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SPORT | Page 1

Verstappen seeks Qatar hat-trick but Norris title favourite





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Sheikha Moza opens MF Husain Museum



Her Highness Sheikha Moza bint Nasser, Chairperson of Qatar Foundation (QF), speaking yesterday at the inauguration of Lawh Wa Qalam: MF Husain Museum – a living testament to the enduring legacy of one of the world's greatest modern art pioneers, Maqbool Fida Husain, in Education City. **PICTURE:** AR Al-Baker. **Page 12**

Her Highness Sheikha Moza bint Nasser, Chairperson of Qatar Foundation (QF), yesterday inaugurated Lawh Wa Qalam: MF Husain Museum – a living testament to the enduring legacy of one of the world's greatest modern art pioneers, Maqbool Fida Husain.

In her speech, Her Highness Sheikha Moza, said: "Maqbool Fida Husain is a legendary artist – a true master whose artistic works transcend borders and connect cultures, histories, and identities. I am delighted to fulfil the dream of this late, esteemed artist by inaugurating the museum, which will stand as a new landmark in Education City showcasing pages from his life and a collection of his works."

With HE Sheikha Hind bint Hamad al-Thani, Vice-Chairperson of QF, ministers, other dignitaries, and art collectors and experts from throughout the world in attendance, the museum within QF's Education City was unveiled in spectacular fashion at a ceremony which took guests on a journey through Husain's remarkable life and work, from the motifs that characterised his practice to the moments in history that shaped his art.

Held ahead of Lawh Wa Qalam: MF Husain Museum – which features over 150 of Husain's original works and personal objects that are in the custody of QF – opening to the public today (Friday, 28 November), the ceremony marking the arrival of a new addition to Qatar's cultural landscape culminated with a powerful and poignant moment: the unveiling of the painting bearing Husain's sketch of his concept for the museum that, having been made a reality by QF and architect Martand Khosla, now bears his name and tells his story. **To Page 12**

PM attends conclusion of 'Watan 2025' exercise



QNA
Doha

HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani yesterday attended the conclusion of the "Watan 2025" exercise.

The exercise included preliminary desk-based phases, followed by field exercises simulating realistic scenarios for dealing with security challenges and emergencies.

The closing ceremony was attended by HE the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Defence Affairs Sheikh Saud bin Abdulrahman bin Hassan bin Ali al-Thani and HE the Minister of Interior and Commander of Internal Security Forces (Lekhwiya), Sheikh Khalifa bin Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani, along with a number of Their Excellencies the ministers; senior officials from participating entities; and security leaders.

HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs also inaugurated the Lekhwiya camp – in Zekreet – which is preparing to host the "Arabian Gulf Security 4" exercise in early 2026, with the participation of security agencies from the Gulf Co-operation Council (GCC) countries. **Page 2**

Qatar condemns US shooting

Qatar has expressed its strong condemnation and denunciation of the shooting incident that occurred near the White House in the US, which resulted in the injury of two National Guard members, affirming its full solidarity with the United States, its government and people. In a statement issued yesterday, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs reiterated Qatar's firm stance rejecting violence, terrorism, and criminal acts, regardless of the motives and reasons. The Ministry also conveyed Qatar's wishes for a swift recovery for the injured. **(QNA)**

QT announces 2025 Tourism Awards

Qatar Tourism announced yesterday the winners of its third annual Tourism Awards at Raffles Doha, honouring those advancing Qatar's global standing. HE Saad bin Ali al-Kharji, Chairman of Qatar Tourism, said, "Today, we gather to celebrate excellence, honour dedication, and recognise the exceptional efforts of the professionals driving our tourism sector." **Page 12**

Israel told to end 'settler violence'

Four European nations yesterday urged Israel to stop what they called increasing "settler violence against Palestinian civilians" in the occupied West Bank. "We — France, Germany, Italy, the United Kingdom — strongly condemn the massive increase of settler violence against Palestinian civilians and call for stability in the West Bank," they said.

COMMUNITY
See Page 6

Culture minister meets Costa Rica counterpart



HE the Minister of Culture Sheikh Abdulrahman bin Hamad al-Thani met yesterday with Minister of Culture and Youth of the Republic of Costa Rica Jorge Rodriguez Vives. During the meeting, they discussed aspects of joint co-operation between the two countries and ways to support and develop them in the cultural field. **(QNA)**

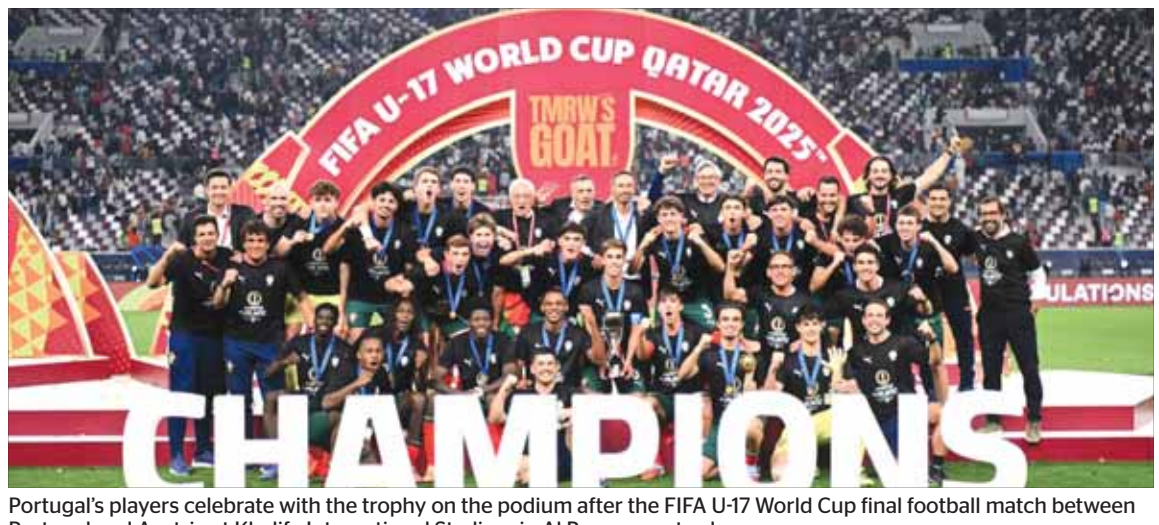
National Archives of Qatar board holds 2nd meeting



HE the Chairman of the Board of Trustees of National Archives of Qatar Abdullah bin Khalifa al-Attiyah chaired yesterday the 2nd meeting of the Board at the National Archives of Qatar premises. The meeting discussed the topics on its agenda, with Secretary-General of the Qatar National Archives Dr Ahmed Abdullah al-Buainain presenting the key achievements of 2025, in addition to discussing the latest developments, events and plans during the coming period to make appropriate decisions regarding them. **(QNA)**

Cabral fires Portugal to first U-17 FIFA World Cup title

Portugal yesterday became FIFA U-17 World Cup champions for the first time after beating Austria in a compelling Doha final. Anisio Cabral's first-half strike proved the difference at Khalifa International Stadium, as the reigning U-17 European champions completed a dream 2025 double. Austria, competing in their first World Cup final at any level, battled tirelessly as they hunted a leveller and came agonisingly close when Daniel Frauscher struck the inside of the post late in the game. **Sport Page 1**



Portugal's players celebrate with the trophy on the podium after the FIFA U-17 World Cup final football match between Portugal and Austria at Khalifa International Stadium in Al Rayyan yesterday.

PHCC International conference opens in Doha

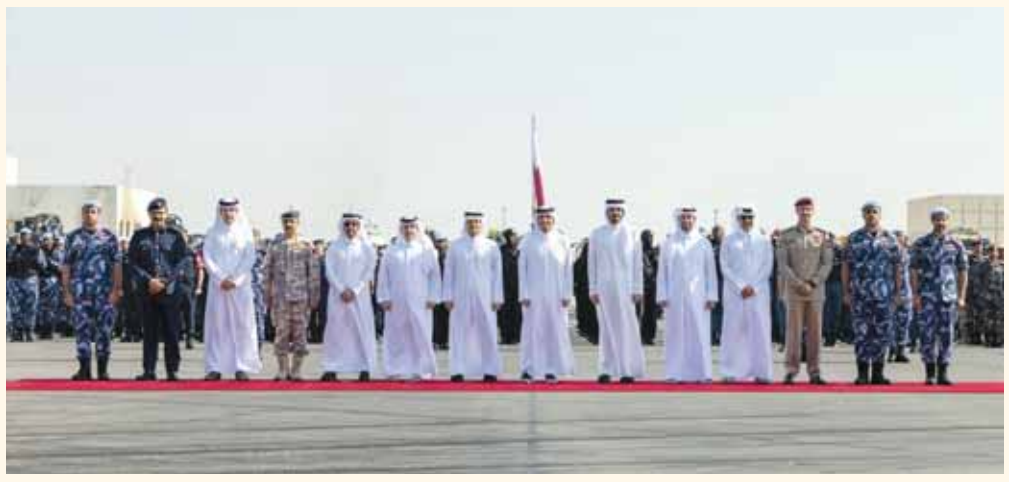
The sixth International Primary Health Care Conference (IPHCC) started yesterday in the presence of HE Mansoor bin Ebrahim al-Mahmoud at the Ritz Carlton Doha exploring the latest advancements and innovations in primary health care. A large number of dignitaries and officials as well as international experts and speakers took part in the opening session of the conference.

The three day conference organised by the Primary Health Care Corporation (PHCC) with the theme 'Inspiring Tomorrow; The Power of Collaboration in Primary Health Care' is exploring many of the current topics and the advancements of technology in primary health care sector.

To Page 2

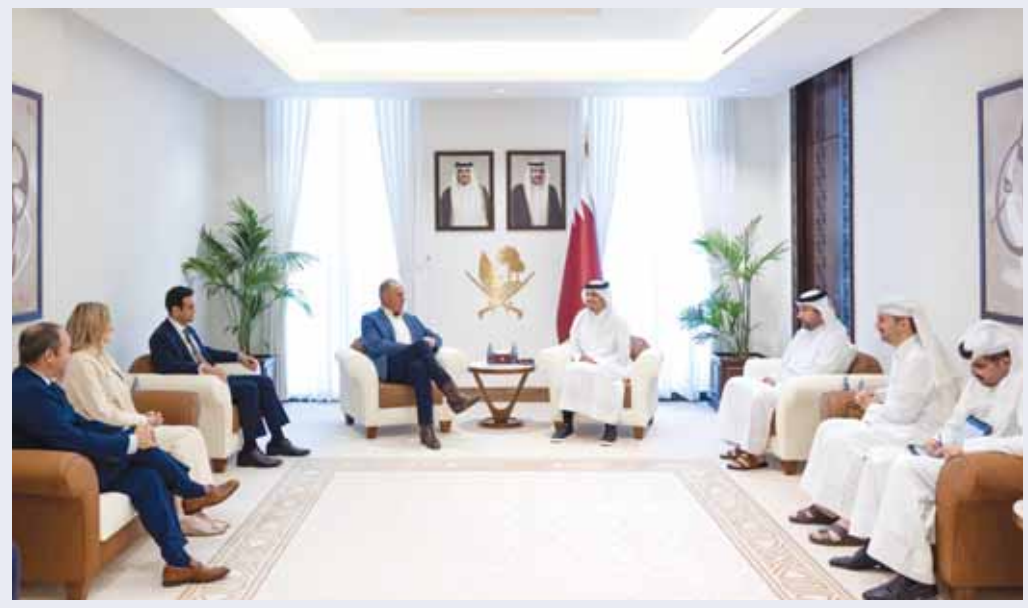
QATAR

PM attends closing of 'Watan 2025' exercise



HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani yesterday attended the conclusion of the "Watan 2025" exercise. The exercise included preliminary desk-based phases, followed by field exercises simulating realistic scenarios for dealing with security challenges and emergencies. The closing ceremony was attended by HE the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Defence Affairs Sheikh Saud bin Abdulrahman bin Hassan bin Ali al-Thani and HE the Minister of Interior and Commander of Internal Security Forces (Lekhwiya), Sheikh Khalifa bin Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani along with a number the ministers; senior officials from participating entities; and security leaders. HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs also inaugurated the Lekhwiya camp – in Zekreet – which is preparing to host the "Arabian Gulf Security 4" exercise in early 2026, with the participation of security agencies from the Gulf Co-operation Council (GCC) countries. **(QNA)**

PM, US Congress delegation discuss ties



HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani met yesterday with a delegation of members of the Congress of the United States of America, including Laurel Lee, Marlin Stutzman, Abraham Hamadeh, Ryan Zinke and Lance Gooden, on the occasion of their visit to the country. The meeting discussed the close strategic relations between Qatar and the United States and ways to support and strengthen them. It also discussed regional developments, in addition to a number of topics of common interest. **(QNA)**

'6th IPHCC showcases Qatar's position in building sophisticated healthcare system'

QNA
Doha

Officials from the Primary Health Care Corporation (PHCC) affirmed that the 6th International Primary Health Care Conference (IPHCC), which commenced in Doha yesterday, reflects the advanced position Qatar has attained in building a sophisticated healthcare system that places human beings at the heart of development. They added that it embodies the PHCC's ability to organise major scientific events and its firm commitment to enhancing the quality and efficiency of health services, in line with Qatar National Vision 2030 and the objectives of the National Health Strategy 2024-2030.

Assistant Director General for Administrative Affairs and Shared Services at PHCC, Muslim Mubarak al-Nabit told Qatar News Agency (QNA) that the 6th International Primary Health Care Conference reflects the Corporation's capacity to organise major scientific events according to the highest administrative and logistical standards.

He noted that the Corporation's teams have dedicated their expertise to ensuring the conference's success, befitting Qatar's stature, by providing a comprehensive organisational structure that supports the scientific sessions and training workshops, and enables experts to contribute. The participants benefited from an effective platform for dialogue and the exchange of ideas.

He emphasised that the conference's success stemmed from collaborative institutional efforts that fostered a culture of excellence and high-quality performance. He noted the pivotal role of shared services in supporting the event, from participant registration and venue preparation to technical arrangements and the management of accompanying programmes. This event underscored the institution's commitment to its active administrative and organisational role in supporting Qatar's healthcare future.

For her part, Director of Quality Management at PHCC, Dr Amal al-Ali stated that the conference reaffirmed the corporation's unwavering commitment to enhancing the quality and efficiency of healthcare services, aligning with Qatar National Vision 2030 and the goals of the National Health Strategy 2024-2030.

She explained that quality is not merely an administrative concept, but rather an integrated approach based on continuous improvement, innovation, and the adoption of best practices to ensure safe and comprehensive healthcare that meets the needs of all members of society.

She also explained that the conference represents an important scientific platform that brings together experts and practitioners to exchange knowledge, review successful experiences, and discuss the latest developments in health technologies and artificial intelligence, thus contributing to improving the level of services. Furthermore, it encourages enhanced integration among various health specialties and the development of staff skills to ensure healthcare teams are prepared to face future challenges.

People-centric

In turn, Assistant Director General for Strategy and Business Development at PHCC, Dr Mohammed Ghaith al-Kuwari emphasised that the 6th IPHCC reflects the advanced position Qatar has reached in building a sophisticated healthcare system that places people at the heart of development.

He added that its convening reinforces the national vision that underscores the importance of innovation, prevention, and the integration of health services in a comprehensive and sustainable manner. This is especially significant given the broad participation of over a thousand experts and established scientific practices in this year's conference, making it a unique platform for knowledge exchange, partnership building, and skills development.

He pointed out that including students in the scientific programme is a strategic step towards preparing the next generation of primary healthcare specialists, affirming that the conference strengthens Qatar's position as a leading regional centre for medical education, scientific research, and comprehensive health development.

For her part, Assistant Director General of Quality Management and Workforce Development at PHCC, Dr Zuleikha Mohsen al-Wahidi said that the conference embodies Qatar's vision of developing a healthcare sector based on knowledge, innovation, and prevention.

She explained that the participation of more than a thousand specialists from around the world in its proceedings is evidence of the widespread confidence the Foundation enjoys as a leading scientific centre in the region, given its focus on future-oriented topics, most notably artificial intelligence and emerging technologies, in addition to promoting continuing medical education and empowering national talent as a fundamental component of the healthcare system's sustainability.

For his part, Executive Director of the Director General's Office and Director of Business Development at the Corporation, Khalid Abdulkarim al-Khanji emphasised the conference's significance as a leading scientific event reflecting the State of Qatar's commitment to developing an integrated healthcare system that places human beings at the centre. He noted that it also embodies Qatar's National Vision 2030, which aims to enhance healthcare performance, improve services, empower talent, and support scientific research and innovation in primary care. This has made the conference an effective platform for developing partnerships and building impactful initiatives that contribute to enhancing the quality of healthcare.

The Corporation is committed to continuously supporting this scientific movement, which raises the level of services and keeps pace with global developments in the health sector.

Assistant Director General for Operations and Clinical Affairs at PHCC, Dr Samia Ahmed al-Abdullah considered the conference an important scientific platform for discussing the latest developments in clinical services and integrated patient care.

