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BUSINESS | Page 1

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Amir sends condolences to Lanka president

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani and His Highness the Deputy Amir Sheikh Abdullah bin Hamad al-Thani have sent cables of condolences to President Anura Kumara Dissanayake of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, following the deaths caused by the cyclone-related floods and landslides that struck the capital Colombo and its surrounding areas. His Highness extended his best wishes for the swift recovery of those injured in the disaster. **(QNA)**

Putin warns Europe of war against Russia

President Vladimir Putin warned European powers yesterday that if they started a war with Russia then Moscow was ready to fight and that the defeat of European powers would be so absolute that there would be no one left to even negotiate a peace deal. "If Europe suddenly wants to start a war with us and starts it," Putin said, then it would end so swiftly for Europe that Russia would have no one left to negotiate with. Putin used the Russian word for "war".

Qatar aspires to become a service economy and a leader in the field of technology: PM

- Qatar hopes to develop 50 AI-powered government services by 2029
- PM participates in discussion panel at opening of WSJ Tech Live Qatar 2025

QNA
Doha

Hosted for the first time in the Middle East and North Africa (Mena), the *Wall Street Journal* (WSJ) Tech Live Qatar 2025 kicked off yesterday in the presence of HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani.

The Tech Live conference is the key technology event organised by the *Wall Street Journal*. It constitutes a high-level global platform to discuss the accelerating role of technology in shaping the future of business, regulatory policies, and innovation. It is attended by more than 200 leading figures, including top CEOs listed in the Fortune 500, investors, and leaders from the technology, media, entertainment, and finance sectors from around the world.



PM participates in a Dialogue Session during the opening of the *Wall Street Journal* Tech Live Qatar 2025 Conference in Doha yesterday.

The conference programme began with a panel discussion with HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, moderated by CEO of Dow Jones, publisher of the *Wall Street Journal*, Almar Latour, which addressed the paths of digital transformation, economic diversification and the role of technology in enhancing the

competitiveness of various sectors in Qatar.

HE Sheikh Mohammed said that over the past decades, Qatar has become famous for its role as a link between East and West, and a regional centre in the fields of logistics, aviation, politics, diplomacy and mediation, as well as its influential presence in the energy

sector through access to various countries around the world. Qatar is pleased that Doha is the first stop for this conference outside the United States, which reflects the country's aspirations to enhance the diversification of its economy and consolidate a culture of innovation.

His Excellency added that Qatar has hosted a series of technology events recently, from the Mobile World Congress to the Web Summit, which Qatar hosted for two consecutive years and is preparing to host again next year. Qatar's goal in creating these platforms is to bring together participants from across the region and attract others from the United States, Europe, and Latin America to learn about what Asia and Africa have to offer in this field.

He indicated that diversifying the national economy and making it more flexible and dynamic is one of the most important priorities.

He noted that although Qatar is known as a hydrocarbon economy, data from recent years show that non-hydrocarbon sectors are now leading growth, which is what Qatar has been working on for many years. He pointed out at the same time that the Qatar Investment Authority is one of the most important tools in this path, at the level of diversifying sources of income and expanding the base of the economy towards new sectors.

His Excellency also affirmed Qatar's endeavour to establish a strong foundation in the technology sector, as a sector that enables various other sectors. He said that considering the essential sectors in people's daily lives, such as health, education, logistics and financial services, they can be enhanced through technological empowerment. As a country, Qatar aspires to become a service economy and a leader in the field of technology. **To Page 12**

QND celebrations to be held at Darb Al Saai from Dec 10-20

- Darb Al Saai will be open to the public daily from 3pm to 11pm

QNA
Doha

The events commemorating Qatar National Day (QND) this year will be held at the Darb Al Saai venue in the Umm Salal area from Dec 10 to 20, the Ministry of Culture has announced.

Darb Al Saai will be opening its doors to the public daily from 3pm to 11pm at its permanent premises.

The cultural events will feature an integrated experience showcasing the time-honoured Qatari



heritage, spotlighting loyalty and belonging bequeathed from forefathers and inherited by the people of Qatar generation after generation, the ministry noted.

It highlighted that these events are held under the QND's motto: "With You it Rises, From You it Awaits", offering a space for the gathering of citizens and residents to behold the history of this nation, its values, and identity, through a broad series of cultural, patrimonial, and artistic events on a space of 150,000 square metres at the permanent venue. **To Page 12**

Gaza truce holding as Qatar pushes toward next phase



HE Dr Majid al-Ansari

By Tawfik Lamari
Staff Reporter

The ceasefire in Gaza is holding as Qatar continues intensive efforts to advance to the second phase of the Gaza agreement, Foreign

Ministry spokesperson HE Dr Majid bin Mohammed al-Ansari said during the weekly media briefing yesterday. HE Dr al-Ansari, Adviser to the Prime Minister and official spokesperson for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, reaffirmed Qatar's commitment to strengthening its global partnerships while sustaining its role as a key mediator in the Gaza negotiations. He cautioned, however, that ongoing Israeli violations were "alarming".

Qatar, alongside the United States and Egypt secured a long-elusive truce in Gaza, which came into effect on October 10 and has mostly halted two years of fighting between Israel and Palestinian resistance movement Hamas. "Efforts are continuing through the monitoring room in Cairo to

follow up on Israeli violations, and we have confidence in the plan of US President Donald Trump, his role, and the role of the mediators," he said. Qatar believes the parties "should be pushing to stage two very, very soon," he added. Highlighting Doha's diplomatic role, the spokesperson stressed that Qatar is urging all sides to stay engaged in negotiations. "This is the longest-standing truce, and we are playing our part in implementing the agreement, monitoring violations, and trying to prevent its collapse," he said. Under the second phase of the deal, which gained UN backing in November, Israel is to withdraw from its positions in the territory, an interim authority is to govern Gaza and an international stabilisation force is to be deployed. **To Page 5**



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Amir receives written message from Spanish prime minister



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani received a written message from Prime Minister of Spain Dr Pedro Sanchez, pertaining to bilateral relations and ways to support and develop them. HE the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Sultan bin Saad al-Muraikhi received the message during his meeting with the ambassador of Spain Alvaro Renedo Zalba. **(QNA)**

Envoy highlights Qatar-Finland relations for future-proof education

The Education House event, co-organised by the HundrED Foundation, opened at Qatar National Library (QNL) with a keynote address by Juha Mustonen, the ambassador of Finland. Mustonen praised QNL as a vital institution for access to knowledge and culture, drawing parallels to Finland's extensive network of public libraries, one of the country's most celebrated social innovations. He emphasised that libraries are not just repositories of books but gateways to lifelong learning and civic engagement.

