference.

He estimated the value of the deal at around 10bn zlotys (\$2.73bn), and said Sweden had committed to buy some armaments from Poland as part of a wider co-operation agreement, and to provide a "gap-filler" submarine for the Polish army to train on.

It is the first submarine export order for Saab since it acquired the submarine division in 2014 and CEO Micael Johansson said Poland's announcement marked a "fantastic milestone" for the company.

"It's a real breakthrough," he told Reuters. "It's incredibly important for the security of the Baltic Sea and to have this ability on both sides of the sea means a lot."

Saab, which makes a wide range of military equipment including fighter jets, surveillance systems, missiles and submarines, will supply Poland with its A26 submarines. Kosiniak-Kamysz said he would like the commercial deal concluded no later than the second quarter of 2026 and he expected the first delivery in 2030.

Johansson stressed that no contract had been signed but that Poland's estimate of the value was in the "right ballpark". He said Saab could meet the 2030 delivery date and that the deal would not affect the timeline for delivery of two submarines Sweden has ordered.

The Baltic region is on heightened alert following a string of cases of suspicious damage to underwater infrastructure since 2022, but authorities have been unable to find sufficient proof of deliberate malicious intent to press charges.

"This shows that Europe is taking responsibility for its own security and that Poland and Sweden are making it possible for us to take a stronger responsibility for our own region, for the Baltic region and for Northern Europe," Sweden's ambassador to Poland, Martina Quick, told Reuters.

Nasa confirms support for delayed European Mars rover

Nasa has confirmed that it will contribute to Europe's Martian rover Rosalind Franklin, which is scheduled to launch in 2028 after repeated delays, the European Space Agency said yesterday.

The rover aims to be the first on the red planet capable of drilling up to 2m (6.5 feet) below the surface to search for extraterrestrial life.

However, the mission relies on several elements from Nasa, which US President Donald Trump has targeted with steep budget cuts since returning to the White House in January. ESA director general Josef Aschbacher said he had received "a letter from the Nasa administration to confirm the contributions" of the US space agency to the mission.

"That is good news," Aschbacher said on the sidelines of the ESA's ministerial council meeting being held this week in the German city of Bremen. The mission was originally intended to launch in 2020, but suffered several setbacks.

In 2022, it was suspended after the ESA ended co-operation with Russia – the agency's main partner for the mission – following Moscow's invasion of Ukraine.

The ESA then turned to the United States for help. Aschbacher said Nasa was contributing to three of the mission's elements: the launcher, radioisotope heater unit and braking engine.

The braking engine had been confirmed some time ago, but the other two elements will be a relief for the ESA.

Nasa is also providing "one instrument to analyse traces of possible life on Mars," Aschbacher added.

The rover, which is named after British scientist Rosalind Franklin, is planned to touch down on the Martian surface in 2030.

Some aspects can be viewed positively, but many require special discussions among experts," he said.

The original plan – drafted without input from Ukraine's European allies – would have seen Kyiv withdraw from its eastern Donetsk region and the United

Russia: Talks to end Ukraine war 'serious' after new US plan

AFP
Moscow

Russia said yesterday that ongoing talks to end the war in Ukraine were "serious", after earlier welcoming parts of a new US plan to halt the deadliest fighting in Europe since World War II.

A deal was still a long way off, Russian officials warned, with US President Donald Trump's envoy Steve Witkoff due in Moscow next week for further talks.

But the negotiations were "ongoing, the process is serious", Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said in televised comments.

Washington has not published its new plan, which Trump has called a "fine-tuned" update of a previous 28-point proposal firmly rejected by an alarmed Kyiv and its European allies for being, they said, a Kremlin wish-list.

Trump and US Army Secretary Dan Driscoll, who has been in talks with Russian delegates this week, have also expressed cautious optimism over the revised version.

Ukrainian officials have said Driscoll is due for further talks in Kyiv this week.

It is not clear how similar the new plan is to the earlier proposal, but an official familiar with the matter told AFP the new draft had fewer points and left sensitive issues concerning territory – a key point for both Russia and Ukraine – unresolved.

In comments to a Russian state TV reporter, Kremlin aide Yuri Ushakov said the draft required "truly serious analysis" and that Russia had not yet discussed it with anyone.

"Some aspects can be viewed positively, but many require special discussions among experts," he said.