She noted that this year's conference themes reflect the priorities of the healthcare sector in Qatar, including strengthening preventive medicine, developing chronic disease services, and expanding the application of artificial intelligence to improve patient experience and enhance the quality of care.

This is especially significant given the participation of a select group of international and local experts in the discussion sessions, who will offer scientific insights that contribute to supporting clinical practices and improving the efficiency of medical teams. She stated that PHCC remains committed to improving services at health centres and developing clinical programmes in accordance with international standards. She emphasised that the conference is a significant contributor to supporting continuous development and enhancing the quality of primary healthcare in Qatar.

Wise guidance

During his address at the conference's opening session, Associate Director of Imperial College London, Lord Darzi commended Qatar's healthcare system, affirming that, under the wise guidance of its leadership, it is leading a genuine transformation in this field, particularly in primary healthcare. This aligns with Qatar's health strategy and its National Vision 2030, which aims to make health a continuous state of well-being supported by science and data. He noted that primary healthcare should become a robust and fundamental model upon which any healthcare system can be built to ensure its resilience and efficiency. He also touched on the conference's objectives and the role of primary healthcare in driving innovation and transformation, as well as human-centred healthcare, indicating the significant opportunities available in these areas.

Lord Darzi highlights Qatar's advancements in healthcare

By Joseph Varghese
Staff Reporter



Prof Lord Ara Darzi. **PICTURE:** Shaji Kayamkulam

Qatar is a symbol of ambition, innovation and human progress, noted, Prof Lord Ara Darzi, co-director, Imperial College London and the executive chair of the World Innovation Summit for Health (WISH) highlighting the advancements made by the country in healthcare.

"Qatar doesn't just plan, it builds, transforming vision into verifiable reality. This nation is a model for the world, demonstrating what is possible when visionary leadership aligns with unwavering purpose," said, Lord Darzi at the opening session of the sixth International Primary Health Care Conference organised by the Primary Health Care Corporation.

He said that health systems globally are under extraordinary pressure as life expectancy has improved and with it a surge in chronic disease. "WHO estimates a global health workforce shortfall of over 11mn professionals by 2030. These challenges are universal, but so are the opportunities. Advances in artificial intelligence, genomics, and digital health have the power to shift care from hospital corridors to our homes and communities," explained Lord Darzi.

He pointed out that the question is no longer whether we can transform, but how quickly. "Qatar, with its visionary leadership and agility, is poised to lead in that way. The case for change is urgent. The old model of reactive care is clinically, economically, and morally unsustainable," he remarked.

According to him, primary care must evolve from being the front door of the health system to becoming its central nervous system. He emphasised: "Primary care is the bedrock, the unshakeable foundation upon which all resilient health systems are built. It is the centre of trust, continuity, and human connection that cannot be outsourced or automated. This is not about episodic interventions. It is about generational care."

"For Qatar, this shift aligns perfectly with the National Health Strategy and Vision 2030. PHCC is already showing the world how it can be done. Building on this vision, we can identify seven innovation pathways that empower this foundation," he continued. Lord Darzi noted the seven pathways are: Genetic intelligence; the digital health ecosystem; personalised medicine; continuous health monitoring; population genomics; intelligent healthcare systems and precision robotics.

"This is an extension of the care continuum, coordinated by primary care teams to ensure seamless preparation and faster data-driven recovery at home. These innovations stand on the bedrock established already by Her Highness Sheikha Moza bint Nasser, Chairperson of Qatar Foundation," he highlighted.

"Our collective duty now is to translate these powerful assets, which Qatar has invested in over a decade and more, into tangible health value for all," added Lord Darzi.

PHCC conference explores advancements in healthcare



HE Mansoor bin Ebrahim al-Mahmoud along with other dignitaries.

From Page 1

About 1,000 experts, speakers, doctors, speakers, healthcare professionals, policymakers, researchers, educators, students, and stakeholders from across the globe are sharing their knowledge and best practices in primary healthcare over the course of the conference.

Speaking at the opening session, Dr Mariam Abdul Malik, managing director of the PHCC said that the conference is an embodiment of Qatar's firm commitment to developing the health sector.

"Primary healthcare in Qatar has become an advanced model at the regional and international levels, thanks to the strategic investment in human health and the building of an integrated system that provides high-quality preventive, curative and rehabilitative services in a safe and competitive environment." she explained.

Dr Abdul Malik highlighted that everyone in Qatar enjoys an advanced health system and what has been achieved in terms of healthcare services is clearly reflected in the satisfaction of community members and visitors to health centres, with visitors' satisfaction level reaching above 80% in the recent surveys.

"This conference is not just a scientific event, but a platform that stimulates creativity, inspires health work teams to share knowledge and experiences, and explore innovative solutions that contribute to establishing a more prepared, flexible and sustainable health system for a healthier and more prosperous tomorrow for the nation and society," she added.

Speaking at the opening session, Prof Lord Ara Darzi, co-director, Imperial College London and the executive chair of the World Innovation Summit for Health highlighted the huge advancements made by Qatar in healthcare and praised the country for its vision.

He said: "Primary care is the bedrock, the unshakeable foundation upon which all resilient health systems are built. It is the centre of trust, continuity, and human connection that cannot be outsourced or automated. This is not about episodic interventions. It is about generational care." After the opening session, the Minister of Public Health along with other dignitaries toured the exhibition accompanying the conference.

A lot of healthcare professionals, including local and international companies, providers of medical services, supplies and devices, are participating in the exhibition to showcase their latest innovations in the healthcare sector, along with various educational and technological entities.

The conference showcases a wide range of advanced topics in primary healthcare through panel discussions and workshops led by a select group of international speakers and experts. It will also provide researchers with an opportunity to present their research and the findings of recent studies that can be applied to improving primary healthcare services both within Qatar and internationally.

Qatar participates in GCC meeting on combating human trafficking in New York



Undersecretary of the Ministry of Labour and Secretary-General of the National Committee to Combat Human Trafficking, Sheikha Najwa bint Abdulrahman al-Thani.

Undersecretary of the Ministry of Labour and Secretary-General of the National Committee to Combat Human Trafficking, Sheikha Najwa bint Abdulrahman al-Thani participated in a high-level GCC meeting on regional co-operation to combat human trafficking, held on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly meeting on the Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons in New York.

Sheikha Najwa emphasised that Qatar has made remarkable progress over the past two years in strengthening its human trafficking prevention system. This includes updating national legislation, developing specialised institutional structures within law enforcement agencies, and adopting digital tools that use artificial intelligence to monitor and follow up on cases.

In her speech at the event, she noted that the country has also strengthened national partnerships with various institutions, expanded training and capacity-building programmes, and enhanced victim protection through improved shelter and care services, alongside the launch of a unified national platform for receiving reports.

She stressed that these diverse efforts are founded on a consistent vision that prioritises human protection and dignity, establishing an integrated national approach aligned with international best practices.

Sheikha Najwa bint Abdulrahman al-Thani added that Qatar is currently implementing the National Plan to Combat Human Trafficking (2024-2026), which is structured around four main pillars: Prevention — Strengthening policies and legislation, intensifying awareness campaigns, and integrating anti-trafficking indicators into transport, aviation, and labour sectors; Protection — Developing shelter mechanisms, expanding psychological, social, and legal support services, improving the national referral system, and ensuring humane and sustainable victim reintegration; Prosecution — Enhancing law enforcement capacities, developing advanced investigation tools, and adopting legislative amendments to ensure more precise monitoring and effective accountability; and Partnerships and Co-operation — Strengthening collaboration with GCC countries and international organisations such as ICAO and UN agencies, alongside developing shared databases and knowledge-based analytics.

On the sidelines of the UN General Assembly meeting, Sheikha Najwa bint Abdulrahman al-Thani also met with a number of international organisation officials, including Special Representative of the International Labour Organisation to the UN, Samuel-Olonjuwon Cynthia and Director of the International Organisation for Migration Office at the UN, Par Liljert. **(QNA)**

Qatar, Pakistan explore education, vocational training co-operation



HE the Minister of Education and Higher Education Lolwah bint Rashid AlKhater held talks with Minister of State for Federal Education and Professional Training of Pakistan Wajiha Qamar to explore further collaboration. The talks focused on exchanging expertise, sharing best practices, and enhancing the quality of education and vocational training between the countries. **(QNA)**

QNA director-general meets Czech News Agency Council chairman



HE the Director-General of Qatar News Agency (QNA) Ahmed bin Saeed al-Rumaihi met with Chairman of Czech News Agency (CTK) Council David Soukup, yesterday. During the meeting, they reviewed aspects of joint co-operation and discussed exchanging expertise and expanding media coverage between the the countries. The meeting also focused on QNA's experience in digital transformation and diverse news content, as well as mechanisms for utilising the latest technologies in producing and publishing news. **(QNA)**

Msheireb Properties wins four Qatar Tourism Awards to extend streak

Msheireb Properties, the leading sustainable real estate developer in Qatar, won four awards at the Qatar Tourism Awards 2025, marking Msheireb's continued success at the prestigious awards for the third consecutive year.

The Awards, presented by Qatar Tourism and World Tourism Organisation (UN Tourism), recognise innovation and excellence in the nation's tourism sector, aiming to raise awareness of Qatar as a world-class tourism and leisure destination.

Msheireb Properties received recognition across multiple categories: Msheireb Downtown Doha (MDD) was named Leading Sustainable Attraction: in the hospitality sector, Ammar Samad from Zulal Wellness Resort by Chiva-Som received the Community Leadership award; The Spa at Mandarin Oriental, Doha won Exceptional Spa Experience; and Liang at Mandarin Oriental, Doha was recognised for Exceptional Fine Dining Experience.

These recognitions reflect Msheireb Properties' integrated approach to creating destinations that honour Qatari heritage whilst embracing innovation, sustainability, and cultural excellence. From MDD's pioneering sustainable urban development and smart city technologies to Msheireb Museums' preservation of Qatar's rich heritage through immersive storytelling, the awards acknowledge the commitment to meaningful experiences that serve both residents and visitors whilst supporting Qatar National Vision 2030. Msheireb Properties CEO Ali Mohammed al-Kuwari said: "This recognition celebrates the collective efforts of our entire team in creating meaningful experiences that honour Qatari heritage whilst embracing innovation and excellence across all aspects of our work. We remain committed to developing destinations that are not only sustainable and accessible, but also deeply rooted in authentic Qatari culture and values".

As a key cultural and tourist destination, MDD contributes to the growth of Qatar's tourism sector by promoting cultural exchange, nurturing social interaction, and championing sustainability. The city embodies the nation's commitment to environmental stewardship, accessibility, and responsible tourism.

"These recognitions reflect the dedication of our entire team across all our divisions. We remain committed to preserving Qatar's rich cultural heritage whilst pushing the boundaries of sustainable development and inclusive design," al-Kuwari said.



Msheireb Properties CEO Ali Mohammed al-Kuwari (right) receiving the award from QT chairman HE Saad bin Ali al-Kharji.

Qatar attends GCC civil aviation executive meeting in Kuwait



The Qatar Civil Aviation Authority (QCAA) took part in the 21st GCC Executive Committee for Civil Aviation, held in Kuwait City yesterday. QCAA Acting President Mohammed bin Faleh al-Hajri led Qatar's delegation to the meeting. Key outputs included a recommendation to establish a unified GCC Civil Aviation Authority, updates to a study on a unified GCC airspace, and a review of mechanisms for co-operation on the unified safety assessment programme for foreign aircraft. Delegates also discussed the work of the committee on public policy and strategic planning, co-ordination and integration in advanced air transport projects, and other initiatives aimed at enhancing civil aviation co-operation across the GCC. **(QNA)**

QF schools welcome delegates to explore specialised education models

Qatar Foundation (QF) for Education, Science and Community Development yesterday welcomed high-level international delegations, including spouse of the President of Costa Rica Signe Zeicate; spouse of the President of Panama Maricel Cohen de Mulino; and Minister of Education of Senegal Serigne Mbaye Thiam.

The visits, which included stops at Warif Academy, Awsaj Academy, Renad Academy, and Academyati, aimed to explore QF's specialised and inclusive pre-university education models.

The delegations were introduced to the unique academic programmes offered by each school, gaining insights into innovative teaching approaches, academic and behavioural support systems, and specialised services tailored to meet diverse student needs. School administrators presented their educational missions and philosophies, highlighting their roles in promoting inclusive education, fostering innovation, and developing students' skills within a comprehensive learning ecosystem. The visiting dignitaries expressed their appreciation for the efforts undertaken by QF's schools and emphasised the importance of international collaboration in advancing specialised education.





These visits underscore the growing global interest in Qatar's pioneering educational experiences, with QF's models serving as a global reference for building inclusive and sustainable learning environments. **(QNA)**

QU in pact with Joaan Bin Jassim Academy for Defence Studies



Qatar University (QU) and Joaan Bin Jassim Academy for Defence Studies have signed a memorandum of understanding aimed at enhancing joint co-operation between the two parties in scientific and practical fields, at the premises of Qatar University campus.

The signing of the MoU came as part of the parties' keenness to exchange expertise and information, co-operate in organising conferences, seminars, and training workshops, in addition to developing research and studies of mutual interest, achieving integration and contributing to improving performance efficiency in line with the requirements and standards of total quality. On this occasion, QU's President Dr Omar al-Ansari affirmed that the signing of this MoU reflects the university's commitment to strengthening institutional partnerships with various national sectors, noting that this co-operation will contribute to developing the education, training, and scientific research system between the two sides.

For his part, President of the Joaan Bin Jassim Academy for Defence Brigadier General Dr Rajeh Mohammed bin Aqeel al-Nabit stated, "This memorandum is not merely an agreement but an extension of a successful and productive path of co-operation between both sides. This step continues what began in 2018, when the academy signed an agreement with the university to implement a Master's programme in defence studies, which helped prepare distinguished national cadres who combine academic knowledge with professional expertise in the defence field. Today, we build on that achievement to expand areas of co-operation and develop joint programmes that meet the State's strategic needs and to strengthen institutional integration in research, innovation, and capacity building. **(QNA)**

Arab women filmmakers underline DFI support for diverse narratives

Doha Film Festival (DFF), set to conclude today (November 28), hosted a thought-provoking panel titled, Reframing Cinema: Diversity in the Female Gaze, which explored the challenges and opportunities faced by women in film.

The talk also underscored Doha Film Institute's (DFI) commitment to uplifting powerful, varied narratives from script to screen. The panellists included Palestinian filmmaker Annemarie Jacir, Libyan-Syrian director Jihan, British-Palestinian filmmaker Farah Nabulsi, and Rawia AlHag from Sudan.

Nabulsi, whose 2020 short film *The Present* was nominated for an Academy Award, said: "DFI and Qumra enable women to participate in cinema, and this panel is proof. We're not just here as artists and women – we're the outcome of these initiatives that have supported us."

Annemarie Jacir, whose historical drama *Palestine 36* tackles a critical period of time, said: "I've found that the Arab film scene is much more equal and fairer than other regions globally. There is now financial support in the Arab world for Arab cinema. I spent six years to secure financing for my 2008 film, *Salt of this Sea*. Today, it's incredible."

Rawia AlHag, director of Khartoum, a documentary that follows five people in war-torn Sudan, shed light on the specific difficulties she encountered: "My experience wasn't easy at all because of societal limitations. But I felt we had a responsibility with this film – not only to be the voice of Sudanese women, men, or children. But Sudanese people"

Jihan, whose documentary *My Father and Qaddafi*, explores her own family's journey after the vanishing of her father, added: "There was a very conscious feminine force that I had. In the process of making the film, I went from passive to empowered. However, this film choice had nothing to do with being a woman. I wanted to honour my father, to tell his story, and I chose film as my medium to do it."



Participants in the panel titled 'Reframing Cinema: Diversity in the Female Gaze'.

QATAR

Qmic, Mowasalat launch mobility hub

Qatar Mobility Innovations Centre (Qmic) and Mowasalat have signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) launching the Future Mobility Collaboration Hub, a joint national initiative to strengthen co-operation in mobility innovation, smart city technologies, and digital transformation.

The signing took place during Mobile World Congress Doha, underscoring both organisations' commitment to advancing Qatar's leadership in future mobility on a global stage. The signing was represented by Dr Aiman Erbad, VP of Research and Graduate Studies at Qatar University, on behalf of Qmic, and Ahmed al-Muftah, deputy CEO of Mowasalat. This collaboration brings together two of Qatar's key mobility and technology stakeholders to accelerate the development of advanced, sustainable, and efficient transportation solutions. Through shared expertise, the Hub aims to support the country's transition toward intelligent mobility ecosystems that enhance service quality, operational efficiency, and user experience.

The initiative reflects a growing national focus on innovation-driven development. By aligning Qmic's capabilities in homegrown IoT, AI, and smart mobility platforms with Mowasalat's operational leadership in public transportation, the partnership will open new pathways for pioneering solutions that serve Qatar's evolving mobility needs.



Dr Mohammed Abdulaziz al-Sada, executive director of Qmic, emphasised the significance of this collaboration, stating: "This strategic partnership reflects our ongoing commitment to empowering national entities with advanced, and cutting-edge technologies developed in Qatar. By working closely with Mowasalat, we aim to co-create innovative mobility solutions that elevate service quality and strengthen Qatar's position as a regional leader in smart transportation."