The ambassador commended the World Innovation Summit for Education (WISE) for its focus on human values, quoting Her Highness Sheikha Moza bint Nasser, Chairperson of Qatar Foundation: "Human values are at the heart of education." He noted that the Education Above All Foundation exemplifies this principle by transforming the belief in human dignity and equality into tangible action. Finland's success story in education was a central theme of the address. The ambassador highlighted that equal access to

quality education has been the cornerstone of Finland's rise as a global knowledge economy and a Nordic welfare society. He noted that the country's student-centred approach, recognised by the World Economic Forum as one of the best in the world, is admired internationally, including in Qatar. The Qatar-Finland International School, established in 2014, reflects this enduring partnership, built on the conviction that every child deserves a joyful and meaningful learning experience. Looking ahead, Mustonen introduced

Finland's new national vision for education, which focuses on investing in human capacities that cannot and should not be automated. He said: "Empathy, creativity, ethical reasoning, and democratic agency will define the future. Finland's vision integrates technological literacy into curricula while leveraging AI to reduce administrative burdens on teachers, freeing time for human interaction. AI can also support multilingualism and inclusive pedagogy in increasingly diverse classrooms."



Ambassador Juha Mustonen

Acknowledging the rapid technological transformation shaping education globally, Mustonen affirmed Finland's readiness to collaborate with Qatar on critical areas such as teacher education and technical and vocational education and training development.

OFFICIAL

Amir sends condolences to King Salman

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani and His Highness the Deputy Amir Sheikh Abdullah bin Hamad al-Thani sent cables of condolences to the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman bin Abdulaziz al-Saud of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia on the passing of Prince Abdullah bin Fahd bin Abdullah bin Abdulaziz bin Musa'ed bin Jalawi al-Saud. **(QNA)**

Amir sends congratulations to Lao president

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani and His Highness the Deputy Amir Sheikh Abdullah bin Hamad al-Thani sent yesterday cables of congratulations to President of the Lao People's Democratic Republic Thongloun Sisoulith on his country's National Day. HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani sent also a cable of congratulations to Prime Minister Sonexay Siphandone on his country's National Day. **(QNA)**

Qatar marks 60th anniversary of Anti-Racism Treaty with call for stronger national legislation

QNA
Doha

Qatar's National Human Rights Committee (NHRC), in partnership with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, has marked the 60th anniversary of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD) with a seminar and cultural event, underscoring the country's commitment to equality and non-discrimination.

The event highlighted the convention's status as one of the most important binding international instruments in human rights, and featured a short film showcasing Qatar's initiatives to promote justice, equality and the fight against racial discrimination.

HE the NHRC Chairperson Maryam bint Abdullah al-Attiyah said the anniversary offered an opportunity to reaffirm Qatar's commitment to building a global community free of racism, describing racial discrimination as a profound threat to human rights



and social cohesion. She noted that the principles of equality and non-discrimination are reflected in Qatar's constitution and in the country's National Vision 2030.

HE al-Attiyah urged the adoption of a comprehensive anti-discrimination law and the creation of a specialised national body to combat racism, arguing that such steps would strengthen the country's legislative and institutional framework. She also called for continued adherence to the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action and condemned racial violence in conflict zones, citing Gaza and Sudan's Darfur region.



Acting Director of the Human Rights Department at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Sarah al-Saadi, said Qatar places significant importance on promoting equality, but stressed that combating discrimination is a responsibility shared by society as a whole. She pointed to national programmes aimed at raising awareness, training officials and embedding a culture of equality in all sectors.

Meanwhile, Dr Sheikha bint Abdullah al-Misnad, a member of the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, explained that the com-



mittee reviews state reports, issues recommendations and provides early-warning mechanisms to address urgent cases of racism. She said efforts to eradicate discrimination required changes in attitudes as well as policy reforms.

Representatives from the UN Human Rights Training and Documentation Centre praised Qatar's co-operation with international institutions and its efforts to promote equality in education, labour and public services.

The main panel discussion addressed the achievements and global challenges over 60 years

since the convention, examining the treaty's impact and the obstacles that remain worldwide. Experts from Qatar's foreign ministry, interior ministry, labour ministry, academia and the NHRC outlined measures taken to curb discrimination in areas ranging from law enforcement to the workplace.

The event concluded with an open discussion featuring national and international participants, ending with a set of recommendations aimed at strengthening anti-racism frameworks both in Qatar and globally.

Qatar in deal with PwC Middle East and OpenAI to advance national AI ecosystem

QNA
Doha

Qatar's Ministry of Communications and Information Technology (MCIT) has signed a co-operation agreement with PwC Middle East and US-based artificial intelligence (AI) research organisation OpenAI, marking a significant step towards building an integrated national AI ecosystem.

The partnership aims to accelerate the development of advanced AI infrastructure, expand practical adoption across public and private sectors, and promote the use of innovative, reliable and safe AI solutions to improve operational efficiency and enhance the quality of services.

Under the agreement, the collaboration will focus on three main pillars: establishing a new AI testbed for government entities and startups, boosting productivity across public-sector institutions through tools such as ChatGPT, and designing innova-

tive AI-driven projects in key national sectors.

The initiative also seeks to accelerate Qatar's digital transformation by drawing on global consulting expertise and leading AI models.

The agreement was signed by MCIT's Director of Digital Innovation, Eman al-Kuwari; Consulting Partner at PwC Middle East, Yazan al-Safi; and Head of Enterprise for Mena at OpenAI, Farouk Hamzawi.

Al-Kuwari said the collaboration marks a practical step toward building a world-class national AI framework grounded in clear governance and trusted innovation. She noted that the ministry is working to empower government bodies and startups to develop AI-based projects that enhance public services, improve efficiency, and support Qatar's transition to a sustainable, knowledge-based economy.

She added that the partnership will help accelerate MCIT's initiatives linked to government productivity, the design of pioneering digital projects in vital



sectors, and the development of national talent capable of leading and safely deploying AI technologies at scale.

Al-Safi of PwC Middle East described the agreement as a commitment to supporting Qatar's efforts to expand AI adoption. By combining policy leadership, deep advisory expertise and cutting-edge technology, he said, Qatar can move from experimentation to scalable impact. The focus, he added, is on enabling institutions to adopt AI responsibly, improve citizen experiences, and unlock knowledge-based

growth across priority sectors.

Meanwhile, Hamzawi of OpenAI highlighted the co-operation as an opportunity to support Qatar's national priorities through advanced AI tools, helping boost productivity, enhance innovation and drive ambitious economic goals in a safe and responsible manner.

Under the agreement, MCIT will create an enabling environment for government agencies and startups to deploy AI solutions, while PwC Middle East will provide advisory expertise to help entities explore AI opportunities and develop productivity-en-

hancing initiatives. OpenAI will offer technical support, including access to advanced AI models and participation in the development of the national AI testbed, ensuring global best practices in responsible AI use.