The original plan – drafted without input from Ukraine's European allies – would have seen Kyiv withdraw from its eastern Donetsk region and the United



Kremlin aide Yuri Ushakov and Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov talk to each other during a meeting of Russia's President Vladimir Putin and Kyrgyz President Sadyr Japarov at the Yntymak Ordo (Palace of Unity) presidential residence in Bishkek yesterday. (AFP)

States de facto recognise the Donetsk, Crimea and Lugansk regions as Russian.

It ignited a storm of criticism, with Washington forced to deny claims it was just a Russian "wish list", throwing an extraordinary element of confusion into the talks.

Ukrainian leader Volodymyr Zelensky framed it as one of the most difficult choices in Ukrainian history: "either the loss of dignity or the risk of losing a key partner" in Washington.

The updated plan appears to please Kyiv more. Ukraine said later it had reached an "understanding" with the United States, and that the two sides had pared back some of the points Kyiv disagreed with following talks in Geneva.

Russian President Vladimir Putin ordered the full-scale military assault on Ukraine in February 2022 – calling it a "special military operation".

Kyiv and its European allies say the war is an unprovoked and illegal land grab that has resulted in a tidal wave of violence and destruction.

Tens of thousands of civilians and military personnel have been killed since the war began, while millions of Ukrainians have been forced to leave their homes.

US officials were upbeat Tuesday about the drive to end the war, even as they acknowledged key sticking points remained over the plan.

But the Kremlin cautioned yesterday it was "too early" to say if a deal was close.

Ukraine's European allies had drafted their own counter-proposal to the original plan, which Russia immediately smacked down, accusing them of "meddling" in the peace process.

EU Commission Chief Ursula von der Leyen said yesterday that days of negotiations to refine the US plan had begun to lay the groundwork for a possible settlement.

But she warned Russia showed no sign of really wanting to stop the fighting.

"I want to be clear from the very outset: Europe will stand with Ukraine and support Ukraine every step of the way," she told EU lawmakers. As diplomatic efforts to end the war rumbled on, Ukraine yesterday reported another night of air attacks.

A Russian drone attack on the southern Ukrainian region of Zaporizhzhia overnight left more than a dozen wounded and damaged tens of homes, governor Ivan Fedorov said.

Top French court upholds ex-president Sarkozy's second conviction

France's highest court ruled against former president Nicolas Sarkozy yesterday over illegal financing of his 2012 re-election bid, adding a second definitive conviction to his rap sheet. The ruling comes after Sarkozy, a one-term president from 2007 to 2012, was sent to jail last month in a separate case, related to alleged Libyan funding in his earlier election campaign.

The 70-year-old's 20 days in jail made him the first post-war French leader to serve time behind bars, before his release earlier this month pending an appeals trial.

The Court of Cassation yesterday said Sarkozy was "definitively convicted" in the 2012 campaign financing case, upholding the ruling of an appeals

court last year that sentenced him to a six-month term with an electronic tag. Prosecutors argued Sarkozy's right-wing party worked with a public relations firm, Bygmalion, to hide the true cost of his 2012 electoral campaign.

They said he spent nearly €43mn (almost \$50mn) on his 2012 campaign, nearly double the permitted amount of €22.5mn.

Unlike his co-defendants, he was not implicated in the double-billing system allegedly used to cover costs but was held accountable as the beneficiary of illegal campaign financing.

Sarkozy has denied "any criminal responsibility", denouncing the allegations as "lies".

But his lawyers Patrice Spinosi and Emmanuel Piwnica in a joint statement told AFP that he had taken note of the Court of Cassation's decision.

The former president has faced a series of legal challenges since leaving office. In December last year, he exhausted his last legal recourse in another case over trying to extract favours from a judge.

He served that sentence with an electronic ankle tag, which was removed in May after several months. Then he was jailed after a lower court found him guilty of allowing aides to collect money from Libyan leader Moammer Gaddafi for his 2007 presidential run.

Despite his legal problems, Sarkozy remains an influential figure on the right.

He was received by President Emmanuel Macron before entering prison, and Justice Minister Gerald Darmanin, a former protege, sparked criticism by meeting Sarkozy inside Paris's La Sante jail.

A court later barred Sarkozy from seeing the minister and other officials as part of restrictions tied to his release from prison until the appeals trial in the so-called Libyan case in March next year.

A fortnight after his release, the ex-leader announced he would publish a book next month about his experience of serving three weeks in jail.



BAD NEWS: Nicolas Sarkozy.

Alfardan Automobiles supports Qatar's classic car community

Alfardan Automotive, through Alfardan Automobiles, the exclusive importer and official BMW Group distributor in Qatar, participated as the main sponsor in the sixth edition of the Qatar Classic Luxury Car Competition and Exhibition 2025, held at The Pearl Island.