Al-Muftah, added: "This collaboration marks a significant step towards realising our vision of becoming the region's leading technology enabler in mobility. By partnering with Qmic Innovation Lab, we are reinforcing our commitment to localising technology and developing future-ready talent. Combining Qmic's hands-on research capabilities with our in-house R&D and extensive operational experience in mobility creates a powerful platform to accelerate innovation and deliver impactful, locally engineered mobility solutions."

Transport minister meets Moroccan, Turkish counterparts



HE the Minister of Transport Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdullah bin Mohammed al-Thani met yesterday with Minister of Transport and Logistics of Morocco, Abdessamad Kayouh, and Minister of Transport and Infrastructure of Turkiye, Abdulkadir Oraloglu, separately, on the sidelines of the 34th session of the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) Assembly, held in London. During the meetings, the parties reviewed relations in the fields of transport and related logistics services and discussed ways to further expand and develop these areas. **(QNA)**



Ministry delegation visits Jordan for educational exchange



A delegation from the Ministry of Education and Higher Education conducted an official visit to Jordan to exchange expertise and learn from leading experiences in e-learning, vocational training, and programmes for people with disabilities.

The visit, led by the Director of Educational Services Center Management, Iman Ali al-Nuaimi, focused on studying Jordan's licensing system for e-learning platforms, including their establishment procedures and operational regulations. The delegation also reviewed training programmes offered through continuing education, mechanisms for accrediting professional programmes in private centres, and the practices of centres for people with disabilities.

The delegation met with the Director of Private Education at the Jordanian Ministry of Education to discuss licensing and monitoring procedures for educational platforms. This was followed by field visits to licensed platforms such as Asas and Go Academy to examine their operations and the educational content provided to students.

The delegation also visited the Vocational Training Corp under the Jordanian Ministry of Labour to review training programmes and beneficiary groups, as well as the Vocational and Technical Skills Development Authority and the Accreditation and Quality Authority for vocational training, where both sides discussed programme accreditation policies and quality assurance in training centres. Additionally, they visited Queen Rania Teacher Academy to review programmes for continuing education of staff, evaluation mechanisms for e-learning platforms, and opportunities to align these with Qatar's continuing education programmes to expand open educational platforms.

The programme concluded with visits to the Atlas Center for Autism and Capacity Development and the Higher Council for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (HCD) to review therapeutic and behavioural programmes, accreditation requirements for specialised centres, and ways to enhance their services.

This visit is part of the ministry's efforts to enhance the quality of education and training, develop academic support programmes and centres for people with disabilities, keep pace with global developments, and contribute to achieving Qatar National Vision 2030 by building an innovative, inclusive, and sustainable education system. **(QNA)**

Visit Qatar reveals 'Sealine Season' events for Jan 2026





Some of the artists expected to be featured during the events.

Visit Qatar is set to launch Sealine Season, an immersive desert experience running throughout the month of January 2026.

Sealine Season will showcase Qatar's desert landscapes as a standout winter destination, offering visitors from within Qatar and the GCC live cultural performances, local cuisine, recreational experiences, and family-friendly entertainment.

The season will feature a series of weekend concerts as part of Sealine Nights, which will be held at Sealine Circuit Sports Club (Mawater) celebrating traditional and regional performances, beginning with Moudi and Sultan Khalifa on January 16, a live concert by renowned musician Khalid Abdulrahman on January 23, and concluding with Samri Night on January 30.

Each evening is curated to offer audiences a memorable celebration of culturally rooted musical expressions set against a scenic desert backdrop. The concert nights will also feature fireworks displays, and a Monster Jam Show will take place on January 9-10.



The Sealine Circuit Sports Club (Mawater) venue will accommodate up to 6,000 visitors per night, with convenient parking and full accessibility. Doors open at 6.30pm, with the show commencing at 8pm. More information on the full line-up of Sealine Season activities is available at https://visitqatar.com/sealine

Ooredoo deploys Gemini Enterprise

Ooredoo Qatar has announced a company-wide deployment of Gemini Enterprise, becoming one of the first telecommunications operators in the EMEA region to adopt Google Cloud's agentic AI platform.

Ooredoo's teams will use Gemini Enterprise to help streamline workflows, gain deeper insights from data, and personalise customer interactions, a statement said. This initiative builds upon Ooredoo's existing collaboration with Google Cloud, leveraging their cutting-edge AI solutions to drive innovation and efficiency.

Ooredoo Qatar's marketing and creative teams will also benefit from the adoption of Google's models, including Veo, Imagen, and Gemini Flash Image. The use of these models will help Ooredoo Qatar's employees rapidly create high-quality marketing campaigns and content, significantly reducing time-to-market and production costs.

Sheikh Ali bin Jabor bin Mohammad al-Thani, CEO of Ooredoo Qatar, commented: "At Ooredoo, we see AI as a fundamental driver of our next phase of growth. Deploying Gemini Enterprise across our organisation will empower our teams with deeper insights, enhanced productivity, and new creative capabilities, transforming how we work and how we serve our customers. This collaboration with Google Cloud reflects our commitment to leading Qatar's digital evolution and supporting the ambitions of Qatar National Vision 2030."

QPC session hosts Al Jazeera's Sarah al-Rasheed on journalism challenges

By Tawfik Lamari
Staff Reporter

The Qatar Press Centre (QPC) hosted Qatari journalist and media personality Sarah al-Rasheed, a correspondent for Al Jazeera, during the 11th session of the "Press Cafe,' held under the title: "Journalism Between Facts and Risks".

Attended by a number of journalists, media professionals, and those interested in journalism, the session was moderated by media personality Amal Abdulmalik and reviewed the Press Cafe's vision of highlighting national media talent.

Correspondent Sarah al-Rasheed attributed her success to her parents, noting they encouraged her to study media and fostered her passion for the Arabic language. Her passion and love for media began in her childhood when her father, Dr Hassan Rasheed, a theatre critic, took her on a visit to Qatar Radio's studio. He also played a crucial role in shaping her ideas and helping her pursue her dream.

She emphasised that she had a passion for being in front of a microphone from a young age, a passion that continued until she finished high school and then studied media at Qatar University. After graduating, she worked as a producer and presenter on the "Police Are with You" programme on Qatar Radio.

Sarah pointed out that the media today is not as powerful as it once was. Newspapers and other media outlets were once the primary source of news, and their influence often led to changes in events and shaped public opinion, benefiting individuals and society.

She added that the nature of field work requires high speed in completing reports and transmitting news, and this pressure may sometimes affect the accuracy of details or the completeness of information. Hence the reason for striking a balance between speed and credibility.

Sarah, who reported on the heinous Israeli attack on Qatar, among other major events she has covered, told *Gulf Times* about working for Al Jazeera.

"As a Qatari woman who had to prove myself in a new domain, it was hard for my community to understand why I chose this kind of career, but I found myself in a field that I wanted for so long, and I wanted to change how people think about our role and how important media is.

"...And to inspire other people, either male or female, to join journalism, especially in the context of the crises that happened around Qatar or in it. I think that politically, people are more aware of where we are and the role of our country."



From left: Amal Abdulmalik and Sarah al-Rasheed.

As a Qatari correspondent who experienced firsthand the heinous Israeli attack on Doha, Sarah said: "I will not forget this attack, I do not want to remember that day. I was driving with my son when we heard the bombs; I was scared.

"I thought that we were not going to reach home, and it was the first time for Qatari people to feel unsafe in one of the safest countries in the world. I felt this is my job, this is where I need to say the truth.

"I was full of anger; I needed to let people know how bad the situation was. We needed to let the world know what happened in our country and how it affected us and that is the role of a correspondent. That day was more important than any other day for me; I had to understand the situation, report on it, and let people understand what happened," Sarah said.

Alfardan Auto announces arrival of BMW 7 Series Suhail Edition in Qatar

Alfardan Automobiles, the official importer of BMW Group vehicles in Qatar, announced the arrival of the exclusive BMW 7 Series Suhail Edition. Limited to just 50 examples worldwide, this remarkable edition makes its debut in Doha as a tribute to Arabian heritage and a reaffirmation of the brand's prestige in Qatar.

Ayman Berjawi, general manager at Alfardan Automobiles, said: "We are delighted to welcome the BMW 7 Series Suhail Edition to Qatar. This edition honours our Arabian cultural legacy while offering customers an exclusive expression of BMW Individual craftsmanship and personalisation. By offering limited edition and tailor-made models such as the Suhail Edition highlights our commitment to delivering unmatched luxury and distinction."



Each vehicle is crafted with personalised materials, handcrafted details, and bespoke finishes.



The BMW 7 Series Suhail Edition.

A symbol of distinction arrives in Qatar

Inspired by the Suhail star that has long been associated with brilliance, guidance, and the changing seasons in the Middle East – this exclusive edition blends cultural storytelling with BMW's advanced engineering. Its two-tone Night Blue Metallic and Oxide Grey Metallic exterior captures the edition's celestial inspiration, complemented by the iconic glowing kidney grille and crystal headlights. Inside, the Suhail motif is elegantly embroidered across key interior elements, paired with BMW Individual Merino Leather in Taupe Grey/Night Blue and refined wood accents. Subtle ambient lighting and the Sky Lounge panorama roof further enhance the cabin's sophisticated, star-inspired atmosphere.

Crafted through BMW Individual

The Suhail Edition is a showcase of what is possible through BMW Individual, where each vehicle is crafted with personalised materials, handcrafted details, and bespoke finishes. The arrival of the BMW 7 Series Suhail Edition reflects Alfardan Automobiles' ongoing commitment to expanding the range of exclusive BMW models available in Qatar, offering customers access to unique editions shaped by both innovation and craftsmanship.

MWC25 Doha reflects region's role in shaping future of communications, IT

QNA
Doha

HE the Minister of Communications and Information Technology Mohammed bin Ali al-Mannai *(pictured)* said the first edition of MWC25 Doha reflected the importance of the role that the region can play in shaping the future of communications and information technology by hosting this level of global expertise and companies in Doha.

In a statement to Qatar News Agency (QNA), HE al-Mannai explained that the conference demonstrated the ability of the region's economies to employ fifth-generation and beyond technologies, artificial intelligence, and smart digital solutions in practical applications that support growth and open up broad horizons for innovation and growth.

The Ministry of Communications and Information Technology affirmed its keenness to continue its partnership with GSMA, and to build on what has been achieved during this edition to launch new joint initiatives and enhance the region's presence in the global innovation system, and to support aspirations for a more advanced and sustainable digital future, HE the Minister said.

MWC25 Doha, held under the patronage of HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani, and organised by the GSMA Association in partnership with the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology, concluded its work after two days that witnessed a great surge in the level of participation and attendance.

Approximately 9,500 participants from more than 110 countries, including a notable percentage of executive leaders who constituted 20% of the total attendance, along with 41% of managers and decision-makers at the advanced sector level, attended the conference.

MWC25 Doha also saw significant presence from sectors related to communications and information technology, as their representatives constituted about 61% of the total participants, reflecting the growing international and regional interest in the region's role in the future of global communication.



Director-General of the GSMA Vivek Badrinath said that launching MWC in Doha at this pivotal moment gives the region a platform to show the scale of its digital ambition. Qatar's pavilion was one of the most prominent stops at the conference, showcasing 32 innovative digital projects presented by 17 government entities, reflecting the level of progress in digital transformation and smart services in the country.

Over two days, the pavilion witnessed a significant influx of ministerial delegations, policymakers, and international experts who explored national projects in smart cities, automated government services, digital identity, and artificial intelligence-based technologies. The pavilion also facilitated direct interaction between government entities and visitors, and provided a platform for meetings with global companies to foster collaboration opportunities.

The agenda included a wide range of panel discussions and dialogues in which nearly 300 international speakers and experts participated, discussing the latest developments in 5G networks, cloud technologies, artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, smart digital infrastructure, and strategies for developing digital skills for individuals and institutions.

The GSMA Ministerial Programme was one of the conference's main themes, attracting 60 official delegations from 49 countries and more than 10 international organisations, who discussed spectrum policies, digital infrastructure, digital inclusion and accelerating digital transformation through solutions focused on regional and international governmental co-operation.

The conference also witnessed the announcement of more than 30 partnerships, co-operation agreements and memoranda of understanding between government agencies, companies and technology entities, as part of efforts to enhance the innovation environment and open new paths for digital growth.

MWC25 Doha also witnessed significant media presence, including more than 180 journalists and international analysts, who followed the live coverage of the events and monitored the technical trends that were raised during the discussions, reflecting the growing global interest in the digital transformations taking place in the region.

The Ministry of Communications and Information Technology stated that with the conclusion of the inaugural edition of MWC25 Doha, Qatar is preparing to host the next four editions of the conference, reflecting the growing international confidence in the country's ability to promote the digital transformation agenda in the region.

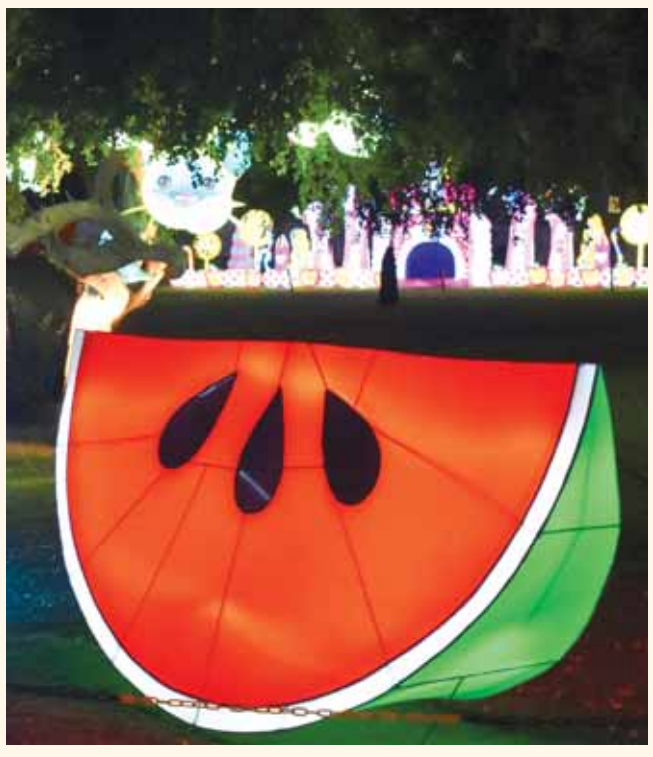
Over the coming years, the conference will continue to solidify Doha's position as a platform that brings together policymakers, industry leaders and global companies, and supports the advancement of innovation and advanced technologies in the Middle East and North Africa.

Qatar's first-ever Lantern Festival making waves



Al Bidda Park transformed into a luminous wonderland as Qatar's first-ever Lantern Festival opened its gates to the public yesterday. The event, organised by Safe Flight Solutions (SFS) in partnership with renowned Chinese artisan firm Haitian Culture, features more than 400 handcrafted lantern installations spread across a 55,000-sq m area. It will run until March 28, 2026. While lantern festivals are rooted in ancient rituals symbolising unity, peace, and the hope for brighter days, the organiser noted that this unique festival offers a distinct fusion of global tradition and local culture. Visitors can explore several immersive zones designed to spark the imagination, from the Legends of Light to the Glow Gardens and the Cultural Courtyard, offering a space for live performances, including music, dance, and storytelling. It also hosts family-friendly activities where children can enjoy the Family Fun Zone, equipped with inflatables and arcade games, among others. **PICTURES:** Thajudheen







Qatar attends Nato-ICI joint meeting in Brussels

QNA
Brussels

Qatar is in the final stages of establishing a regional Nato training centre in Doha and is preparing to sign the Individually Tailored Partnership Programs (ITPPs)

The State of Qatar took part in the joint meeting between the Nato Council and member states of the Istanbul Co-operation Initiative (ICI) in Brussels. Charge d'Affaires at Qatar's Mission to the European Union and Nato, Sara bint Ahmed al-Mohannadi, represented the country at the meeting. She said the meeting was held amid rapidly evolving security and geopolitical developments, underlining the need to strengthen joint efforts and build partnerships based on mutual respect.

Al-Mohannadi stressed that Doha is a trusted Nato partner in supporting regional and global security and stability. Since joining the ICI in 2005, Qatar has expanded its co-operation with Nato in three key areas: diplomacy, training, and operations.

The diplomat revealed that Qatar is in the final stages of establishing a regional Nato training centre in Doha and is preparing to sign the Individually Tailored Partnership Programs (ITPPs). She noted that Qatar is the only partner to have fully certified all units of its armed forces under Nato's Operational Capabilities Concept Evaluation and Feedback Program. Highlighting Qatar's mediation efforts, al-Mohannadi cited the signing of the Doha Framework Agreement in November 2025 between the Government of DR Congo and the Congo River Alliance (M23), as well as ongoing initiatives to reunite Ukrainian children.