The collaboration brings together the core elements needed to expand AI adoption in Qatar – an advanced testing environment, innovative AI-driven projects, and broadened access to cutting-edge technologies – aimed at driving productivity and supporting the country's digital ambitions.

Culture ministry takes part in Iraq book fair

The Ministry of Culture is participating in the sixth edition of the Iraq International Book Fair, which is being held from Dec 3-13.

The participation comes as part of the ministry's commitment to enhancing Qatar's presence in international cultural forums, reflecting the stature of Qatari culture, its openness to the Arab and global cultural scene, and supporting the country's efforts to build bridges of cultural communication among peoples. The Qatari pavilion features a collection of recent literary and intellectual publications issued by the Ministry of Culture and several Qatari publishing houses, highlighting the diversity of national cultural production and the richness of Qatar's creative movement.

Jassim Ahmed al-Buainain, Director of the Libraries Department at the Ministry of Culture and Director of the Doha International Book Fair, said in a statement that the ministry's participation in the Iraq International Book Fair is a continuation of its presence at major Arab and international cultural exhibitions. He said that the Qatari participation aims to showcase Qatar's cultural landscape and exchange expertise with international cultural institutions.

He added that Qatar's presence in such events reflects the ministry's vision to support the book and publishing industry, as well as to encourage Qatari writers and creatives to reach a wider audience in the Arab world and internationally. He noted that through its international participation, the Ministry of Culture is keen to strengthen cultural relations with brotherly and friendly countries, and to introduce Qatari cultural production as part of Qatar's civilisational and human presence on the global stage.

This edition of the exhibition features a wide range of local, Arab, and international publishing houses, with the attendance of hundreds of publishers and cultural institutions, reinforcing the fair's position as a prominent platform for new publications and a venue that brings together authors, creators, and those interested in publishing and reading under specialised programmes.

The exhibition programme includes a variety of cultural activities such as book signing sessions, literary evenings, intellectual seminars, and workshops focused on the publishing industry, in addition to events aimed at youth and students, and programmes designed to support reading and develop cultural skills among the public. **(QNA)**

Old Doha Port unveils full-throttle festivities for FIFA Arab Cup 2025



Old Doha Port has unveiled a full destination-wide programme of activations for the FIFA Arab Cup 2025, taking place from December 1-18, bringing together fan experiences, cultural programming, and waterfront festivities across the destination.

Launched under the campaign “From the Port, the Journey Begins”, the initiative reinforces Old Doha Port’s role as Qatar’s maritime gateway during major sporting moments.

Throughout the tournament, Arab Cup fans can enjoy a dedicated Fan Zone at Mina Park, located opposite the Containers Yard, where large screens will showcase every match live against the backdrop of the marina. The experience is enhanced by a selection of food and beverage stalls, creating a festive atmosphere for all visitors along the scenic waterfront. Adding to the excitement, Mina District will come alive with daily roaming, stationed performances and cultural showcases from 4:00pm-10:00pm, bringing a vibrant, family-friendly atmosphere to the waterfront throughout the tour-

nament. Completing the experience, Old Doha Port will host AlMajlis programme by AlKass TV, broadcasting live from the heart of the destination, positioning the Port as the central waterfront hub for Arab Cup conversations and analysis.

To accommodate regional and international guests arriving by sea, Old Doha Port recently introduced exclusive Arab Cup berthing packages that combine luxury marina berths with premium match tickets and access to the Port’s world-class marina facilities. As Qatar’s only marina able to host superyachts of up to 180m, the Port strengthens its position as the nation’s maritime entry point during major sporting events. Visitors will also be able to navigate seamlessly through the Mina Link water shuttle, launched in collaboration with Brooq Tourism, connecting key hubs including Mina District and the Containers Yard.

Through these activations, Old Doha Port invites visitors to a destination where the spirit of the Arab Cup comes to life and where the journey begins for fans across the region. (QNA)

QRCS brings fresh hope for kidney patients in Sudan



QRCS delivered 80 dialysis machines to support health care facilities in Sudan.

Qatar Red Crescent Society (QRCS) delivered 80 dialysis machines to support healthcare facilities in 10 states in Sudan, reflecting Qatar’s humanitarian solidarity and support for the people of Sudan against health challenges.

The initiative is in collaboration with the Federal Ministry of Health (MoH), the National Centre for Kidney Diseases and Surgery (NCKDS), and the Humanitarian Aid Commission (HAC).

The handover ceremony was held under the patronage and in the presence of Sudan’s Federal Minister of Health, Dr Haitham Mohamed Ibrahim, and Qatari ambassador to Sudan Mohamed Ibrahim al-Sada. At the ceremony, Dr Ibrahim thanked the government and people of Qatar for their support, saying the health and shelter interventions had a clear and tangible impact on the beneficiaries and health care infrastructure. “Covering all states of Sudan, the new dialysis machines would greatly help bridge the gap in dialysis services. We are working together with NCKDS to ensure the effective distribution of the new equipment and prepare for the resumption of the organ transplant programme,” said the minister.

Humanitarian Aid Commissioner Salwa Adam Buniya lauded QRCS’ humanitarian initiative, citing HAC statistics that Qatari aid was the highest among all relief aid providers during the war.

She said this represents a spirit of partnership and solidarity, helping strengthen Sudan’s ability to deal with the existing health challenges. Al-Sada affirmed that the Qatari government and humanitarian organisations co-ordinated closely with the Sudanese MoH.

He said that Qatari support was not limited to medical equipment but also involved the reconstruction of health care infrastructure, as well as other development initiatives that would boost the resilience of the people of Sudan.

NCKDS director Nizar Zulfu commended the key role of QRCS, the State of Qatar, and all the organisations backing the Sudanese health care sector. He said the number of dialysis centres decreased from 105 to just 32 due to destruction. Thanks to collaborative efforts, he revealed that 72 centres have resumed operation, demonstrating how such vital interventions can save lives.

Dr Salah al-Din Daak, head of QRCS’ representation office in Sudan, said they implemented many humanitarian interventions in various sectors, including health care. He noted that this batch of equipment would be followed by more ones to bolster health care services in Sudan. Kidney failure is a growing global health challenge. In Sudan, thousands of patients are facing this calamity every day, with more than 6,000 patients relying on regular dialysis sessions to survive.



LuLu Hypermarket Qatar brings back the highly anticipated 10/15/20/30 savings promotion

LuLu Hypermarket Qatar has unveiled the return of its highly awaited 10/15/20/30 promotion, marking yet another season filled with exceptional value for shoppers.

Running until December 10, the promotion features attractive discounts across a wide selection of categories, including groceries, fresh food, fruits and vegetables, household essentials, textiles, stationery, toys, and more.