Across five days, 65 exceptional classic cars were on display, underscoring Qatar's status as a regional hub for automotive heritage and luxury.

As the main sponsor, Alfardan Automotive helped in transforming the event into an immersive journey through automotive history against the stunning backdrop of The Pearl Island. The event attracted the general public and passionate collectors from both Qatar and the wider GCC, offering a rare glimpse of meticulously selected vehicles exemplifying timeless design and engineering excellence.

Featuring an expanded lineup of classics, paired with an increase in participation from across the GCC, this year's edition was the largest to date, further strengthening Qatar's reputation amongst the region's enthusiasts and collectors.

The exhibition highlighted Qatar's cultural identity and automotive heritage, demonstrating how classic vehicles have the unique ability to connect generations through craftsmanship and storytelling. A highlight during the event was the exclusive Alfardan Automobiles BMW Classics Club display, featuring rare and historically significant BMWs. The display showcased two iconic models, the BMW E30 M3 (1991) and the BMW 2000cs (1968), and highlighted the rich heritage of the GCC, attracting significant interest from visitors and classic car enthusiasts alike.

Showcasing the BMW Classics Club at the event underlined its role in growing a dedicated community of classic BMW owners and enthusiasts in Qatar, while strengthening their connection with Alfardan



Omar Hussain Alfardan (2nd, left), the president and CEO of Alfardan Group, at Qatar Classic Luxury Car Competition and Exhibition 2025.



VIPs at the event.



BMW at Qatar Classic Luxury Car Competition and Exhibition 2025.

Automobiles as the Middle East's first Certified BMW Classic Partner. Through exclusive drives, curated exhibitions and educational sessions, the club aims to keep these iconic models on the road, preserve their heritage for future generations and reinforce Qatar's position as a key destination for classic car culture.

Ayman Berjawi, general manager of Alfardan Automobiles, said: "Supporting the sixth Qatar Classic Luxury Car Competition and Exhibition 2025 underscores our commitment to Qatar's

automotive scene and passion for classics. With 65 outstanding vehicles and the BMW Classics Club's engagement, Qatar's growing stature as a destination for collectors and enthusiasts is clear."

Hussain Omar Alfardan, Chief Marketing Officer of Alfardan Automotive, said: "This year's show aimed to engage families, first-time visitors, and collectors alike. From the BMW Classics Club to the broader exhibition, our goal was to share stories and highlight what makes each vehicle unique. The strong response encourages us to continue nurturing Qatar's classic car culture."

The Pearl Island also hosted a lively, family-friendly event with interactive zones on restoration and a children's area. Artistic performances kept visitors energised.

Twenty winners were recognised across a variety of categories, with awards in cash and prizes for excellence in restoration, preservation, and presentation. The event set a benchmark for quality and dedication.

Organisers aim to enhance future editions by blending authenticity with modernity, expanding experiences, and further establishing Qatar as a key player in classic car culture. Alfardan Automobiles remains dedicated to celebrating automotive heritage, luxury, and community.

M7 and Franca Fund host inaugural gala to advance future of preventive genomics

M7 hosted the Franca Fund Gala on Nov 23 at the Museum of Islamic Art, honouring the life and legacy of the late Franca Sozzani, editor-in-chief of Vogue Italia, by raising funds to drive research in preventive genomics.

The event, in partnership with The Franca Sozzani Fund for Preventive Genomics, took place as Qatar marks its cultural journey over the past 50 years with Evolution Nation, a celebration highlighting both the nation's cultural milestones and its aspirations for the future.

The gala was co-hosted by HE Sheikha Al Mayassa bint Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani, Qatar Museums Chairperson and Fashion Trust Arabia Co-Chair; Francesco Carrozzini, Co-Founder, Franca Sozzani Fund for Preventive Genomics and Sozzani's son; and global editorial director at Vogue and chief content officer for Condé Nast and long-time friend of Sozzani, Anna Wintour. Among the VIPS in attendance includes Queen Rania al-Abdullah of Jordan.

"Tonight's gala underscores our commitment to reimagine healthcare through cutting-edge science, combined with the highest ethical standards, global advocacy, and compassionate



HE Sheikha Al Mayassa bint Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani at the Franca Fund Gala.

care. These vital goals are the core of Franca Fund as well as our other beneficiaries this evening: the Qatar Cancer Society and the Xana Foundation in Barcelona," said HE Sheikha Al Mayassa.