She also emphasised shared opportunities between Qatar and Nato in maritime security, counter-terrorism, counter-extremism, and artificial intelligence, describing them as strategic priorities requiring co-ordinated action. Al-Mohannadi reaffirmed the strategic nature of Qatar's partnership with Nato and the country's commitment to further strengthening co-operation to support security and stability in the region and worldwide.

Nato Secretary-General Mark Rutte praised Qatar's pivotal role in mediation and conflict resolution, its active engagement on the international stage, as well as its strong partnership with the Nato, including hosting the bloc's training centre.

COMMUNITY

ASD annual choral festival showcases unity, celebration



The American School of Doha (ASD) hosted its fourth annual Sing Out Primary Choral Festival recently, bringing together young singers from schools across Qatar for a day of music, unity, and celebration.

This year's festival highlighted the power of collective singing as one voice and the joy that comes from making music together, a statement said. The festival showcased mass choir performances conducted and led by Brita Fray, featuring over 300 students from Doha English Speaking School, Al Khor International School, Park House English School, Dukhan English School, Qatar International School, GEMS Wellington School, and the American School of Doha.

Supporting them were ASD Lower and Upper Elementary music teachers Sanae Yamaura, Jennie Andreasen, and Lisa Cheung. Guided by their dedicated music educators, students filled the theatre with uplifting choral repertoire that reflected collaboration, harmony, unity, and shared purpose.

The event also featured an ensemble of guest musicians whose artistry elevated the performances and added vibrant energy to the festival.

The event was supported by ASD's administration comprising director Dr Victor Guthrie; Upper Elementary School principal Brian Donaldson; Upper Elementary associate principal Selina Peay-Collins; Lower Elementary principal Craig Campbell; Lower Elementary associate principal Abigail Kasky; and associate director of athletics and activities Trent Howell.

QU marks graduation of Empower Generations 14th cohort









Qatar University (QU) celebrated the graduation of the 14th cohort of the Empower Generations Consortium, a national initiative dedicated to investing in Qatari talent in the fields of life sciences, health sciences, and scientific research.

Established in support of Qatar National Vision 2030, the Consortium is a collaborative ecosystem led by QU, bringing together more than 13 partners from the health and education sectors, including the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MoEHE), the official sponsor; Qatar Precision Health Institute; Qatar Foundation; Hamad Medical Corporation (HMC); the Ministry of Public Health; the Primary Health Care Corporation (PHCC); Sidra Medicine; Gannas Qatari Society; the Qatar Falcon Genome Project; and the Veterinary Medicine Center, along with two international partners: Fractal Up Center for Artificial Intelligence Research and the Africa Research Project (ARP).

The ceremony was attended by Prof Asma al-Thani, vice-president for Medical Sciences and director of the Biomedical Research Center at QU, along with several university vice-presidents, deans of health and medical sciences colleges, and representatives from the MoEHE. In her remarks, Fatima al-Obaidli, assistant director at the MoEHE, praised QU's efforts and the Empowering Generations Consortium programmes for their role in enhancing students' skills and preparing them for the future.

The 14th cycle of the Consortium began in November 2025 and continued for two weeks of separate training programmes for male and female students. A total of 23 high schools and 150 Qatari students participated in three projects: Health, the Genomics and Precision Medicine Project, and Qatar Scientists of Biodiversity. The programme concluded with separate recognition ceremonies for the female and male participants.

During the ceremony, Dr Abdulla al-Yafei, president's executive assistant for administrative operations at QU, delivered a speech highlighting the success of the 14th cycle. He noted that the programme received 620 applications, of which 150 were selected to join the specialised training across various fields. He recalled that the Consortium was established in 2013 to support Qatar National Vision 2030 and comprises 13 partners across the health, research, and education sectors.

He added that the Consortium has significantly contributed to raising the number of Qatari students in the health and medical programmes at QU from 6% in 2013 to 43% in 2025. He also noted the Consortium 's achievements, including published research in peer-reviewed journals, documented effectiveness through comprehensive databases, and multiple international awards.

Dr al-Yafie reiterated QU's commitment to empowering students through comprehensive hands-on training environments and expressed gratitude to all partners for their continued support.

The event concluded with the presentation of honorary certificates to participating schools across Qatar and to the students, awarded by the MoEHE.

WCM-Q students launch science magazine



Students at Weill Cornell Medicine-Qatar (WCM-Q) have launched the college's very first student-led magazine.

The *Mawj Science* Magazine was founded to provide a voice for the student body, foster a spirit of enquiry and scientific interest among students, and share news of groundbreaking innovation in biomedical science and education, a statement said.

The inaugural edition of *Mawj*, which means 'wave' in Arabic, features dozens of articles written by WCM-Q students on a wide range of topics, including the mental health of medical professionals, paediatric epilepsy, how technological advances are redefining medical education, the link between gut-brain health and autism, student research projects investigating the effectiveness of traditional remedies, and accounts of student contributions to medical conferences, among other stories. The online magazine also features articles by WCM-Q faculty. Second-year medical student Ubaida al-Aani is the founder and editor-in-chief of *Mawj*. Student contributors Sama Ayoub, Noor Numan, Amani Benamor, Batoul Arabi, Sama al-Saffar, and Nisarga Natesha Kumuda penned articles for the launch edition. Faculty member Christine Gaskell, senior teaching specialist in pre-medical education and a PhD student, contributed an article on her research. Dr Javaid Sheikh, dean of WCM-Q, hoped that *Mawj* will be a great success and provide an extremely valuable platform for collaboration among the thriving community of student researchers, supporting their ambitions to pursue excellence in medicine by continuously advancing the boundaries of research in clinical care, biomedical research and medical education. *Mawj Science* Magazine can be read at https://mawjmagazine.org/

Indian expat forum holds literary festival



Indian community organisation Qatar Tamizhar Sangam (QTS), conducted the Dr APJ Abdul Kalam Memorial Literary Festival recently, inspiring young minds through an expanded line up of creative and literary competitions.

This year's edition was broadened to include drawing, essay writing, and poetry competitions, in addition to the traditional elocution event. More than 250 students from various Indian schools in Qatar participated across sub-junior, junior, and senior categories.

The organisers noted that the expanded range of competitions was aimed at fostering inclusivity and inspiring more students to participate — an initiative closely aligned with Dr Kalam's belief in nurturing curiosity, creativity, and confidence in children.

The prize distribution ceremony and a special poetry event had Embassy of India's deputy chief of mission Sandeep Kumar as the chief guest. Winners in each category were honoured with trophies and certificates, while all participants received certificates of appreciation. Adding an intellectual dimension to the event, a talk show on Sangam Literature was conducted, exploring its immense influence on ethics, life values, and contemporary culture. Scholars and speakers discussed how Sangam literary works continue to guide modern society with timeless wisdom on humanity, love, valour and moral conduct. The festival concluded with renewed inspiration for participants and attendees, echoing Dr APJ Abdul Kalam's guiding words: "Dream, dream, dream. Dreams transform into thoughts and thoughts result in action."

World Children's Day observed at QU's ECC



The Early Childhood Center (ECC) at Qatar University (QU)'s College of Education organised its annual festival in celebration of World Children's Day 2025 under the theme 'Reflections on the Child's Hundred Languages.'

The event brought together around 200 children from the ECC, as well as from public, private, and international kindergartens, parents and representatives from educational, cultural, and community organisations within the university and beyond.

The festival's theme reflects QU's mission as a beacon of thought and creativity rooted in an Arab–Islamic identity with a global horizon.

Inspired by global early childhood philosophies, the ECC adopted the concept of the 'Hundred Languages of Children' and translated it into practices that align with the rich cultural context of Qatar. This year's festival aimed to raise community awareness about the importance of encouraging children to express themselves through multiple forms of communication, nurturing their potential, strengthening community partnerships, and promoting values of diversity, respect, and teamwork.



The opening ceremony featured a performance of the Amiri Anthem by the Qatar Armed Forces Music Band, followed by remarks from Prof Diala Hamidi, director of the ECC, who highlighted the festival's purpose, theme, and objectives. The programme also included an educational video showcasing classroom practices inspired by the 'Hundred Languages' approach, in addition to a theatrical performance presented by the children of the ECC.

Prof Asma al-Attiyah, dean of the College of Education at QU, honoured the participating organisations that contributed a variety of interactive activities. These included a group parade led by the Armed Forces Music Band, followed by the distribution of children across multiple learning stations offering art, drama, gardening, physical activities, and hands-on scientific experiments designed to spark curiosity and enrich children's learning experiences.

This year's celebration reflects the ECC's commitment to providing a quality learning environment that nurtures children's diverse modes of expression and celebrates their individuality, in alignment with QU's vision of delivering impactful education and supporting sustainable community development, a statement added.

Hong Kong police arrest construction firm bosses over fire; death toll hits 83

Several residential high-rises engulfed in flames, firefighters battle to reach those feared trapped, police arrest three construction firm officials, renovation contractors held in manslaughter probe

Reuters
Hong Kong

Hong Kong police arrested the bosses of a construction company on suspicion of manslaughter yesterday over the city's worst fire in nearly 80 years, which killed at least 83 people with scores more listed as missing. By the early hours of Friday, firefighters had mostly contained the blaze raging for more than 24 hours, ripping through the Wang Fuk Court housing complex in the northern district of Tai Po. The estate had been undergoing renovations and was wrapped in bamboo scaffolding and green mesh.

Most of the victims were found in two high-rise blocks in the eight-tower complex, Deputy Director of Fire Services Derek Armstrong Chan said.

He said firefighters found residents who were alive in several of the buildings, but gave no further details. The *South China Morning Post* reported one survivor was found on the stairwell of one of the buildings.

Rescuers battled intense heat, thick smoke and collapsing scaffolding and debris as they fought to reach residents feared trapped on the upper floors of the complex.

"We expect the fire to be fully put out tonight," Chan said. "We'll continue to douse water to lower the temperatures," he added.

A distraught woman carrying her daughter's graduation photograph searched for her child outside a shelter, one of eight that authorities said are housing 900 residents.

"She and her father are still not out yet," said the 52-year-old, who gave only her surname, Ng, as she sobbed. "They didn't have water to save our building."

Police arrested two directors and an engineering consultant of Prestige Construction, a firm contracted to perform maintenance on the buildings. Police said those arrested were under suspicion of manslaughter for using unsafe materials. "We have reason to believe that the company's responsible parties were grossly negligent, which led to this accident and caused the fire to spread uncontrollably, resulting in major casualties," Police Superintendent Eileen Chung said. Prestige did not answer repeated calls for comment.

Police seized bidding documents, a list of employees, 14 computers and three mobile phones in a raid of the company's office, the government added.



A general view shows the aftermath of a major fire that swept through several apartment blocks at the Wang Fuk Court residential estate in Hong Kong's Tai Po district yesterday. *(AFP)*

WORST FIRE SINCE 1948

The confirmed death toll rose to 83 as of midnight in Hong Kong yesterday, Hong Kong's emergency responders said. That made it Hong Kong's deadliest fire since 1948, when 176 people were killed in a warehouse blaze.

The government said in the very early hours of yesterday that 279 people were listed as missing, but that figure has not been updated for 24 hours. In a telegram to Hong Kong's bishop, Cardinal Stephen Chow Sau-yan, Pope Leo sent "spiritual solidarity to all those suffering from the effects of this calamity, especially the injured and the families who grieve". Hong Kong's leader, John Lee, said the government would set up a HK$300mn ($39mn) fund to help residents while companies including automakers Xiaomi, Xpeng and Geely as well as the charity foundation of Alibaba's founder Jack Ma and Tencent announced donations.

On the second night after the blaze, dozens of evacuees set up mattresses in a nearby mall, with many saying official evacuation centres should be saved for those with greater need.

People – from elderly residents to schoolchildren – wrapped themselves in duvets and huddled in tents outside a McDonald's restaurant and convenience shops as a steady stream of volunteers handed out snacks and toiletries.

The eight blocks of the tightly-packed complex of 2,000 apartments were home to more than 4,600 people in the financial hub, which is struggling to overcome chronic shortages of affordable housing. Police also said they found foam material sealing windows on one unaffected building, installed in the year-long maintenance work. The city's development bureau has discussed gradually replacing bamboo scaffolding with metal scaffolding as a safety measure.

China's President Xi Jinping urged an "all-out effort" to extinguish the fire and minimise casualties and losses, state broadcaster CCTV said. The leadership of both the Hong Kong government and China's Communist Party moved quickly to show they attached utmost importance to a tragedy seen as a potential test of Beijing's grip on the semi-autonomous region.

Hong Kong's sky-high property prices have long been a trigger for discontent and the tragedy could stoke resentment towards authorities despite efforts to tighten political and national security control.

"27TH FLOOR, ROOM 1: HE IS DEAD"

An online app showed reports of missing persons submitted through a linked Google document that detailed residents of individual towers and rooms. It includes descriptions such as "Mother-in-law in her 70s, missing" or "one boy and one girl" or "Rooftop: 33-year-old male." One simply read: "27th floor, room 1: He is dead."

Reuters could not independently verify the information on the app. The fire has prompted comparisons to London's Grenfell Tower inferno, which killed 72 people in 2017. That fire was blamed on firms fitting the exterior with flammable cladding, as well as failings by the government and the construction industry.

Hong Kong, one of the world's most densely populated cities, is scattered with high-rise housing complexes. Tai Po, near the border with mainland China, is an established suburban district and home to about 300,000.

Occupied since 1983, the complex is under a government-subsidised home ownership scheme, according to property agency websites, a lifeline for the city's middle-income families.

Princess of Wales visits mental health charity



Catherine, Princess of Wales and patron of Anna Freud, plays with 13-month-old Amelia Baddeley (bottom left) from Reading during a visit to the children's mental health charity Anna Freud in north London yesterday. The Royal Foundation Centre for Early Childhood is launching a new project with Anna Freud to enhance the skills of health visitors to support early social and emotional development. (**AFP**)

Bangladesh ex-PM Hasina gets 21 years in jail for corruption

A court in Bangladesh sentenced ousted prime minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday to 21 years in prison for corruption, a week after she was given the death penalty for crimes against humanity.

Hasina, 78, is currently residing in India and has defied court orders that she return to Bangladesh.

She was sentenced in absentia on November 17 to be hanged for crimes against humanity after ordering a deadly crackdown against a student-led uprising last year that eventually ousted her.

But three other cases had been brought against the ex-leader by the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) over land grabs of lucrative plots in a suburb of the capital Dhaka. Hasina's conduct "demonstrates a persistent corruption mindset rooted in entitlement, unchecked power, and a greedy eye for public property", ruled judge Abdullah Al Mamun.

"Treating public land as a private asset, she directed her greedy eye toward state resources and manipulated official procedures to benefit herself and her close relatives."

Hasina's US-based son Sajeeb Wazed and daughter Saima Wazed, who has served as a top UN official, were sentenced to five years each.

Hasina fled Bangladesh by helicopter on August 5, 2024, after weeks of student-led protests against her autocratic rule.

Public prosecutor Khan Moinul Hasan said he would appeal the verdict in the corruption cases.

"We are not satisfied with the verdict, as we had sought maximum punishment," he told AFP.

"We will consult our client, the Anti-Corruption Commission, and decide on the next course of action." he added. (**AFP**)

UK's Farage under pressure over teenage racism allegations

AFP
London

Hard-right British lawmaker Nigel Farage faced growing scrutiny yesterday over allegations he made racist and antisemitic comments while a youngster at an elite English school.

The leader of the anti-immigrant Reform UK party, currently tipped by polls to become Britain's next prime minister, has offered different defences to the claims since they resurfaced last week.

He noted Wednesday that a former pupil who said Farage had verbally abused him had "different political views to me", but added that he was "genuinely sorry" if the man felt "hurt".

Film director Peter Ettedgui, who is Jewish, told *The Guardian* newspaper that Farage engaged in offensive behaviour while a pupil at Dulwich College, a private school in south London, in the 1970s.

He said the future politician would "sidle up to me and growl: 'Hitler was right,' or 'gas them,' sometimes adding a long hiss to simulate the sound of the gas showers".

Playground 'banter'

Brexit champion Farage, 61, told reporters Wednesday that he "never, ever, ever would have said or done anything like that directly to a human being".

He was less categorical during an interview with broadcasters on Monday when he was repeatedly asked whether he could rule out having engaged in racial abuse.



Nigel Farage

"I would never, ever do it in a hurtful or insulting way," he replied, later adding that if he had, it was "not with intent".

The Eurosceptic also said he might have been responsible for some "banter in a playground" that could be interpreted in "the modern light of day in some sort of way".

Reform then released a statement Tuesday in which Farage said: "I can tell you categorically that I did not say the things that have been published in the *Guardian* aged 13, nearly 50 years ago."

Ettedgui, a Bafta and Emmy-award winning director, has told the BBC that Farage was being "fundamentally dishonest" by suggesting school contemporaries were not telling the truth.

The Guardian said its report, first published last week, was based on allegations from more than a dozen former pupils.

One classmate claimed that Farage sang a racist song and performed the Nazi "Sieg Heil" salute. Another alleged that as a prefect, the future politician put a child in detention because of his skin colour.

Some of the claims have been reported previously, including more than a decade ago by veteran political reporter Michael Crick.