Shoppers can expect a comprehensive assortment of premium-quality products, thoughtfully curated to meet the varied needs of LuLu’s loyal customers, all while maintaining affordability and high standards.

A LuLu spokesperson expressed great enthusiasm for this year’s edition, noting that the 10/15/20/30 promotion has consistently proven to be a major success. They added that the product range is expanded every year to better cater to customers’ daily requirements, ultimately enhancing the overall shopping experience at LuLu.

Enhancing the excitement of the season, LuLu is simultaneously running its Super Friday promotion, offering shoppers a new wave of savings across popular categories. The Super Friday event offers remarkable deals on electronics, smartphones, laptops, accessories, home appliances, toys, sports items and many other essential products.

Furthermore, in this period of savings, LuLu’s seasonal Sale Promotion delivers added value through significant discounts ranging from 20-



50% across readymade garments, sarees, churidars, footwear, ladies’ bags, baby accessories and sunglasses. These popular promotions will continue until December 6, 2025, giving customers ample opportunity to make the most of the exclusive offers.

With a blend of compelling promotions, rewarding partnerships, and an expanded product range, LuLu Hypermarket continues to provide exceptional value and an unparalleled shopping experience. Customers are encouraged to visit their nearest LuLu branch soon to take advantage of these limited time offers and enjoy a rewarding start to the winter season.



Milaha, UDST sign pact to boost co-operation in maritime, logistics sectors

Qatar Navigation (Milaha), the industry leading provider of maritime and logistics solutions, has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the University of Doha for Science and Technology (UDST), Qatar’s first national applied university, to advance co-operation in education, research, and workforce development across the maritime and logistics sectors.

The MoU was signed by Milaha’s Group CEO Fahad bin Saad al-Qahtani and UDST president Dr Salem Al-Naemi at the university’s campus. Under this partnership, Milaha and UDST will collaborate on aligning academic programmes with industry needs, developing specialised training and certification courses, and creating internship

and career pathways for students.

The agreement also supports joint research in areas such as marine sustainability, digitalisation, automation, and decarbonisation.

Milaha will contribute its industry expertise through participation in advisory committees, guest lectures, and seminars, while benefiting from access to UDST’s Marine Training Center and simulation facilities for employee upskilling and certification aligned with global standards.

Commenting on the signing, al-Qahtani said: “At Milaha, we are committed to cultivating Qatar’s future maritime and logistics leaders. Our partnership with UDST reflects a shared commitment to applied learn-

ing, innovation, and building a highly skilled, future-ready workforce.”

Dr Al-Naemi, said: “This collaboration with Milaha reflects our ongoing efforts to align education with industry needs. By integrating real-world expertise into our programmes, we aim to empower our students with practical skills and hands-on training that prepare them to excel in Qatar’s dynamic maritime and logistics fields.”

Through this MoU, Milaha and UDST reaffirm their commitment to Qatar National Vision 2030 by supporting national talent development, enhancing research, and contributing to the sustainable growth of the maritime and logistics industries, a statement added.

QU, Shell celebrate graduation of Intilaaqah - Qatar second cohort

Qatar University (QU) and Shell Qatar celebrated the graduation of the second cohort of the ‘Shell Intilaaqah - Qatar’ programme, a leading national initiative aimed at fostering an entrepreneurial mindset among Qatari youth and equipping them with the skills necessary to enter the business world with confidence and competence.

The ceremony marked the graduation of 115 male and female students from various colleges and academic disciplines. Present on the occasion were QU president Dr Omar al-Ansari, Qatar Shell Companies managing director and chairman Rob Maxwell, several members of the University’s administration and faculty, representatives of national entrepreneurship support entities, and students.

This graduation ceremony builds on the remarkable success of the programme’s inaugural edition, which served as a distinguished platform to enhance the capabilities of 100 students through a series of practical workshops and professional mentoring sessions. Evaluation results from the first cohort demonstrated significant improvement in students’ entrepreneurial competencies and boosted their confidence in launching their ventures, a state-



ment said yesterday. The second cohort reinforces the programme’s position as one of the most prominent national efforts in promoting entrepreneurial thinking and developing youth capabilities to engage in entrepreneurial activities, transforming their ideas into innovative projects that contribute to the country’s economic and social development.

In his speech during the event, Dr al-Ansari, said the initiative represents an important pathway to fostering an entrepreneurial mindset among young people and strengthening their readiness to contribute to the nation’s development.

Maxwell stated that Intilaaqah represents what’s possible when industry and academia come together with a shared purpose. Intilaaqah is designed to spark that mindset early, giving students the

confidence and capability to turn ideas into impact, he added.

Farha al-Kuwari, a student in the College of Education, recalled that the ‘Shell Intilaaqah’ programme helped her gain a deeper understanding of her strengths and how to build on them, while also enabling her to work on and improve areas that needed development.

Hussein Omar Arar, a student in the College of Engineering, shared that the programme helped him better understand himself and recognise the foundational steps required before pursuing any entrepreneurial or professional path.

‘Shell Intilaaqah - Qatar’ programme, implemented under the global Shell LiveWIRE initiative, stands as a distinguished model of partnership between the academic and private sectors, the statement added.



Carrefour Qatar launches ‘PayLater’

Carrefour, which Majid Al Futtaim owns the exclusive rights to operate in Qatar, has launched PayLater, a new ‘Buy Now, Pay Later’ feature available in stores and online.

With PayLater, eligible customers can shop across food and non-food categories and split their total bill into four equal instalments without any additional fees or interest, a statement said.

From upgrading electronics to managing monthly groceries or preparing for festive seasons, the service enhances financial accessibility by offering greater convenience and flexibility.

The launch reflects Carrefour’s commitment to enhancing affordability and smarter budgeting options for customers across Qatar, the statement added.

Suzuki Grand Vitara model recalled

The Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MoCI), in co-operation with Teyseer Motors, has announced the recall of Suzuki Grand Vitara vehicles 2025 model as the fuel level indicator and warning light within the speedometer assembly may not accurately reflect the actual fuel status as designed.

The ministry said the recall campaign falls within the framework of efforts to protect consumers and ensure that car dealers follow up on vehicle defects and repairs.

The ministry said it will co-ordinate with the dealer to follow up on the maintenance and repair works and will communicate with customers to ensure that the necessary repairs are carried out.

The ministry urged all consumers to report any violations or breaches by contacting the Consumer Protection and Combatting Commercial Fraud Department, which receives complaints, suggestions, and inquiries through the following communication channels: Call Centre: 16001, e-mail: info@moci.gov.qa, ministry’s accounts on social media: @mociqatar, ministry’s Mobile App: MOCIQATAR (available on iOS and Android devices).