The event raised more than \$4mn, which will directly support the work of The Franca Fund and its visionary goal: to support ongoing research programs in preventive genomics at Harvard Medical School and Mass General Brigham, led by internationally acclaimed physician-scientist and Harvard Professor of Medicine (Genetics) Dr Robert Green. He is considered a pioneer in the responsible use of DNA analysis to detect and provide early treatment or prevention of inherited conditions that affect millions of children and adults worldwide.

In a statement, Carrozzini said: "My mother believed that ideas should never sit still. She once told me, 'If it's not daring, it's not new. And if it's not new,

it won't matter.' That was Franca - fearless, restless, always pushing everyone, including herself, to see what others haven't yet seen."

Advancing equity in access to medical care, HE Sheikha Al Mayassa announced a donation to the Qatar Cancer Society (QCS), founded and chaired since 1997 by Dr Khalid bin Jabor al-Thani. Serving as a voice of awareness and a platform of support for all those facing the journey of cancer treatment, QCS offers every patient a renewed sense of hope, providing financial assistance to more than 10,770 cancer patients.

HE Sheikha Al Mayassa also announced a contribution to the Xana Foundation in support of the launch La Casa De Las Xanas. The Xana Foundation was born to offer warm support and steadfast companionship to families whose children face serious illnesses.

WEEKEND DEALS

العرض متاح في جميع منافذ سفاري بتاريخ: ٢٧-١١-٢٥ في جميع منافذ سفاري
Promotion available at all Safari outlets on: 27-11-2025 at all Safari Outlets
قد يكون هناك حدود للمشتريات العرض ساري حتى نفاذ الكمية.



 <p>16 QR.75</p> <p>لحم بقري باكستاني بالعظم ١ كجم Pakistan Beef with Bone 1 kg</p>	 <p>33 QR.75</p> <p>سلمون نرويجي ١ كجم Fresh Salmon Norway 1 kg</p>	 <p>9 QR.75</p> <p>سمك كينج صغير قطر ١ كجم Fresh King Fish Small Qatar 1 kg</p>	 <p>9 QR.75</p> <p>جمبري صغير سعودي ١ كجم Fresh Prawns Small KSA 1 kg</p>	 <p>7 QR.50</p> <p>سمك بلطي مصري ١ كجم Fresh Tilapia Egypt 1 kg</p>
 <p>1 QR.75</p> <p>بصل هندي ١ كجم Onion India 1 kg</p>	 <p>1 QR.50</p> <p>بطاطس باكستاني ١ كجم Potato Pakistan 1 kg</p>	 <p>2 QR.75</p> <p>خيار اصفر هندي ١ كجم Indian Yellow Cucumber 1 kg</p>	 <p>1 QR.00</p> <p>يقطين قطر ١ كجم Pumpkin Qatar 1 kg</p>	 <p>3 QR.25</p> <p>موز اخوادر ١ كجم Banana Ecuador 1 kg</p>
 <p>4 QR.75</p> <p>موز اصفر كبير هندي ١ كجم Yellow Banana Big India 1 kg</p>	 <p>5 QR.00</p> <p>تفاح رويال جالا تشيلي ١ كجم Apple Royal Gala Chile 1 kg</p>	 <p>5 QR.00</p> <p>كوي صيني ١ كجم Kiwi China 1 kg</p>	 <p>4 QR.75</p> <p>توت الزرق افريقيا ١٢٥ جم ١ عبوة Blueberry Africa (Approx: 125g) 1 box</p>	 <p>9 QR.75</p> <p>فراولة دريسكولز افريقيا ٢٥٠ جم ١ عبوة Strawberry Driscoll's Africa (Approx: 250g) 1 box</p>
 <p>12 QR.00</p> <p>تين مجفف حبل ٥٠٠ جم Dry Fig Rope 500 gm</p>	 <p>4 QR.00</p> <p>مافن احبة مشكل ٦ قطع Muffins Asrtd. 6 pcs</p>	 <p>20 QR.00</p> <p>امانة ارز مزة بسمتي هندي ٥ كجم x ١ عبوة Amana Indian Mazza Basmati Rice 5 kg x 1 pc</p>	 <p>15 QR.00</p> <p>الجزيرة زيت زيتون بكر ٥٠٠ مل x ١ عبوة Al Jazira Extra Virgin 500 ml x 1 pc</p>	 <p>9 QR.00</p> <p>ساديا دجاج شواية ١١٠٠ جم x ١ عبوة Sadia Chicken Griller 1100 gm x 1 pc</p>