Reform won its first MPs at last year's general election and has since soared to double-digit leads in opinion polls over Prime Minister Keir Starmer's Labour party.

Former MEP Farage was elected to the UK parliament at his eighth attempt. His elevation to political frontrunner means more scrutiny.

"He's always been a figure who's free to roam the margins," Robert Ford, politics professor at Manchester University, told AFP.

"This is a different ball game, as I think they're discovering."

Ford said he thought the teenage racism allegations were likely "reinforcing" the country's polarising views of Farage rather than prompting people to change their minds.

The recent sentencing to more than 10 years in prison of Reform's former leader in Wales, Nathan Gill, could be more damaging, he added. Gill admitted having been paid around £40,000 ($53,000) to make pro-Russian statements in the European Parliament.

"People who like Farage tend to be strong nationalists," said Ford.

"They tend to be very much on the Ukraine side, and they tend to be very anti-Putin."

Starmer has said the racism allegations against Farage showed Reform's "true colours". He also accused the party of being "riddled with pro-Putin propaganda".

India approves $800mn plan to boost rare earth magnet production

AFP
Mumbai

India has approved a more than $800mn plan to boost production of rare earth magnets in an effort to secure supplies and cut its dependence on imports from countries like China.

Rare earth permanent magnets (REPMs), some of the strongest types of permanent magnets, made from alloys of rare earth elements, are used in many critical sectors, including electric vehicles, aerospace and renewable energy.

New Delhi currently meets its demand primarily through imports, with the government estimating that the country's needs could double by 2030.

India's cabinet approved on Tuesday a 72.8bn rupee ($815.3mn) scheme to promote the production of REPMs, which the government said will help secure the "supply chain for domestic industries".

The plan involves offering sales-linked incentives and subsidies to help establish a manufacturing capacity of around 6,000 metric tonnes per year.

"This first-of-its-kind initiative aims to establish 6,000 MTPA (metric tonnes per annum) of integrated REPM manufacturing in India, thereby enhancing self-reliance and positioning India as a key player in the global REPM market," the government said in a statement.

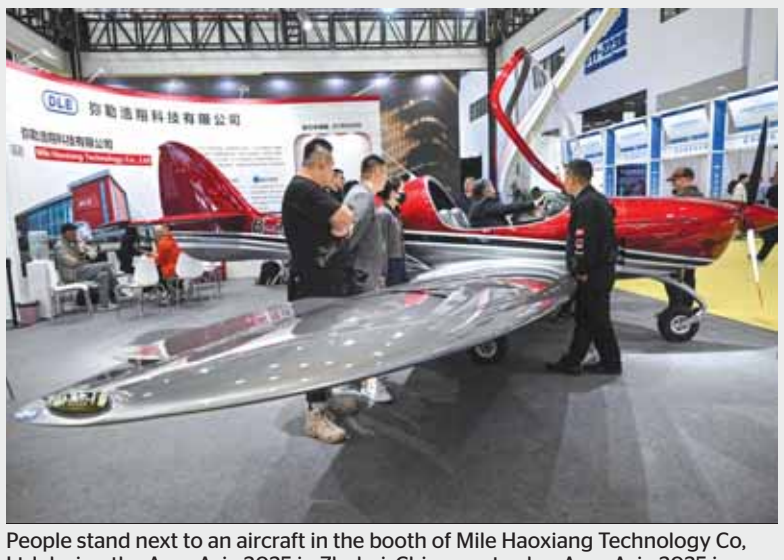
Local industry groups welcomed the move, with the Automotive Component Manufacturers Association of India (ACMA) saying it will provide long-term resilience to the automotive supply chain.

It will encourage investments in advanced materials and give India a strong position in global value chains for EVs and clean energy, Vikrampati Singhania, ACMA president, said in a statement.

"This is a strategic and forward-looking intervention that addresses one of the most critical gaps in the EV and advanced mobility ecosystem," he said.

While India sources rare earth magnets from multiple countries, China's export curbs earlier this year raised alarm among some Indian firms.

Aero Asia 2025



People stand next to an aircraft in the booth of Mile Haoxiang Technology Co, Ltd during the Aero Asia 2025 in Zhuhai, China, yesterday. Aero Asia 2025 is an international aviation and aerospace exhibition that runs between November 27 and 30. (**AFP**)

WORLD

Putin says US-Ukraine text could form basis for future peace deal

Moscow could sign pledge not to attack Europe: President

Reuters
Bishkek

President Vladimir Putin said yesterday that the outlines of a draft peace plan discussed by the United States and Ukraine could become the basis of future deals to end the war in Ukraine, but that if not Russia would fight on.

Diplomatic efforts to defuse Europe's deadliest and most devastating conflict since World War Two have been stepped up in recent weeks, with various peace plans emerging from different sides, including the United States and Europe.

"In general, we agree that this can be the basis for future agreements," Putin told a news conference in Kyrgyzstan, adding that the variant of the plan discussed by Washington and Kyiv in Geneva had been passed to Moscow.

US and Ukrainian negotiators held talks on the latest US-backed peace plan in Geneva on Sunday.

Putin said the United States was taking into account Russia's position, but that some things still needed to be discussed. If Europe wanted a pledge from Russia not to attack it, then Russia was willing to give such a pledge, he said.

Russia, Putin noted, was being told that it should cease the fighting but needed Kyiv's forces to pull back before it could do so.

"Ukrainian troops must withdraw from the territories they hold, and then the fighting will cease. If they don't leave, then we shall achieve this by armed means. That's it," Putin said.

Russian forces were advancing in Ukraine at a faster pace now, he added.

With another winter approaching in the nearly four-year war, Russian forces control almost one-fifth of Ukraine — in its east and south — and are pushing forward while bombarding Ukrainian energy infrastructure.

Putin said he considered the Ukrainian leadership to be illegitimate and so it was legally impossible to sign a deal with Kyiv.

It was therefore important, he said, to ensure that any agreement was recognised by the international community — and that the international community recognised Russian gains in Ukraine.

"Therefore, broadly speaking, of course, we ultimately want to reach an agreement with Ukraine. But right now, this is practically impossible. Impossible legally," Putin said.

He said that the Crimean peninsula, which Russia seized from Ukraine and annexed in 2014, and Ukraine's eastern Donbas region should be a topic for discussions with Washington.

Donald Trump's special envoy Steve Witkoff plans to visit Moscow next week.

Commenting on the leak of a recording of a call between top advisers to Trump and Putin, the Kremlin chief rejected the suggestion that Witkoff had shown himself to be biased towards Moscow in peace talks over Ukraine, describing it as nonsense.

Bloomberg News published the transcript of an October 14 telephone call in which Witkoff advised Putin's foreign policy aide Yuri Ushakov on how to pitch a Ukraine peace plan to Trump.



Russian President Vladimir Putin meets with the Russian media in Bishkek yesterday. (**AFP**)

France to restore voluntary military service: Macron

AFP
Varces-Allières-et-Risset

France will introduce a voluntary military service of 10 months beginning next year, President Emmanuel Macron said yesterday, in the face of what it views as a growing threat posed by Russia.

Almost three decades after France scrapped conscription, the head of state said young adults who wished to could sign up for a 10-month military service.

"A new national service will be introduced, gradually starting next summer," he said during a speech to troops in Varces-Allieres-et-Risset in southeastern France.

But he said volunteers, mostly aged 18 to 19, would be deployed "only on national soil".

The announcement comes more than three and a half years into Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, with Macron and other French officials warning that Moscow risks not stopping at Ukraine's borders.

"In the event of a major crisis, parliament may authorise calling upon individuals beyond just volunteers," Macron added, and military "service would become mandatory".

"But aside from this exceptional case, this national service is a service of volunteers then selected to meet the needs of our armed forces."

France's top general, armed forces chief of staff Fabien Mandon, sparked uproar at home last week by warning that France must be ready "to lose its children", adding that Russia is "preparing for a confrontation by 2030 with our countries".

He said it was inspired by fellow European countries.

"At a time when all our European allies are making progress in the face of a threat that affects us all, France cannot remain idle," he said.

The new scheme would include 3,000 volunteers from the summer next year, then increase gradually so as to incorporate 10,000 young people into the army by 2030 and 50,000 by 2035, Macron said.

The large majority would be men and women aged 18 and 19, while the rest would be aged up to 25 and would have specific qualifications.

While around a dozen states have some form of conscription, the use of military service is uneven across Europe.

But France joins European countries such as Baltic states Latvia and Lithuania which have brought it back in recent years, while others such as Denmark have toughened its terms.

There is so far no suggestion that the military service in France would be compulsory, as it was before then-president Jacques Chirac abolished conscription in 1997 as part of the reform of the army.

Military service is seen as a way of bolstering armies with recruits, but also of providing a large pool of potential reservists, who could be called up in the case of a future war.

The French armed forces have approximately 200,000 active military personnel and 47,000 reservists, numbers expected to increase to 210,000 and 80,000 respectively by 2030.

Khan's party seeks prison visit over health concerns

The party of Pakistan's jailed former prime minister Imran Khan demanded a meeting with him yesterday, saying it was worried about his health as he has been barred from seeing his family and lawyers for over three weeks.

Khan has been in jail since August 2023, serving a 14-year sentence on corruption charges, one of dozens of cases he says were made up in order for the army to keep him out of politics, a charge the military denies.

Zulfikar Bukhari, spokesperson of Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party, said no-one has seen Khan since November 4, and no reason had been given for not granting a meeting.

Khan is being denied visits and medical support despite his status of a former prime minister.

"His health is our concern. We are worried about his illegal isolation," Bukhari told Reuters, demanding the government give Khan's family immediate access to him.

Khan's family and party members have protested outside the jail in the garrison city of Rawalpindi in recent days demanding a meeting.

A delegation from the party visited the prison to see Khan yesterday, but authorities again denied access, Bukhari said.

Prison rules allow Khan to meet outsiders at least once a week, although prison authorities can suspend such access. There have been long gaps spanning weeks when Khan was not allowed to meet outsiders, the party said. Local media reported that the 73-year-old former international cricketer might be moved to a high-security prison to make meeting him more challenging.



SPOTLIGHT: Former prime minister Imran Khan.

Khan's status has become a talking point on social media and #WHEREISIMRANKHAN was trending on X yesterday.

Pakistan's interior ministry did not respond to a request for comment. A jail official told Reuters that the former premier was in good health, and that he was not aware of any plans to move him to any other facility.

He spoke on the condition of anonymity as he is not authorised to speak to the media.

Khan, elected as prime minister in 2018, was ousted in 2022 through a controversial vote in parliament after he fell out with military generals, who play a significant role in making or breaking governments.

His arrest in May 2023 sparked protests against the military nationwide, leading to a crackdown on the party.

The party emerged as the single biggest in the 2024 election, but says that rigging robbed it of more seats to help other parties form a coalition government under Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif.

Spain PM's ex-ally arrested in graft probe

Spain's Supreme Court yesterday ordered a former close ally of Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez into custody in a corruption investigation that has threatened to topple the leftist government.

The probe into Jose Luis Abalos, a former transport minister and Socialist party heavyweight who helped propel Sanchez to power in 2018, is one of several corruption affairs rattling his fragile minority coalition.

Abalos, his ex-adviser Koldo Garcia and another former senior Socialist figure, Santos Cerdan, are suspected of pocketing kickbacks for the awarding of public contracts for sanitary equipment during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Abalos and Garcia will be remanded in custody without bail on suspicion of bribery, influence peddling, embezzlement and for an "extreme" flight risk, the Supreme Court said in a statement. "Numerous rational indications of criminality exist against both," and the measures ordered against them came "combined with a foreseeably imminent trial", the court added.

Terror investigation into National Guardsmen's shooting in Washington

Trump orders halt to Afghan immigration processing over gunman's nationality

AFP
Washington

The FBI said yesterday it had launched an international terrorism investigation after a gunman — identified as an Afghan national who served with US troops in Afghanistan — shot and critically injured two National Guard soldiers near the White House in Washington.

The shooting, which officials described as an unprovoked, "ambush-style" attack, cast a grim shadow over the Thanksgiving holiday and triggered a hardline, anti-immigrant response from President Donald Trump and some of his top law enforcement officials.

In a brief video statement in which he called the shooting an "act of evil," Trump painted immigrants as an existential threat to national security and his administration ordered an immediate halt to the processing of immigration applications from Afghanistan.

"We must take all necessary measures to ensure the removal of any alien from any country who does not belong here, or add benefit to our country. If they can't love our country, we don't want them," the president said.

The US attorney for Washington DC, Jeanine Pirro, said the suspected assailant — identified as Rahmanullah Lakanwal, 29 — had been living in the western state of Washington and had driven across the country to the nation's capital.

In what she called a "brazen and targeted" attack, Pirro said the gunman opened fire with a .357 Smith and Wesson revolver on a group of guardsmen on patrol Wednesday just a few blocks shy of the White House.

"One guardsman is struck, goes down, and then the shooter leans over and strikes the guardsman again. Another guardsman is struck several times," Pirro said.



National Guard members stand together behind yellow tape after two National Guard members were shot near the White House in Washington, DC, US, yesterday.(**Reuters**)



SUSPECT: Rahmanullah Lakanwal.

Both soldiers remained in critical condition yesterday, while the suspected shooter was in detention in hospital. He was charged with three counts of assault with intent to kill — charges that Pirro said would immediately be upgraded to first-degree murder if one of the guardsmen died.

Officials said they still had no clear understanding of the motive behind the shooting.

CIA director John Ratcliffe said the suspect had been part of a CIA-backed "partner force" fighting the Taliban in Afghanistan, and had been brought to the United States as part of a programme to evacuate Afghans who had worked with the agency.

FBI director Kash Patel told reporters yesterday that officials were investigating any associates the suspect had either back home or in the United States.

"That is what a broad-based international terrorism investigation looks like," Patel said, without elaborating on what the precise terrorism motive might be.

The incident brings together three politically explosive issues: Trump's controversial use of the military at home, immigration, and the legacy of the US war in Afghanistan.

Trump has deployed troops to several cities, all run by Democrats, including Washington, Los Angeles and Memphis. The move has prompted multiple lawsuits and allegations of authoritarian overreach by the White House.

In the wake of Wednesday's shooting, Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth announced 500 more troops would deploy to Washington, bringing the total to 2,500.

Two break out of French jail in 'old-fashioned' bed sheets escape

Two prisoners escaped from a French jail using bed sheets after sawing through the bars of their cell, a prosecutor said yesterday.

France has some of the worst prison overcrowding in Europe, and staff unions have complained the state is neglecting normal jails as it moves narco criminals into new supermax prisons.

Guards noticed that the two men had escaped from the jail in the eastern city of Dijon shortly before dawn, the prisons authority said.

The pair "seem to have sawn through bars" and "fled using bed sheets", Dijon prosecutor Olivier Caracotch said, without providing further details on how exactly they used the bedding.

The fugitives are a 19-year-old man held in pre-trial detention since October 2024 for attempted murder, and a 32-year-old man incarcerated since 2023 over threats and violence against a partner, Caracotch said.

Union official Ahmed Saih, who represents prison officers at the jail, said the inmates used "old-fashioned, manual saw blades".

"We've been warning about the risk of a jail break for months," Saih said, noting earlier reports of saw blades found inside the prison.

He called for more staff and better equipment, including "gratings that cannot be sawn through".

Dijon prison, built in 1853, is in poor condition, with 311 inmates for 180 places, according to the justice ministry.

"Prison is very hard here," an inmate released yesterday after eight months, told AFP.

"There were three of us in a cell: two on bunk beds and one sleeping on the floor," he said outside the prison gates.

The prison break comes less than two weeks after another escape in the northwestern city of Rennes.

A 37-year-old convict, who had more than a year still to serve for theft, fled on November 14 during an outing with fellow prisoners to the city's planetarium.

He was arrested yesterday in a traveller community camp in the nearby city of Nantes, sources close to the case told AFP, requesting to remain unnamed as unauthorised to speak to the media.



This photograph taken in Dijon, eastern France, yesterday shows the entrance of the Dijon Prison. (**AFP**)

Justice Minister Gerald Darmanin sacked the prison's director.

Three prison directors' unions on Wednesday lashed out at the tough-talking right-wing minister, who is pushing through a plan to lock up the most dangerous drug traffickers in supermax prisons.

They accused him of "devoting all the resources of a debt-ridden state" to the high-security prisons for those accused of drug trafficking and jihadist attacks, and neglecting the "vast majority" of other jails.

"While the justice minister parades around in overfunded facilities, other (prison) services are suffering," they said in a joint statement. Darmanin last week announced the Dijon facility was scheduled to receive €6.3mn ($7.3mn), as part of a programme to eliminate mobile phones from six French prisons.

France has some of the worst prison overcrowding in Europe, ranking third worst after Slovenia and Cyprus, according to a Council of Europe report published in July.

In early October, the national average was 135 inmates per 100 places available.

In comparison, the rate in Dijon is almost 173 inmates for 100 beds.

Notorious French drug baron Mohamed Amra, known as "The Fly", was transferred to a new supermax prison in northern France in July.

Amra made international headlines when he escaped in May 2024 when the prison van he was being transported in was ambushed by gunmen and two prison guards were killed.