Vodafone Qatar announces in-stadium initiatives during FIFA Arab Cup Qatar

Vodafone Qatar is elevating the match-day experience at the FIFA Arab Cup Qatar 2025 with a special in-stadium engagement initiative that celebrates fans.

At every match, spectators will have the chance to be recognised as the official #FanOfTheMatch or #FamilyOfTheMatch, an activation launched in line with Vodafone Qatar’s role as the Official Technology Sponsor of the tournament.

Designed to highlight the enthusiasm and community spirit of supporters, the initiative invites attendees to capture and share their tournament experience for an opportunity to appear on the stadium’s big screen and win prizes.

The randomly selected “Fan of the Match” from all the qualifying entries will receive one Apple Watch, while the chosen “Family of the Match” will be awarded one Motorola smartphone.

To participate, fans must attend the match, take an individual or family selfie before halftime, tag @VodafoneQatar, and include the hashtag #FanOfTheMatch or #FamilyOfTheMatch in their post.

To find out more about Vodafone Qatar’s products and services, visit www.vodafone.qa

QU signs four IP licensing pacts at MWC25

As the exclusive educational partner of the recent Mobile World Congress (MWC25) in Doha, Qatar University (QU) announced the signing of several intellectual property (IP) licensing agreements with four emerging and international technology companies.

The agreements were formalised during the “From Innovation to Impact: IP Commercialisation and Industry Collaboration Signing Ceremony”, held on the sidelines of the global event.

These agreements align with the QU’s strategy to strengthen the national innovation ecosystem and accelerate the transition of research outputs from laboratories to industry and the marketplace, a statement said yesterday.

Qatar University signed a licensing agreement with ClearExhaust, the second startup to emerge from the university’s innovation ecosystem.

ClearExhaust was founded and led by Prof Samer Ahmed from the Department of Mechanical Engineering, supported by a team of graduate students and research assistants at the QU.

The company specialises in developing innovative systems to reduce emissions from combustion engines.

Its first product, the “Smokeless Exhaust Pipe”, is based on a registered US patent and offers a breakthrough solution that removes 100% of visible diesel emissions while reducing carbon dioxide

(CO2) emissions by 20-30%.

The system was developed at the QU’s Thermal Engines Laboratory and tested on TATA buses in collaboration with Al-Hamad Automobiles, as well as municipal service trucks at the Ministry of Municipality.

The company is also developing a second innovation, the Portable Carbon Capture System, which demonstrated 100% carbon capture efficiency during laboratory testing on diesel engines.

The technology will be registered soon as a US patent.

These solutions address Qatar’s needs for emission reduction in line with the Qatar National Vision 2030 and the National Climate Change Action Plan (NCCAP 2021).

The QU signed an exclusive licensing agreement with iDiagnosis Ltd, a UK-based medical diagnostics company, to commercialise a novel blood test for the early detection of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD).

The test is the first of its kind globally to achieve accuracy levels exceeding 80% sensitivity and specificity in both discovery and clinical validation studies, meeting the diagnostic standards set by the American Psychiatric Association.

The technology analyses low-level protein modifications associated with metabolic changes in the brain, supported by advanced artificial intelligence (AI) algorithms to ensure predictive accuracy.



The company was founded in 2024 by former QU researcher Prof Nailla Rabbani and Prof Paul Thornalley, formerly from Hamad Bin Khalifa University.

The technology was developed and clinically validated in a large-scale study funded by the QU, which also owns the associated patents.

The licensing agreement marks a major milestone in enabling early ASD diagnosis, improving referral accuracy, and accelerating access to timely support and treatment for children.

The QU also signed an exclusive licensing agreement with QLife Pharma, a Qatar-based pharmaceutical company specialised in manufacturing high-value pharmaceutical products and advancing national self-sufficiency, to produce and commercialise Q-Silvano, a topical antimicrobial gel based on stable silver nanoparticles.

The product was developed in the QU Health Sector – College of Pharmacy laboratory under the

leadership of Prof Alaaeldin Elkilany.

Q-Silvano is the first nano-based medical product to be officially registered with the Ministry of Public Health in Qatar.

Technology transfer is currently underway to enable local manufacturing and product launch in early 2026, with plans for regional expansion into GCC and Mena (Middle East and North Africa) markets.

The licensing agreement covers the transfer of formulation knowledge, enabling large-scale production, and facilitating commercial marketing processes.

This collaboration focuses on technology transfer, regulatory compliance, quality systems development, and sustainable production scaling, supporting local market needs and paving the way for regional expansion.

The achievement highlights the impact of QU-industry partnerships in transforming local research innovation into therapeutics manufactured in Qatar, in line

with Qatar National Vision 2030 and the country’s knowledge-based health sector goals.

The QU launched a new collaboration agreement with Genesis Technologies, a startup emerging from the national research and innovation ecosystem, to introduce the Imdaat platform during its first commercial phase.

The agreement transforms research outcomes developed by the Qatar Research, Development and Innovation Council and the QU into a tangible digital product.

The platform is preparing for its first implementation with a ministry in Qatar in the coming months, offering a reliable and secure decentralised system for issuing and verifying digital documents, enhancing government service efficiency, and supporting the nation’s digital transformation agenda.


Commenting on the occasion, QU Vice-President (Research and Graduate Studies) Prof Aiman Erbad said: “The QU’s signing of a series of IP licensing agreements during MWC25 reflects the sig-

nificant progress we have made in building an integrated innovation ecosystem grounded in applied research and researcher empowerment and in linking scientific output directly to industry and societal needs.”

“These agreements mark an important step toward accelerating the transfer of national knowledge and technologies to global markets, while strengthening the ability of our startups to offer innovative solutions in vital fields such as digital health, sustainability, and clean energy,” he said. “We believe strategic partnerships with local and international institutions create unique opportunities for our researchers and students to expand their impact and achieve tangible economic and societal value.”

These agreements, it was pointed out, reflect the advanced stage reached by the QU in building an integrated innovation and IP ecosystem founded on applied research support, researcher empowerment, the establishment of knowledge-based startups, and strengthened collaboration with industry locally and globally.

At the end of the ceremony, the QU emphasised that enhancing the commercialisation of national innovations will remain a central focus of its research strategy in the coming years, supporting the knowledge-based economy and advancing national priorities in health, environment, and digital transformation, the statement added.



The Transport Company
MOWASALAT (KARWA)

Mowasalat (Karwa) announces the following tender:



Tender Ref. No.	Tender Title	Bid Closing Date
TC-071-EGS-2025	Lease of Drivers Accommodation in Dukhan-Zikreet, Al Shamal-Al Ruwais or surrounding areas	23 December 2025







CONDITIONS:

MOWASALAT Company (Karwa) is pleased to announce the requirement for Lease of Drivers Accommodation in Dukhan-Zikreet, Al Shamal-Al Ruwais (sealed envelope), in accordance with the following terms:

- Interested parties will receive the required documents via email upon submitting an expression of their interest containing authorization letter and their commercial / legal documents to tenders@Mowasalat.com and bid submission as per the following procedure.
- Tender validity:** Bid validity period shall be 180 days from the bid closing date.
- Bid submission:** Bids must be submitted in 1 sealed (IN RED WAX) envelopes (1 Original + 1 non-Editable copy in a USB) addressed to Secretary - Tender Committee clearly highlighting the Tender Ref. No. & Tender Title and including the following minimum documents:
 - Commercial Proposal
 - Details of Building
 - Proof of Ownership / Proof of authorization from Owner
 - QCDD Certificate, municipality approvals and Workers' Welfare Standard compliance
 - Expected mobilization date for the facilities
 - List of other properties owned / authorized by the Bidder
- Bid Closing Date:** Bid submission deadline is **12:00 noon Doha Local Time** as on the Bid closing date shown above. The 3 envelopes must be handed over to the Office of The Secretary-Tenders Committee, located at Mowasalat Head Office, Industrial Area. Any tender submitted after the deadline will not be considered.

Tel.: 4458 8724 Fax: 4458 8850

 **Supplier Registration** **Mowasalat Location**

 **كروى KARWA** **دوحة ليموزين dotalimousine** **خدمات كروى karwa services** **مركز مواصلات الطبي mowasalat medical center** **أكاديمية كروى Karwa Academy** **كروى للتكنولوجيا Karwa Technologies**

Homegrown heroes: Qatari athletes up to the challenge at T100 Triathlon

As the world’s elite triathletes prepare to arrive in Doha for the inaugural Qatar T100 Triathlon World Championship Final, attention also turns to the Qatari athletes who will represent the nation on the global stage, embodying a spirit of determination and ambition.

Set to take place on December 10-13, the event marks the final stage of the T100 Triathlon World Tour, a global series that attracts the world’s top endurance athletes.

The competition will showcase Qatar’s blend of natural and urban landscapes, with a course that winds through the Arabian Gulf and Lusail’s modern landmarks.

For Qatar’s own athletes, the competition represents more than just a race, it is an opportunity to showcase national pride, resilience, and the growing triathlon culture in the region.

Sharing his excitement, Qatari athlete Mohammed al-Hashimi, who will be doing the 100km triathlon – a 2km swim, 80km bike and 18km run – said: “Competing in an event of this scale here in Qatar feels incredibly special.”

“It’s more than a race for me; it’s a moment that reminds me of how far I’ve

come, and how much strength we uncover in ourselves when we choose not to give up,” he said.

“Having this world-class event hosted in my own country makes the experience even more meaningful,” al-Hashimi continued. “It’s empowering to stand at the same start line with athletes from around the world, knowing that Qatar is creating opportunities for all of us to grow, challenge ourselves, and be part of something bigger.”

Alya al-Hamad, who will also be doing the 100km distance, said: “Having the T100 take place here in Qatar feels like a remarkable opportunity for anyone who loves endurance sports to participate in and experience a major global event.”

“For me, I began my endurance journey in 2022, focusing mainly on sprint-distance triathlon, but having the T100 in my own country gave me the courage to try something new,” she said. “Moving into long-distance triathlon ahead of this race has pushed me to challenge myself and test my limits.”

Asked about her message to the new generation of athletes in Qatar, Fatima al-Baker, who is doing the Sprint distance triathlon of 1.5km swim, 20km bike and a 5km run, responded: “My message

Alya al-Hamad

Mohammed al-Hashimi

to young athletes is simple: start even if you feel slow, unsure, or not fully ready.”

“Progress doesn’t come from perfection; it comes from showing up again and again, even on hard days,” she said. “Believe in your ability to become stronger, and don’t compare your journey to anyone else’s.”

Qatar’s reputation as a hub for world-class sport continues to grow, with the T100 Triathlon Final joining a prestigious calendar of international sporting events.

As the country welcomes the world’s best athletes, its own competitors stand ready to make their mark, reflecting the spirit of determination and ambition that underscores Qatar’s vision for excellence and leadership on the global sporting stage.

Qatar unveils book charting climate and green development progress

QNA
Doha

Qatar has unveiled a new book documenting the country's environmental achievements and long-term climate ambitions, as officials reaffirm the State's commitment to sustainable development.

The Ministry of Environment and Climate Change launched *Environmental Sustainability in Qatar 2025* at a ceremony attended and sponsored by HE the Minister of Environment and Climate Change Dr Abdullah bin Abdulaziz bin Turki al-Subaie. The publication aims to capture Qatar's national journey in protecting natural resources, reducing emissions and embedding sustainability across government and industry.

Assistant Undersecretary for Climate Change Affairs, Ahamed Mohammed al-Sada, said sustainability has become a national guiding principle shaping future policies and projects. Qatar, he noted, is working to balance economic growth with environmental protection while improving quality of life. Al-Sada described the new book as a reference point that



highlights the commitment of both public and private institutions to applying best environmental practices. It also showcases the country's progress in expanding clean energy, improving air-quality monitoring, and backing innovative low-emission initiatives.

The launch was paired with a conference featuring sessions on sustainable transport, green real-estate development and the role of banks in supporting the green economy – a forum that officials said helped generate recommen-

dations aligned with the country's sustainability goals.

The publication comes as Qatar advances several national strategies, including its Third National Development Strategy and the ministry's 2024-2030 environmental strategy. These frameworks set out priorities for environmental governance, resource management and long-term climate planning.

The book outlines key ministry programmes, from emissions-reduction initiatives and biodiversity

protection to enhanced environmental readiness and improved monitoring systems. It also documents national projects in water, energy and waste management, green infrastructure and sustainable mobility.

The chapters highlight conservation efforts for marine and terrestrial wildlife, habitat restoration projects, species-monitoring programmes and regular coastal clean-ups.

The publication also features community-led environmental



initiatives and research projects that have deepened understanding of Qatar's ecosystems.

Urban sustainability is another focal point, with case studies on expanding green spaces, upgrading public parks, adopting green-building standards and integrating public transport, electric vehicles and pedestrian and cycling networks into city planning.

The book also details Qatar's participation in global climate agreements, its role in hosting major environmental conferences and

its support for developing nations seeking climate finance and resilience assistance.

The ministry said the publication reflects Qatar's dedication to documenting its environmental progress and advancing a development model that balances economic growth with the preservation of natural resources.

The goal, it added, is to ensure long-term environmental security for future generations and contribute to the objectives of Qatar National Vision 2030.