He was caught in Romania and extradited to France after a months-long manhunt.

Attire and adornment

Allah Says what means: "O children of Adam! We have bestowed upon you clothing to conceal your private parts and as adornment. But the clothing of righteousness — that is best. That is from the signs of Allah that perhaps they will remember." [Qur'an 7: 26]

One of the visible favours of Allah upon His slaves is that He has created for them different materials by which they can conceal their private parts.

Allah also Says what means: "So We said: 'O Adam! Indeed this (Satan) is an enemy to you and to your wife. Then let him not remove you from Paradise so you would suffer. Indeed, it is [promised] for you not to be hungry therein or be unclothed." [Qur'an 20: 117-118]

Hunger is internal humiliation whilst nakedness is external humiliation, but neither of these two exists in Paradise. The dwellers of Paradise enjoy wearing different garments one on top of the other. Allah Says what means: "And when you look there [in Paradise], you will see pleasure and great dominion. Upon them [i.e., the inhabitants] will be green garments of fine silk and heavy silk…" [Qur'an 76: 20-21]

Thus, clothing is a blessing from Allah that He has bestowed upon us, as Allah Says [what means]: "O children of Adam! We have bestowed upon you clothing to conceal your private parts…" [Qur'an 7: 26]

Concealing one's private parts is mandatory, but this is not all; rather, Allah has, in addition, bestowed upon us adornment. Following this adornment is the inner adornment, which is the spiritual one, as Allah Says [what means]: "But the clothing of righteousness — that is best. That is from the signs of Allah that perhaps they will remember." [Qur'an 7:26]

If the clothing of piety is lost then one's faults are exposed; and if the clothing of the body is gone, then his private parts become exposed, which results in great trials, leaving Satan to open an arena in which to lure mankind. This is why Allah Says [what means]: "So We said: 'O Adam! Indeed this is an enemy to you and to your wife. Then let him not remove you from Paradise so you would suffer. Indeed, it is [promised] for you not to be hungry therein or be unclothed." [Qur'an 20: 117-118]

Unclothing is a plot of Satan, and the first sin that was ever committed resulted in unclothing, as Allah Says what means: "O children of Adam! Let not Satan tempt you as he removed your parents from Paradise, stripping them of their clothing (i.e., the garments of Paradise) to show them their private parts…" [Qur'an 7: 27]

Satan initiated his war against the children of Adam by trying to entice them to expose their private parts, and this battle continued until it has reached its peak in our time when people have actually exposed their private parts and there are nude clubs, nude beaches, and channels on satellite television for nudity, fornication and "summer fashions", which is practical nudity. All these things, which the sinners among the children of Adam thought up with the help of Satan, are vividly shown on TV screens.

Moreover, there are so many magazines and internet websites that feature nudity that it has become something that many feel no shame in publishing or viewing, because the plot of Satan is to corrupt mankind by exposing people's private parts.

This is why Allah warns us by Saying [what means]: "O children of Adam! Let not Satan tempt you…" [Qur'an 7: 27] Satan does this by all means possible: movies, magazines, fashion shows, beauty contests, scanty clothing that women wear to weddings, satellite television channels, and so on. Immorality has become readily available and people are constantly exposed to it.

Imam At-Tabari, may Allah have mercy upon him, stated when commenting on this verse: "It means: Let not Satan deceive you into obeying him and therefore exposing your private parts to others, thus depriving yourselves from entering Paradise, which is exactly what resulted in your father (i.e. Adam) being expelled from Paradise."

This is a very dangerous issue because it could result in one being deprived of entering Paradise, and this is why Islam mandates concealing one's private parts and defines the 'Awrah (i.e., the parts of the body that one is Islamically obliged to cover) and how to cover it. The 'Awrah is defined precisely and in detail for people of all ages and every phase: for infants up to two years of age, then for childhood, and then for the phase that lasts up to and beyond puberty.

Islam obligates clothing because nakedness is a dispraised matter. A man once entered into the presence of the Prophet, *sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam* (may Allah exalt his mention), while wearing improper clothing, so he, *sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam*, asked: "Do you have money?" The man replied: "Yes, from all means. Allah has granted me camels, sheep, horses and slaves." Thereupon, the Prophet, *sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam*, said to him: "Then let the favour and blessings of Allah be apparent on you." Imam Ibn Hajar, may Allah have mercy upon him, commented on this narration stating: "This means: wear the clothing that suits the level of bounties of Allah upon you, and which is clean and pleasant, so that needy people would recognise a person's status and know to ask from him charity. However, in order to judge this issue in light of all relevant texts, one must be moderate in this regard and not extravagant."



This is how real scholars are: they judge an issue in light of all the relevant texts related to it, and do not focus on an isolated piece of evidence. This is an advice to all students of knowledge who seek the truth, this is how you should be, too - never take one text in isolation when there are other texts related to the issue that you are judging, so that you can have a complete picture before making your final judgment.

An example to illustrate this is if one states that the Prophet, *sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam*, said: "Indeed Allah is Jameel (which implies beauty) and He loves beauty" and therefore concludes that it is permissible for the woman to expose her beauty, since beauty is something that Allah loves. We ask such a person: Are you aware of the other texts that specifically prohibit the woman to expose here beauty in front of marriageable men and the texts that command her to adhere to Hijab (i.e. Muslim woman's outfit in Islam)?

Some scholars who were wealthy would wear the best clothing that they possessed during seasons such as Ramadan so that the poor could recognise them and ask them for charity, but as soon as these seasons were over they would wear modest clothing as a sign of their humility and knowledge of the narration that they were well aware of, which is that of Mu`ath, may Allah be pleased with him, who reported that the Messenger of Allah, *sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam*, said: "Whoever voluntarily forsakes wearing elegant and expensive garments out of humbleness, Allah will call him on the Day of Resurrection and give him, in front of all (His) creation, the choice to wear whichever garment of Belief he wishes." [At-Tirmithi]

The clothing of the Messenger of Allah, *sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam*, was whatever he could find; he would wear wool at times and cotton at others - according to what was available for him at the time and without any extravagance; he, *sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam*, would always thereby be acting in accordance with the commands of Allah. One can eat, wear or drink anything (that is lawful) as long as it is without extravagance or boasting. Men may not wear silk because there is a specific text that prohibits silk for men.

A Muslim is encouraged to adorn himself when going to the mosque. The Messenger of Allah, *sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam*, said: "Whoever performs Ghusl (i.e., a ritual bath) on Friday, wears from the best of his clothing, goes to the Mosque, does not step over people's heads (in trying to reach the front rows) and does not talk whilst the Imam is talking; this will be an expiation for his previous sins."

He, *sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam*, also said: "Whoever performs Ghusl on Friday, wears from the best of his clothing, perfumes himself if he has any, goes to the Mosque, does not step over people's heads (when trying to reach the front rows), then prays whatever Allah decreed for him to pray, and does not talk from the time the Imam starts talking until he finishes, this will be an expiation for his sins between that Friday and the next."

In this regard Allah Says [what means]: "O Children of Adam! Take your adornment [i.e., wear your clothing] at every Masjid…" [Qur'an 7: 31]

Nowadays, people go to parties wearing their very best clothing, but if they go to pray in the mosque, they wear the clothes that they sleep in, or their most inferior clothing.

What type of clothes do stores sell for men nowadays? They sell clothes that are outrageous and reflect a total lack of manhood, and which contradict basic moral values. These are clothes that are absolutely unfit for men to wear, like tight trousers which form the parts, or jeans with advertisements of intoxicants, or clothes that contain images of actors, actresses, dancers and singers. Some of these clothes are in shocking colours, or are so baggy that they look ridiculous.

When some people see a person having his garment fall no lower than the level of his mid-shin, as per the instructions in the *Sunnah*, they accuse him of being backward and an extremist, but at the same time, they themselves may wear Bermuda shorts, which are no longer than the clothing they mock. It seems that just because the latter was designed by the non-Muslims, it is the only acceptable type of clothing.

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

islamweb.net English

Free your heart from spite

When people went to visit Abu Dujaanah, may Allah be pleased with him, in his death sickness, they saw him happy and his face radiant; they asked him about the reason, to which he may Allah be pleased with him replied: "I have two qualities I possessed in my life; one is that I never interfered in that which did not concern me, and the second is that I always had a pure heart, free from spite towards my fellow Muslims".

Imaam Ibn Taymiyyah, may Allah mercy upon him, was another great example in this matter. Some people of knowledge of his time who envied him, spoke ill of him to the Caliph who commanded him to be imprisoned; yet while he was in prison he, may Allah mercy upon him, sent a letter to his students saying: "You know very well that I do not like to see anyone from the common Muslims getting hurt because of me, let alone the people of knowledge. People are three types: one who strives to do what is correct but fails, and such will be rewarded for striving to do what is right and will be pardoned for failing as he tried; another is one who strives to do what is correct and succeeds, and such will be rewarded twice, once for striving to do what is right and another for achieving such a goal; the third type is a person who is a sinner, and we ask Allah to forgive him. I will not forgive any of you if you start talking about anyone who was the cause of my imprisonment".

Not only that, but Allah Willed that Sultan An-Naasir, may Allah have mercy upon him, became the Caliph and wanted to take revenge from the people who were the cause of his imprisonment, but Imaam Ibn Taymiyyah, may Allah mercy upon him, refused and continued to talk to the Caliph and admonish him about the quality of forgiveness and tolerance, until he changed his mind and let them go unharmed.

Jaabir, may Allah be pleased with him, said: "I heard the Messenger of Allah, *sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam*, saying: "The devil has despaired of being worshipped by those who engage in prayer in the Arabian Peninsula but (has not lost hope) in creating dissension among them." [Muslim]

This was a statement made by the Messenger of Allah while addressing his Companions. Satan strives very hard to instill spite in the hearts of the believers towards one another, hence, we must avoid anything that could be the means or cause of enmity or spite. We must know that Satan is the source of spite and envy.

Moreover, spite, dispute and envy are the reasons for one's good deeds being rejected: Abu Hurairah, may Allah be pleased with him, narrated that the Messenger of Allah, *sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam*, said: "People's deeds are presented before Allah on Mondays and Thursdays, and then every slave (of Allah) is granted forgiveness (of minor sins) if he does not associate anything with Allah in worship. But the person in whose heart there is rancour against his brother, will not be pardoned. With regard to them, it is said twice: 'Hold these two until they are reconciled.' 'Hold these two until they are reconciled.'" [Muslim] In fact, this was the reason why the exact night on which the night of *Al-Qadr* falls was not disclosed to the people.



The matter is even graver than this, as indicated in the following narration. Abu Hurairah, may Allah be pleased with him, said that the Messenger of Allah, *sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam*, said: "It is not lawful for a Muslim to forsake his (Muslim) brother beyond three days; and whosoever does so for more than three days, and then dies, will certainly enter the Hell." [Abu Daawood] We ask Allah to purify our hearts from spite and grudges.

One of the main things that leads to having a spiteful heart is backbiting and tale bearing. These two evil qualities often result in hatred and severing of ties amongst people. Therefore, a Muslim must control his tongue and not allow himself to talk about others, backbite or slander them.

Some people refrain from eating certain types of meat before ascertaining their permissibility, yet they have no problems eating the flesh of their fellow Muslim; Allah Says (what means): "And do not backbite each other. Would one of you like to eat the flesh of his dead brother? You would detest it" [Qur'an 49: 12]

Another matter that results in spite is disputes and arguments, thus people must beware of this bad quality. People can hold different opinions but do not have to become enemies due to this. Yoosuf As-Sadafi, may Allah have mercy upon him, said: "I never saw anyone wiser than Imaam Ash-Shaafi'ee. I argued with him once about a matter but we could not come to an agreement, so when he saw me later, he took hold of my hand and said: 'O Abu Moosaa! Can't we disagree and remain brothers?'" Prejudice and partiality – whether to one's opinion, a group or a person – also lead to spite creeping into the heart.

Competing over worldly matters results in spite in most cases; this is why Islam forbade a person from attempting to buy something that his Muslim brother has already started negotiating about, or proposing to a woman who a fellow Muslim has approached earlier. The reason for this is that Islam tries to prevent all the possible reasons that could engender spite and hatred.

The zeal of attaining high posts and positions makes a person envious; Al-Fudhayl Ibn 'Iyaadh, may Allah have mercy upon him, said: "Striving to reach high posts and positions and leadership makes people envious and leads them to transgressing other people's rights."

There is another matter that people neglect, which has a direct connection to this issue: straightening the rows during prayer. Nu'maan Ibn Basheer, may Allah be pleased with him, reported that the Messenger of Allah, *sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam*, said: "Straighten your rows (during prayer) or Allah would create dissension amongst you". [Al-Bukhari and Muslim]

Joking too much with people and two people talking in seclusion in the presence of a third are more reasons for spite amongst Muslims, which we must be careful to avoid.

There are certain things a person can do to prevent spite and spread love instead, like supplicating for others and giving them gifts.

Finally, we must differentiate between being kind hearted and simple minded and naive. Not knowing what is plotted against you is not being kind, as this could make a person fall in the trap of others, like those who propagate drugs and immorality. Many people have been dragged into drugs, immorality and other harmful habits due to their naivete. As Imaam Ibn Al-Qayyim, may Allah have mercy upon him, stated: "Recognising the evil and not indulging in it is not the same as being naive".

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

Dignity: The trait of the righteous

Praise be to Allah, The Exalted. May peace and blessings be upon the Messenger of Allah, *sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam* (may Allah exalt his mention), his family, Companions, and whoever follows his example.

It is becoming of a Muslim to adhere to all that adorns him of noble traits and shun all that disgraces and discredits him.

One of the noble traits that are befitting of a Muslim is *Waqaar* (dignity). We can (fairly) say that dignity is a moral attribute generated by the adherence to a number of noble morals, such as forbearance, serenity, composure gentleness, and steadfastness. This is why it was defined as: "Deliberateness towards the realisation of wants."

Al-Jaahith defined it as follows: "Refraining from idle talk, futility, unnecessary gesturing and movement, keeping anger in check, listening attentively before asking questions, deliberateness in giving answers, guarding against haste, and promptness with regard to all matters."

The pure Islamic Shari'ah was keen on adorning the believers with dignity. With regard to establishing one of the key obligations in Islam, the Prophet, *sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam*, urged the Muslims to adhere to dignity. He said: "If you hear the Iqaamah (second call to prayer), walk to the prayer with tranquility and dignity, and do not hasten your pace (to join the congregational prayer). Perform of the prayer what you catch up with (i.e. with the Imaam) and complete what you missed."

If lay-Muslims are required to adhere to dignity, then the scholars and devout Muslims are required to adhere to it with greater reason. Such was the practice of the scholars of the righteous predecessors. An example is Imaam Maalik, may Allah have mercy upon him; whenever he related Hadith to his students, he would clean himself, wear perfume, comb his beard, and put on his best apparel. Allah, The Exalted, bestowed upon him a great share of dignity, so much so that the following verses of poetry were composed about him (translation of the meaning): "He would at times not answer the questions directed to him, and the questioners would not dare to remind him out of awe of him, and they would keep their heads down. He was endowed with the light of dignity and the honor of piety; revered like a king without being one."

Adhering to dignity was the advice that Ibn Mas'ood, may Allah be pleased with him, gave to those who are devoted to the Quran. He said: "The one who memorises the Qur'an should be oft-weeping, sad, wise, forbearing, and serene. He should not be harsh, heedless, slugabed (lazy), loud, or rough."

Al-Hasan Al-Basri, may Allah have mercy upon him, said: "A man would pursue knowledge, and soon it would show in his earnest fear of Allah, decorum, sayings, gazes, and righteousness."

When a person's heart is alive and his face is adorned with bashfulness, he is prompted to adhere to dignity. He reveres other people, and they revere him in return, and he becomes characterized by dignity.

The more a person venerates and glorifies his Lord, the more people revere him. Whoever glorifies and venerates Allah, The Exalted, He will instill the love and reverence for him in the hearts of people.

On the other hand, the one who takes the Rights of Allah lightly, and the reverence for his Lord weakens in his heart, thus emboldening him to commit sins and transgress against His Limits and neglect His Commands and Obligations, Allah, The Exalted, will not cast reverence for him or awe of him into people's hearts. Even if some people revere him to avoid his evil, it is a false reverence that is founded on hatred rather than love or admiration.

Finally, let us ponder over these beautiful verses composed by an Arab poet (translation of meaning): "Speak the truth, refrain from vain and idle talk, and do not use vulgar language or promote suspicions. Be dignified; speak less, and think more. When you speak, do not give prolonged speeches; do not hasten to answer a question without deliberation, and do not answer a question that was not directed to you."

We ask Allah, The Exalted, to adorn us with faith and bless us with dignity.

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

COMMENT

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
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Making a statement



The UEFA Europa League encounter between Fenerbahce and Ferencvaros at the Sukru Saracoglu Stadium, Istanbul, Turkiye, yesterday where a police officer, Fenerbahce fans and a "free Palestine" banner can be seen inside the stadium before the match. (**Reuters**)

US companies hold the line at climate talks despite Trump

Despite the US government souring on the global climate agenda ahead of the COP30 summit, American companies did not shy away.