Old Doha Port wraps up 3rd seabed cleaning initiative

QNA
Doha

Old Doha Port capped off yesterday the third Seabed Cleaning Initiative, underscoring its steadfast commitment to safeguarding the marine environment and amplifying community awareness of sustainable practices. In a statement, the Port highlighted that since its inception in 2023, the initiative has emerged as a core environmental pillar, strategically reinforcing the national agenda's priorities on sustainable development and the preservation of Qatar's ecological resources.

This year's initiative witnessed integrated collaboration between certified divers, governmental functionaries, and private-sector partners, within a co-ordinated operation extending across the entire waterfront of the Port, the statement read.

It further pointed out that divers successfully operated to remove accumulated waste from the deep water reaching 6 metres, which included plastic materials, fishing lines, nets, and heavy debris that pose a threat to marine life and navigation safety, noting that the intervention areas were identified based on precise seabed surveys conducted prior to the operation.

The initiative has received substantial backing from partners,

with the Ministry of Municipality providing operational mechanisms and support, while the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change conducted environmental oversight and provided essential technical guidelines, the statement continued.

The statement clarified that ExxonMobil Qatar also undertook the role of strategic contributor, while Tanzifco carried out onsite waste sorting operations and ensured that recyclable materials were directed to the competent authorities, with the Qatari Coast Guard ensuring the safety of divers throughout the seabed cleaning operation.

It remarked that the Arab Center for Engineering Studies (ACES) organised workshops and interactive activities for children on sustainability to contribute to strengthening awareness about the importance of protecting the environment. Other key participants included Environmental and Green Energy Services, Athar Alfardan, Alfardan Marine Services, Hai Wash, and Mr. Valet.

As such, CEO of the Old Doha Port, Eng Mohamed Abdullah al-Mulla, asserted that this initiative is a testament to the Port's responsibility toward the coastal environment in the State of Qatar, emphasising that the nation's marine environment constitutes a time-honoured part of its national identity and preserving it

is a duty on the part of all.

This initiative has become an annual landmark with concrete positive impact that corrals the community's enterprises and individuals toward one goal, as long as holding each one of these initiatives reinforces the collective responsibility in safeguarding the nation's natural resources for the generations to come, al-Mulla stressed.

Vice-President and Manager of Public and Government Affairs at ExxonMobil Qatar, Rashid al-Hajri, underlined that collaboration with the Port in this initiative underscores an all-hands-on-deck approach in protecting the environment and marine life, as well as promoting sustainability for the next generations.

Noteworthy, the initiative comes in alignment with the environmental development pillar within Qatar National Vision 2030, which includes a pro-environment appeal for the protection of natural resources and environmental equilibrium, in addition to bolstering environmental governance and societal partnership.

Since its launch in 2023, the Initiative has been incrementally expanded, emerging today as one of the Port's core pillars in the long-term sustainability agenda amid plans to enlarge its scope and broaden the engagement of the community members in the years ahead.

Gaza truce holding as Qatar pushes toward next phase

From Page 1

Dr al-Ansari also condemned Israel's continued killing of Palestinian journalists, saying such actions aim to silence reporting on the reality in Gaza.

On Qatar's efforts regarding the Russia-Ukraine crisis, al-Ansari stated that Qatar engaged from day one in exploring possible mediation efforts and supported all global initiatives aimed at resolving the conflict.

He highlighted Qatar's success in reuniting over 115 children affected by the war with their families from both sides, underlining the Qatari message to all parties is that conflicts are ultimately resolved through peaceful means, and the dialogue table remains the path to crisis resolution.

Turning to domestic developments, he announced that the 23rd Doha Forum will be held on December 6-7, 2025, under the theme "Establishing Justice: From Promises to Tangible Reality." The event will bring together world leaders, policymakers, and experts from more than 150 countries, reflecting Qatar's growing role as a hub for dialogue, cooperation, and shared progress.

Ministry to hold special education forum

The Ministry of Education and Higher Education will hold the first Forum on Special Education and Inclusive Education on December 3-4, under the theme 'Empowerment and Inclusion: Toward a Better Future for Persons with Disabilities'. The forum aims to enhance the quality of inclusive education for students with disabilities. The event will serve as a specialised educational platform bringing together experts and specialists from various institutions to promote community and educational awareness, and to exchange best practices in assessment, educational intervention, and academic, behavioural, and psychological support. The forum also seeks to highlight the latest developments in Qatar's national policy for student inclusion, in addition to showcasing the newest research and studies in the fields of special education and inclusive education.

It further aims to strengthen partnerships among educational, community, medical, and social institutions, contributing to integrated and comprehensive services for students with disabilities. The programme includes specialised sessions to build the skills of educational staff, introduce the role of artificial intelligence and modern technologies in supporting student learning and empowerment, and present field experiences and inspiring success stories of students, their families, and their teachers.

QF's Academyti opens enrolment for its newly launched high school

Academyti, part of Qatar Foundation's (QF) Pre-University Education, has opened enrolment for its new high school stage, a step that reflects its ongoing vision to reimagine education and provide an innovative learning model that enables students to learn in deeper, more connected, real-world ways.

Since its establishment in 2018, Academyti has served as a pioneering educational model in Qatar, applying a progressive learning approach that places students at the centre of the educational process while fostering curiosity, creativity, and self-directed learning.

Academyti is currently enrolling students in Grade 9 under the Ministry of Education and Higher Education curriculum and will expand next year to include Grade 10, as part of a phased plan to offer a comprehensive learning experience across all secondary levels. Enrolment for Grade 9 students will begin in January 2026, with selected admission opportunities available for Grades 9 and 10 for the 2026-2027 academic year.

Elizabeth Kennedy, director of Academyti, said: "Our students represent a new generation of learners who combine academic excellence with practical awareness, drawing strength from a values-based framework that guides their educational journey.

"We strive to create a learning environment that fosters critical thinking, social responsibility, and empowers students to learn for life."

Kennedy noted that Academyti students have engaged in a wide range of experiential learning op-



portunities across QF's diverse and integrated ecosystem combining knowledge with practice. These include stable management and horse riding at QF member Al Shaqab, learning the art of debate in collaboration with QF-founded QatarDebate, and participating in the Chefs Academy, where they developed culinary skills.

"Students also took part in research visits to Qatar National Library, enrolled in digital creativity courses using Adobe programmes, and showcased their innovations during the QF Hackathon 2025. They also participated in the 'Youth Studio' session as part of the WISE 12 Summit," Kennedy added.

"The high school at Academyti offers a blend of academic innovation and Advanced Placement courses, designed to prepare students both academically and

personally to achieve their future goals in Qatar and beyond.

"The academic model at Academyti is based on a competency-driven approach that provides students with a flexible and integrated schedule, allowing them greater space to explore and deepen their interests while maintaining the highest standards of academic rigour."