A Reuters analysis of attendance lists shows there were 60 representatives of *Fortune* 100 companies at the Brazil event, compared with 50 at last year's in Baku, Azerbaijan. Still others attended pre-conference events in Brazil's finance hub Sao Paulo and in Rio de Janeiro.

Tech firms including Microsoft and Google, energy company Occidental Petroleum, carmaker General Motors and lender Citigroup were among those represented on a provisional UN list of attendees of the official summit.

"We've seen no discernible change in the engagement of US companies on climate policy over the course of this year. And that was certainly reflected in attendance levels," said Andrew Wilson, deputy secretary-general for policy at the International Chamber of Commerce.

"We are also seeing growing concern across industry about the growing costs of extreme weather events – underscoring the need for effective policy responses."

Executives said they didn't think now was a good time to opt out of the climate conversation, with rising temperatures unleashing ever more threats to factories, supply chains and the bottom line.

"We're doing it because it's good for the business. It helps create supply security," said PepsiCo Chief Sustainability Officer (CSO) Jim Andrew on the sidelines of the talks.

"We need farmers to be successful, we need them to keep farming," he added, given the company makes the bulk of its revenues from foods including Walkers Crisps and Quaker Oats.

More US companies are also disclosing their climate strategies despite the US dropping plans for a federal rule requiring it

Darren Woods, the boss of top US oil company ExxonMobil was among the US executives, mayors and other sub-national leaders who attended the pre-COP events.

All those players have an important role in the future of climate action, according to Lou Leonard, Inaugural Dean of Clark University's School of Climate, Environment, and Society.

Existing policies from federal and non-federal actors would lead to a 35% reduction in US emissions by 2035, a recent analysis led by the Center for Global Sustainability (CGS) at the University of Maryland showed.

Much of that is being driven by companies.

"Despite the headlines, the private sector continues to invest in and deploy clean energy," said Gina McCarthy, former administrator of the US Environmental Protection Agency and now Managing Co-Chair of 'America Is All In', a coalition of non-federal leaders.

"Last year, clean energy jobs in the US expanded three times faster than the rest of the nation's workforce."

The two-week-long COP30 conference also included many smaller US companies in sectors set to profit from the world's shift to low-carbon energy, including in carbon markets.

"Being here is about connecting globally," said Brennan Spellacy, chief executive at carbon credits platform Patch, "Most of my meetings here are with English, French, and German sustainability leaders and CSOs."

President Trump has called climate change a hoax. But regardless of the US federal position, regulations are changing across the world to hasten the energy transition even though the final deal at COP30 disappointed some.

"Irrespective of what's coming out of the United States, in terms of rhetoric, the market is moving (and) policymakers are recognising the direction of travel," said Jack Hurd, head of both the World Economic Forum's Earth System Agenda and the Tropical Forest Alliance.

More US companies are also disclosing their climate strategies despite the US dropping plans for a federal rule requiring it, although the quality of plans from companies across the globe remains low, data from disclosure platform CDP showed.

Whether they were at the main event or not, the fact US companies appeared was significant, said Maria Mendiluce, CEO at the We Mean Business Coalition.

"The US has a decisive role in global climate, energy and industrial policy, so sub-national leaders, non-state actors and businesses showing up at COP30 matters."

"Even when domestic politics are unsettled, the US shapes markets, capital flows and technology pathways. Its engagement signals to investors that the world's largest economy understands the competitiveness, innovation, security and supply-chain stakes of the energy transition." — Reuters

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From 2 weeks to 2 hours: How AI might reboot Britain's economy

By William Schomberg and David Milliken
London

When accountants at mid-tier firm Moore Kingston Smith began using artificial intelligence to speed up their work, profit margins jumped.

Colleagues in another team running checks against corporate fraud created a report for customers in two hours, something that previously took two weeks.

The rollout of AI is raising hopes that Britain's economy can escape the productivity problem that has dogged it for two decades, even as slow growth pushes finance minister Rachel Reeves towards tax hikes in Wednesday's budget.

Economists say the dominance of services businesses in Britain's private sector compared to other countries could mean higher rewards if it rapidly adopts AI in powerhouse sectors such as accountancy and finance.

Ratings agency Moody's said last Friday the UK could gain more than other countries from the advances in the technology.

Becky Shields, MKS' head of digital transformation, said AI was freeing staff from repetitive work and giving them more time to work with clients.

"The large language models that underpin all of this technology are evolving all the time. They're getting better and better with every iteration," she said.

Services make up 80% of Britain's economy, the same as the United States — and account for a bigger share once services generally provided by the state are stripped out.

MKS, with about 1,500 UK staff, is applying its platform based on Google's Gemini 2.5 model to a growing range of work. Shields said it was still a learning process, but its positive impact was clear.

A team that used AI four times more intensively than another group reported a profit margin 8 percentage points higher, she said.

Rather than ask for proof of orders, invoices, bank statements and other documents for a sample of transactions, the team using AI let clients upload entire datasets which MKS was able to analyse automatically.

Initial extra work is now paying off as the process can be applied more widely. The reduced paperwork helps clients who say they chose the firm for its AI adoption, Shields said.

"You can do a lot with a little with how the technology currently sits," she added, describing the cost of AI as "pennies in the pound" compared with other technology.

For Britain's economy — and struggling Prime Minister Keir Starmer — improving productivity is a major challenge.

An expected downgrade by budget forecasters of the economy's underlying growth potential, reflecting past disappointments, is set to blow a hole in the public finances, meaning Reeves is likely to increase taxes on Wednesday to reassure nervous bond investors that she can cut borrowing.

As elsewhere, improvements in Britain's productivity slowed after the 2007-08 global financial crisis, leading to almost 20 years of weak growth and frustration among voters.

Feeble productivity gains account for half of Britain's slowdown in pay growth since 2008, according to the National Institute of Economic and Social Research, a think tank.

Starmer's government is trying to streamline the planning system, modernise infrastructure and improve skills to raise productivity and get the economy firing again. It also hopes that AI can inject more efficiency into public services.

"Productivity isn't everything, but in the long run it is almost everything," Nobel Prize-winning economist Paul Krugman said in 1990. Bart van Ark, head of the University of Manchester's Productivity Institute, said that for Britain's government "almost everything in the short run is productivity".

Britain has the highest inflation rate among the Group of Seven rich nations and too many people dropping out of the jobs market. Its business investment rate was the G7's second-lowest in 2024, although comparable to that for the United States, which manages far better productivity.

But AI could be a card up Britain's sleeve.

One of Reeves' deputy ministers, Torsten Bell, who is helping to write her budget, argued in his 2024 book that Britain "can and should ride the services wave".

Bolstered by its expertise in financial and business services, law, education and architecture, Britain had a services trade surplus of $248bn in 2024, second only to the United States, World Trade Organisation figures show.

British services exports accounted for just over 7% of the world's total, again the second-highest after the US

Less clear is the AI upside for British factories. They are struggling in the face of high energy, labour and raw materials costs, low public infrastructure investment and shifts in trading rules.

Flooring materials maker Amtico, in England's Midlands region, uses AI to plan production. But its next big investment decision is about expanding the use of robotics to offset some of Britain's high costs for manufacturers.

"I am looking to take my most labour-intensive processes and invest my way out of it," Jonathan Duck, Amtico's chief executive, said.

Many firms are still smarting from a labour tax hike in Reeves' first budget last year. Employers say Reeves would risk her growth agenda if she increases tax on them again.

Analysts say it is too early to be sure about AI's longer-term impact on economic growth as estimates range widely given the uncertainties about its real-world applications, but most agree it will not be immediate.

Bank of England Governor Andrew Bailey, who sees AI as a potential game-changer, said last month it took around 40 years between Thomas Edison first wiring up a light bulb and the impact of electricity showing up in the productivity statistics.

"We are still at the experimentation stage with AI, so investment and persistence is crucial," Bailey said.

The University of Manchester's Van Ark sees AI adding 0.1 to 0.2 percentage points to annual growth in the coming years. That would help an economy growing by about 1.5% a year but will not spare the current government from tough budget choices.

Paul Dales, chief UK economist at Capital Economics, said AI was likely to speed up growth in the mid-2030s, with Britain seeing more adoption than Europe's other big economies due to its more hands-off approach to regulation and labour laws.

Andrew Wishart, an economist at bank Berenberg, said improved productivity in higher-value corporate sectors offered signs that a broader change was already underway.

"If we don't have a sharp rise in taxes, I think we should see it in business earnings," he said.

Risks from the rise of AI include the possibility that its gains flow mostly to bigger firms with more funds to invest, potentially leading to a less competitive economy and aggravating Britain's geographic imbalances.

Some firms in highly regulated sectors, such as accountancy, worry that rule-makers will not keep pace with the technology.

"The challenge for businesses is not getting a sense right now of what is and isn't allowed," Esther Mallowah, head of tech policy at the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales, said.

Another big risk from a more automated future, its impact on the labour market, is becoming a little clearer.

A survey by the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development this month showed 17% of private sector employers expected to reduce headcount over the next 12 months as a result of AI. Only 6% planned an increase.

At MKS, the number of graduates hired this year was cut. But Shields said the reduction was intended as a "short shock" to speed up the way staff adapt to AI.

Hiring would probably return to normal after a year to ensure the human touch is not lost.

"Our clients trust us to do more with their business whether it's wanting more assistance or new services," Shields said. "There is no expectation that will be a long-term trend." — Reuters



COMMENT

Why new Canadian-Swedish partnership matters

By Carla Norrlöf
Toronto

Canada and Sweden have much in common. Both are democracies with constitutional monarchies. Both have open, export-oriented economies. Both have spent a century managing a great-power neighbour. And both are endowed with iron and base-metal resources, vast boreal forests, and abundant freshwater. (Even their strawberries, slow-grown under northern light, taste alike.) It makes sense, then, for them to sign a new strategic partnership on defence production, Arctic security, critical minerals, advanced manufacturing, and emerging technologies.

But this agreement is about more than mutually beneficial co-operation. For Canada, it is a sorely needed hedge: a long-overdue attempt to reduce its dependence on the United States. And for Sweden, it is a power play: a way to consolidate its new role as a Nato ally. The agreement thus serves Canada's need for insurance and Sweden's bid for influence and market share.

Few other advanced economies are as structurally reliant on a single neighbour as Canada. The United States buys most Canadian exports, supplies much of its technology, and dominates its defence procurement. For decades, this dependence felt safe. But after President Donald Trump imposed tariffs on steel and aluminium, forced a renegotiation of the US-Mexico-Canada Agreement, and started talking about annexing Canada, dependence became an intolerable vulnerability.

Sweden, meanwhile, is approaching the same problem from the opposite direction. After decades of non-alignment, it finally joined Nato following Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine. It brings to the alliance a capable military, a sophisticated defence industry, and a political culture that treats preparedness as a civic duty.

Its "total-defence" model (totalförsvar) integrates military and civilian readiness across society – from ensuring ample food and fuel stockpiles to maintaining plans for keeping hospitals, ports, and power grids running in a crisis. Sweden has spent a century designing machines that work in dark winters, deep forests, and icy seas – exactly the conditions that Canadian machine operators also contend with.

The new partnership mirrors this complementarity, but it also exposes a disagreement about how tightly to lean on the US. Canada wants to end its reliance on a single supplier for essential military and industrial systems, because it is looking ahead to a world where it will be less exposed to US decisions. But Sweden wants to bind itself more closely to the US-backed system that Nato represents, because it recognises that geography and neutrality no longer guarantee security. Over time, these distinct views could pull in different directions.

Both sides are focused on defence. Canada has defaulted to using US fighters (F-35As) and patrol aircraft (P-8As), because shared kit makes operations and maintenance easier. But it also concentrates risk. When one supplier dominates procurement, it also dominates negotiations. Sweden's Gripen fighter, built for dispersed operations from rough northern bases, is one of the few serious non-US alternatives.



To be sure, shifting even part of the Canadian fleet to a mixed Gripen/F-35 force would be politically and logistically difficult. The mere thought of it has already drawn fire, with retired Canadian officers warning that any reduction in F-35 purchases would weaken the force, while US commentators argue that a mixed fleet would be costlier, less interoperable with the North American Aerospace Defence Command (NORAD), and weaker in an Arctic fight.

But this might be a price worth paying. If Canada shifted even part of its procurement to Gripens and assembled aircraft in Canada with Swedish support, it would regain some industrial and strategic autonomy. Sweden, meanwhile, will have increased its weight within Nato. The only question is whether the US would view this as increased burden-sharing (something it purports to want) or a loss of its own industrial advantage.

The next phase of great-power competition is being fought through supply chains and logistics – through battery metals, rare earths, telecom standards, and grid hardware. As Trump officials have apparently learned the hard way, China dominates too many of these links.

Fortunately, Canada brings vast reserves of minerals, land, and energy, and Sweden has a strong record of translating engineering and manufacturing ideas into dependable machinery. Together, they can form a corridor from extraction to finished products, offering a hedge for Nato's industrial base against shocks from a single supplier. For Canada, it is a way to avoid overreliance on US buyers and technology; for Sweden, it is another arena in which to bolster its Nato role.

This corridor will have its limits, though. Canada and Sweden are both export powers, and in some markets, they are potential competitors. Both sell vehicles and parts abroad, both depend on forest products, and both want a foothold in the same green-technology and infrastructure niches. Sweden is subject to the European Union's industrial and state-aid rules while Canada is bound up in North American supply chains. A northern production axis will have to work within those constraints.

Still, the partnership allows Sweden to gain a North American foothold without going through Washington. It is deepening its industrial ties with another advanced economy, and assuming a bigger Arctic role with another Arctic country. Nato, too, is getting something it urgently needs: a northern flank that is more capable, more distributed, and less exposed to swings in US politics. At a time of growing fragility within the West, Canada and Sweden are offering a new model to restore resilience.

Of course, both still ultimately depend on the US for security. Nato's command structure, its long-range strike capability, and much of its logistics are American. NORAD is, and will remain, the backbone of North American air and missile defence. A Canadian-Swedish axis can thicken the non-US part of the system, but it cannot replace it. Moreover, Canada may still default to buying American, Sweden's defence buildup may face political or fiscal constraints, and the US may block Swedish systems from finding their way into a core ally's arsenal.

The northern hedge is best understood as a modest, deliberate shift in how two middle powers organise their dependencies. Canada gains breathing room, and Sweden gains leverage in debates about the Arctic, burden-sharing, and how much of Nato's future arsenal must be "Made in America." At a time when "friendly" powers can feel unpredictable, middle powers can adjust with small, deliberate choices of their own. Keep an eye on larger US allies like France, Italy, and Spain, smaller ones like Finland and the Netherlands, rising ones like Poland, and formally neutral countries like Switzerland. All will be exploring new paths to influence and autonomy. — Project Syndicate

• *Carla Norrlöf is Professor of Political Science at the University of Toronto.*

Can AI be Asia's next growth engine?

By Lee Jong-wha
Seoul

Two decades after globalisation fuelled a global economic boom, growth has shifted onto a more subdued path, where it is likely to remain for the foreseeable future. Beyond the immediate shock of fragmenting trade and investment ties – a result of rising geopolitical tensions, particularly between the United States and China – lie structural headwinds, including population aging, stagnant productivity, and the growing costs of inequality and natural disaster. These challenges strike at the heart of Asia's growth model.

Not only is fragmentation causing Asia's export-oriented growth engine to sputter; rapid population aging is tightening the labour supply and compounding fiscal pressures across the region.

The share of people aged 65 and above in Asia will nearly double by mid-century, from 9.8% in 2023 to 18.6% by 2050. Japan and South Korea are already "super-aged" societies, with more than 20% of the population aged 65 or older, and China's population has begun to decline. India and some Southeast Asian economies still enjoy a demographic dividend, but that window is closing quickly.

But demographics need not be destiny. Using new digital technologies – and, in particular, AI – Asia can invigorate productivity growth, ease labour shortages, and extend people's working lives. After all, like electricity and the Internet, AI is a general-purpose technology with the potential to transform production, services, and innovation.

But, while early evidence indicates that AI can improve worker productivity, enable the automation of a growing range of tasks, and spur the creation of new products and services, the technology's broader macroeconomic impact remains uncertain. Some analyses suggest that AI could raise global productivity growth by 0.8-1.3 percentage points annually over the next decade, while others offer more conservative estimates.

Moreover, gains from AI are likely to be concentrated among a few leading firms and sectors at first. Broader productivity gains often take time to emerge, and productivity might even decline in the short term, as firms bear the high costs of adoption, training, and integration – a pattern known as the "productivity J-curve."

As with previous technological revolutions, AI's impact will ultimately depend on countries' capacity to absorb and apply it effectively. For now, this capacity varies widely across Asia.

According to the IMF's AI Preparedness Index, advanced economies, such as Australia, Japan, and Singapore, rank above their peers elsewhere, based on indicators like digital infrastructure, economic integration, regulation, and labour-market policies.

The region's large emerging economies, including China, India, and Indonesia, also perform better than their peers. But low-income economies, like Bangladesh and Cambodia, are lagging.

Given the speed and scale of the transition ahead, and the gathering growth headwinds, all Asian economies should be working to strengthen their ability to harness AI.

To understand what must be done, it is worth revisiting the Nobel Prize-winning research of Philippe Aghion, Peter Howitt, and Joel Mokyr. Aghion and Howitt formalised Joseph Schumpeter's idea of creative destruction – the process by which new technologies replace old ones – while Mokyr, drawing on history, found that lasting progress also requires openness to new ideas and a commitment to scientific inquiry.

Together, they show that sustained prosperity depends on continuous technological progress supported by an enabling culture and institutional framework.

For Asian countries, the lesson is two-fold. First, they must foster the skills people need to make use of AI. Investment in digital literacy and STEM education (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) can help to prepare people for the transformation ahead, while lifelong-learning and reskilling programmes can smooth the adjustment for those already in the workforce. With AI enabling the automation of a growing range of routine and complex tasks, complementary technical, digital, and social skills are essential.



Such programmes should be broadly accessible, and complemented by strengthened social-protection systems and structural reforms that reduce labour-market dualism, thereby ensuring that good, secure jobs remain widely available. Otherwise, job polarisation and income disparities could widen, and growth will become more imbalanced and less resilient.

Beyond fostering the skills people need to make use of AI, Asian governments must make it possible for people to apply those skills creatively. This means investing in research and development, building reliable and broadly accessible digital infrastructure and secure data systems, and designing regulatory frameworks that ensure ethical AI use. Open competition, cross-border research collaboration, and greater access to finance for startups can then ensure that innovation is not confined to a few firms or countries. Such inclusion is vital: progress demands that new ideas and young firms have the tools and opportunities to challenge incumbents.

The stakes are high. If AI adoption remains limited to a few frontier economies or sectors, technology gaps would widen, with far-reaching economic, social, and political consequences. But if Asia harnesses human creativity and AI tools effectively, it can build resilient, innovative, and inclusive economies capable of overcoming current challenges and unlocking new sources of growth. — Project Syndicate

• *Lee Jong-wha, Professor of Economics at Korea University, is a former chief economist at the Asian Development Bank and a former senior adviser for international economic affairs to the president of South Korea.*

France, Germany step up pressure on arms firms to resolve fighter impasse

By Michel Rose, Sabine Siebold, John Irish and Tim Hepher
Paris/Berlin

France and Germany are ratcheting up pressure on their industrial champions to rescue Europe's next-generation fighter as the €100bn ($115bn) project teeters on the brink of collapse, sources close to the matter said.

The Future Combat Air System (FCAS), floated more than eight years ago, has been mired in disputes between France's Dassault Aviation and Airbus over workshare and prized technology.

Following talks last week between French President Emmanuel Macron and German Chancellor Friedrich Merz, Berlin has drafted a "decision roadmap" as part of a mid-December deadline to strike a deal, sources told Reuters.

"The objective is that the CEOs of the participating industrial partners find and sign a written agreement on the core principles of cooperation for the next programme phase by mid-December," the document reads, according to excerpts provided to Reuters. A government source said the roadmap, which also tasks air force chiefs with a review of their respective requirements, was designed to reassert political control.

Airbus and Dassault declined to comment.

At stake is the next phase of plans to deliver a fighter flanked by drones for France, Germany and Spain by 2040, mirroring a UK-Italian-Japanese initiative called GCAP.

Talks have stalled amid mistrust between Rafale manufacturer Dassault and Airbus, which represents both Germany and Spain in the project, known in France as SCAF.

Dassault insists on leading design and development of the core fighter, citing blurred lines of responsibility and its track record of building fighters from start to finish. It says Airbus is free to lead its own uncrewed areas of the project.

Airbus says this goes against agreements that each nation has an equal say. The family-owned French fighter firm and partially state-owned jetliner giant have both sharpened their rhetoric, inviting the other to leave if they don't like the agreed arrangements and pledging to go it alone if necessary.

German sources say Dassault wants 80% control, a figure Dassault denies. They accuse Dassault of limiting access to high-value work.

French sources want to retain parity with Airbus, which stood at 50% before Spain's arrival. They suspect Berlin of wanting to blunt Dassault's technological advantage.

"What seems to have happened was that a very close and strong political relationship between Paris and Berlin has weakened somewhat and the industrialists were let off the leash and are really having a go at each other," Douglas Barrie, IISS senior fellow for military airspace, said in a recent interview.

Failure to break the deadlock risks exposing Europe's inability to forge defence unity at a time when war has returned to the continent.

After weeks of political turmoil in Paris, the capitals are deepening efforts to avoid a damaging blow to Franco-German co-operation.

Still, doubts persist whether Macron, nearing the end of his term and weakened by political crises, can strong-arm Dassault into concessions. Cushioned by strong Rafale exports, Dassault is under less immediate pressure to act and may be playing for time before 2027 elections, some officials and executives said.

Dassault declined to comment.

As FCAS faces pivotal decisions over its future, options are being prepared for a repeat of the schism that saw France quit Eurofighter in 1985, leaving Dassault and Airbus to compete.

Dassault has been a cornerstone of France's defence since World War Two, building all generations of jets carrying its nuclear deterrent, and could most easily go alone.

German industry has threatened to tap Berlin's growing defence budget to bankroll a rival project.

People familiar with the plans said these included a standalone stealth fighter. Other options included teaming with Sweden's Saab, currently without a partner, or BAE Systems-led GCAP. Airbus has maintained regular CEO-level contacts on the issue with both camps, they said. A minimalist compromise increasingly touted would narrow FCAS to a "combat cloud" of secure connectivity while letting Airbus and Dassault develop separate jets – a partial divorce allowing Paris and Berlin to save face and avoid a public split. Each side continues to call the other's bluff.

French planners doubt Germany can easily build a competitive stealth fighter or engine alone, nor fit into the swiftly advancing GCAP project.

Yet even though France has a track record of standalone developments, its budget crisis poses major funding hurdles. Before Berlin's latest push, one German source put the chances of a joint fighter at "less than 50%". Both capitals are now racing to salvage the project. "We can't afford to let this project fail," a French government source said. – Reuters

QATAR







Left: Her Highness Sheikha Moza bint Nasser unveils a painting bearing MF Husain's sketch of his concept for the museum. **PICTURES:** Aisha Al-Musallam and AR Al-Baker.

Sheikha Moza flags off MF Husain Museum

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A space for learning and discovery that inspires creativity and promotes cross-cultural dialogue, Lawh Wa Qalam: MF Husain Museum invites visitors to enter Husain's world and – through paintings, films, tapestry, and photography – explore how his artistic odyssey unfolded, with some of the works it contains having never previously been displayed, and personal items from the renowned artist's life being open to view alongside interviews and quotes that explain the man behind the art.

Among the artworks within the museum are some of the 35 paintings inspired by Arab civilisation that Husain completed before his death in 2011; while Seeroo fi al ardh, his final masterpiece which was opened by QF in 2019 and celebrates humanity's progress, now forms part of the museum.

Following the inauguration, Her Highness Sheikha Moza and guests toured the museum, including its galleries that trace Husain's life and artistic journey, explore how he saw faith and philosophy and sought unity and diversity in his work, and showcase how he connected with his Yemeni ancestry and the heritage of Arab civilisation, before a gala dinner within Seeroo fi al ardh, which also now stands as one of the museum's galleries.

Lawh Wa Qalam: MF Husain Museum – which Husain envisaged as being an artwork in its own right, reflecting the diversity of his artistic vision and his constant pursuit of innovation throughout his life and career – reflects QF's belief in the power of art to spark curiosity, inquiry, imagination, and inspiration, to catalyse conversations, and to broaden minds and deepen understanding of the world. The museum expands QF's portfolio of public art, over 100 works from which are displayed across Education City for everyone to experience, interact with, and enjoy.

The museum – which also houses a café, a gift shop, a library and Creativity Hub, and an auditorium for events and lectures – will be open year-round, from 10am-5pm from Saturday to Thursday and from 1.30pm-7.30pm on Fridays; and closed on Mondays and public holidays. Photography without flash is permitted within the museum, and guided tours in Arabic and English are available, with audio tours set to be introduced in 2026.

For more information about Lawh Wa Qalam: MF Husain Museum, visit https://lawhwaqalam.org.qa/ and follow on Instagram at @lawhwaqalam



Sheikha Moza pays rich tributes to Maqbool Fida Husain

Her Highness Sheikha Moza bint Nasser, Chairperson of Qatar Foundation (QF), paid rich tributes to Maqbool Fida Husain, one of the world's greatest modern art pioneers, while inaugurating Lawh Wa Qalam: MF Husain Museum in Education City.

"Today we stand before a retrospective scene, as we honour a star of the past, celebrate his brilliance in the present, and bear witness to his legacy as it ventures into new horizons of the future," she said, while elaborating that from a cultural perspective, an artist's existence is marked by a rare duality: one life is confined to the finite time they spend on earth, and another is lived as a creator whose vision endures through their legacy.

"In this sense, legendary artists do not experience a cultural death; rather, they continue to survive in the collective memory of humanity. This is the beauty of their craft; vivid in their presence, and eternal in their absence.

"Maqbool Fida Husain was one such legendary artist – a true master whose artistic works transcend borders and connect cultures, histories, and identities.

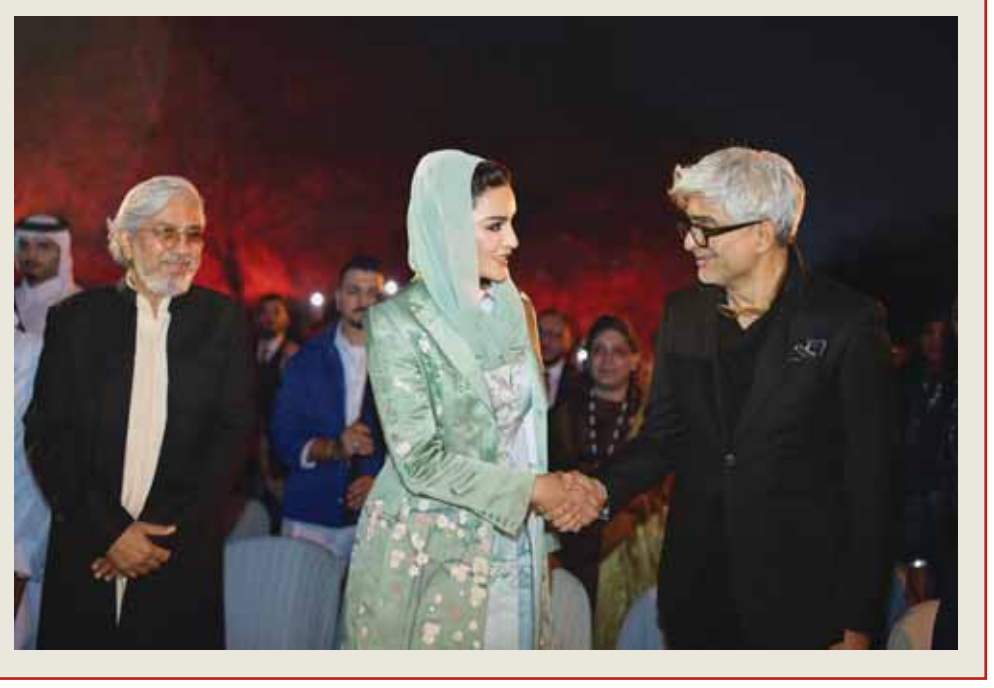
"I first invited him to visit Qatar because I was interested to know more about him as a prominent figure and to understand the creative mind behind the artist. We became fast friends, just as Maqbool swiftly rediscovered his sense of belonging by returning to his Arab cultural roots. He embarked on an artistic endeavour that honoured Arab civilisation – interweaving heritage, identity, and history – until his works came to reflect a profound bond with the culture of the region.

"As an Indian of Arab decent and Islamic faith, Husain turned to his Arab roots for inspiration where he was warmly embraced. Though undeniably an Indian citizen, we recognise that he was equally an Arab Muslim: two identities that enriched his understanding of the human condition.

"During my visit to Yemen in 2010, I was delighted that he accompanied me to the homeland of his Arab roots – a land he held dear. This visit inspired him to create works of art – some of which you will have the chance to discover during your tour. Over the years, Maqbool became a cherished friend, and his bond with Qatar deepened – first as a resident, and ultimately, in the final years of his life, as a citizen.

"I am delighted to fulfil the dream of this late, esteemed artist by inaugurating the Maqbool Fida Husain Museum: "Lawh Wa Qalam". This museum will stand as a new landmark in Education City – a museum dedicated to his work, as he wished it to be, showcasing pages from his life and a collection of his works, with its design having been brought to life based on an illustration sketched by the artist himself.

"Let us wander, together, through galleries of beauty and take a closer look at the art, creativity, and unique vision of Maqbool Fida Husain: eternally present among us, strolling barefoot – as he pleases – through the corridors of his museum, reliving wonderous scene from his memories," concluded Sheikha Moza.



Beckham visits Education Above All Foundation initiative in India





Education Above All (EAA) Foundation, a global education and development organisation, and Mantra4Change, welcomed global former footballer and Unicef Goodwill Ambassador, David Beckham during a special visit to one of its education initiatives in India, where he met with students and witnessed firsthand the transformative impact of EAA Foundation's work. During the visit, Beckham spent time engaging with children and teachers, observing interactive learning activities, and joining students in outdoor play. delivered in collaboration with EAA Foundation's local partner Mantra4Change. The children expressed their excitement and joy, sharing stories about their learning journeys and their dreams for the future. The visit comes as part of the EAA Foundation's ongoing mission to break barriers to education, empower young learners, and partner with communities and governments to deliver innovative, child-centred learning solutions across India.

Qatar Tourism Awards 2025 winners revealed

Qatar Tourism has announced the winners of the third edition of the Qatar Tourism Awards (QTA) during a ceremony held at Raffles Doha. The event honoured the organisations and individuals who continue to elevate Qatar's position as a leading global destination.

This year's winners were recognised in the presence of HE Saad bin Ali al-Kharji, chairman of QT; Abdulaziz Ali al-Mawlawi, CEO of Visit Qatar; Omar al-Jaber, Chief of Tourism Development at QT; Natalia Bayona, executive of UN Tourism; Samer al-Khraishi, director of the UN Tourism Regional Office for the Middle East.



HE Akbar al-Baker after receiving the Lifetime Achievement in Tourism from HE Saad bin Ali al-Kharji

Winners

Category One – Service Excellence

- Outstanding 3-Star Hotel: Hampton by Hilton Doha Old Town
- Outstanding 4-Star Hotel: Embassy Suites by Hilton Doha Old Town
- Outstanding 5-Star Hotel: Raffles Doha
- Exceptional Spa Experience: The Spa at Mandarin Oriental, Doha
- Exceptional Resort Experience: The St Regis Marsa Arabia Island, The Pearl Qatar
- Exceptional Holiday Home Experience: North Vacation Villa
- Outstanding New Tourism Accommodation: Rosewood Doha
- "Heart of Hospitality" Award: Discover Qatar
- Tour Guide of the Year: Maryia Shymanouskaya
- Leading Destination Management Company: Discover Qatar

Category Two – Gastronomic Experiences

- Outstanding Fine Dining Experience: Liang
- Exceptional Casual Dining Experience: Chabrat Al Mina
- Premier Quick Service Experience: Graze Café
- Noteworthy Café Experience: Harvest Café
- Outstanding Authentic Qatari Dining Experience: Bayt Al Waldah
- Outstanding New Restaurant: Athr Café

Category Three – Iconic Attractions and Activities

- Outstanding Cultural Tourism Experience: Museum of Islamic Art – The Immersion
- Unforgettable Adventure Tourism Experience: Discover the Whale Sharks of Qatar by Discover Qatar
- Leading Local Retail Brand: Gema Boutique
- Premier Shopping Mall Experience: Doha Festival City
- Premier Theme Park Experience: Meryal Waterpark
- Iconic Local Attraction: The National Museum of Qatar – Qatar Museums

Category Four – World-Class Events

- Top MICE Event of the Year: Web Summit 2025 – Government Communications Office
- Leading Cultural Event – Local: Katara Traditional Dhow Festival – The Cultural Village
- Premier Sporting Event of the Year: Formula 1 Qatar Airways Qatar Grand Prix 2024
- Outstanding Multi-Purpose MICE & Events Venue: Sheraton Grand Doha

Category Five – Digital Footprint

- Outstanding Destination Campaign: Formula 1 Qatar Airways Qatar Grand Prix 2024
- Tourism Content Creator of the Year: I Love Qatar

Category Six – Smart and Sustainable Tourism

- Tourism Innovation Award: Qatar Museums
- Accessibility Initiative of the Year: WBB West Bay Beach
- Leading Sustainable Attraction: Msheireb Downtown Doha
- Leading Eco-Friendly Accommodation: The Ritz-Carlton Doha

Category Seven – Community Leadership

- Hotel General Manager of the Year: Ammar Samad – Zulal Wellness Resort
- Emerging Leader in Tourism: Shaikha Nasser al-Nassr
- Tourism Personality of the Year: Jassim Abdulaziz al-Jassim
- Lifetime Achievement in Tourism: HE Akbar al-Baker