Since its establishment, Academyti has been committed to fostering an educational approach grounded in innovation and critical thinking, as part of a pioneering movement redefining education in Qatar.

The school invites parents and prospective students to attend its High School Open Day on January 8, from 2.15pm to 3.15pm, to learn more about the Academyti model and explore the learning experience firsthand.



Astronomy and Astrophysics Olympiad begins with 1,600 students

The Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MoEHE) announced the start of the first stages of the junior Astronomy and Astrophysics Olympiad for the 2025-26 academic year, drawing more than 1,600 students from public and private schools.

In a statement, the ministry said the initiative is organised under the supervision of the Curriculum and Learning Resources Department, to form the nucleus of a national astronomy team that will represent Qatar in upcoming regional and international competitions. The opening round included a series of tests designed to measure students' skills in astronomy and astrophysics, ahead of more specialised stages. Following the



initial qualifiers, Al Khansa Primary School for Girls and Qatar Science and Technology Secondary School for Boys hosted the second stage, where selected students sat for advanced exams assessing their scientific readiness and analytical abilities in the field.

The ministry said the Olympiad marks a significant step in sup-

porting talented students in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM), strengthening their capacity to compete in global scientific contests. Officials added that the programme reflects Qatar's commitment to nurturing innovation and creativity, in line with the goals of the Qatar National Vision 2030. (QNA)

 | QATAR



From second left: HE the Minister of Education and Higher Education Lolwah bint Rashid AlKhater, HE Sheikh Faisal bin Qassim al-Thani, HE the Minister of State and President of the Qatar National Library Dr Hamad bin Abdulaziz al-Kawari.



Prof Dr Khalid bin Ibrahim al-Sulaiti with Prof Waldemar Pförtzsch.

Katara launches *B2B Brand Management* book

Katara Cultural Village witnessed on Sunday the launch of the book *B2B Brand Management - Qatar Edition*, dubbed as the first specialised reference of its kind in the country highlighting modern practices in business-to-business brand management.

The launch ceremony was at-

tended by HE Lolwah bint Rashid AlKhater, Minister of Education and Higher Education; HE Dr Hamad bin Abdulaziz al-Kawari, Minister of State and President of the Qatar National Library; HE Sheikh Faisal bin Qassim al-Thani; and a number of senior officials, academics, experts, and those interested in the world of marketing

and brand management.

The book is authored by a group of leading international experts: Katara general manager Prof Dr Khalid bin Ibrahim al-Sulaiti, a professor specialising in marketing; Prof Philip Kotler, known globally as the “Father of Modern Marketing”; and Prof Waldemar Pförtzsch, a leading pioneer in B2B brand management and human-centred marketing.

The book offers a contemporary perspective on the realities and future trends of the Qatari business sector.

During the launch ceremony, Prof Dr al-Sulaiti expressed his pride in launching this high-quality publication, which reflects the

rapid development of the business sector in Qatar. He noted that the book is the fruit of scholarly collaboration aimed at supporting the Qatari business sector with modern knowledge tools.

He explained that the book demonstrates how Qatari institutions build strong brands in a challenging environment, featur-

ing real-world Qatari case studies such as Qatar Airways, Al Jazeera, Industries Qatar, and other Qatari companies, in addition to experiences from Katara. These case studies reveal how Qatari companies innovate, build trust, address challenges, and how Qatari culture becomes a source of brand strength.

Nama forum highlights role of social innovation

QNA
Doha

The Social Development Centre “Nama”, which operates under the umbrella of the Qatar Foundation for Social Work, yesterday concluded the first edition of the Social Innovation Forum 2025. The forum was held under the patronage and presence of HE the Minister of Social Development and Family and Chairperson of the Board of Directors of the Qatar Foundation for Social Work Buthaina bint Ali al-Jabr al-Nuaimi.

The event brought together a distinguished group of decision-makers, experts, and stakeholders in the field of social development.

Organised with the support of the Social and Sports Activities Support Fund (Daam), the forum highlighted the growing role of social innovation as a key driver in building a more inclusive and effective development ecosystem. It emphasised the importance of empowering institutions and communities to create innovative solutions that respond to the needs of beneficiaries and adapt to evolving regional and global challenges.

The inaugural edition of the forum marked a pivotal step toward establishing a comprehensive national framework for social innovation. It showcased local and international perspectives and experiences that underscored the need to develop new models for social work and adopt innovative practices that enhance the quality of services provided to beneficiaries. This aligns with Qatar National Vision 2030, which places human development at its core and calls for a knowledge-based economy and modern approaches to make social work more sustainable and impactful.

The forum reflects Nama’s commitment to contributing to the four pillars of the national vision, particularly the social pillar focused on building a cohesive society capable of facing challenges, the human pillar emphasising investment in individual capabilities, and the economic pillar encouraging diversification and the development of non-traditional sectors, notably social innovation.

During keynote speeches and panel discussions, speakers addressed the importance of transitioning from traditional methods to more advanced systems

in designing and implementing social programmes, paving the way for more flexible and creative models.

The forum also witnessed the signing of several agreements and partnerships aimed at supporting the social innovation ecosystem and enhancing its role in serving the community.

Additionally, an exhibition was held featuring schools and supporters in the field of social entrepreneurship, showcasing promising youth-led initiatives that transformed ideas into impactful social projects.

As part of the forum’s activities, Nama announced the winners of the second edition of the Social Entrepreneurship Award across three categories: Secondary Schools, Best Existing Project, and Best Project Idea. The winning initiatives were honoured for their efforts in developing sustainable and scalable solutions that align with the award’s goals of promoting a culture of social entrepreneurship and fostering youth initiative.

Top honours were awarded to boys from Qatar Leadership Academy and girls from Al Bayan Secondary School for Girls (1st place), boys from Al Rayyan Private School and girls from Al

Wakra Secondary School for Girls (2nd place), boys from Jassim bin Hamad Secondary School and girls from Rabaa Al-Adawiya Secondary School for Girls (3rd place).

Individual awards included Samah Abdulkarim Qassem for Best Project Idea with “Kanan Project”; and Mohamed Wafiq for Best Existing Project with “Wafiq Technology”.

Commenting on the occasion, Nama Executive Director Ghanem Salah al-Ali stated that the forum’s success confirms Qatar’s strong foundation of talented and innovative youth capable of developing impactful solutions that meet societal needs.

Executive Director of Daam, Abdulrahman Abdulatif al-Manaei, emphasised that the fund’s support for the forum stems from its core responsibility to promote national initiatives aimed at modernising the social work ecosystem.

He expressed the fund’s commitment to empowering the forum as an effective platform for generating innovative solutions and supporting the state’s efforts to embed innovation as a key tool for achieving comprehensive development goals.



Oxygen Park Pilates classes promote women’s well-being

The Oxygen Park in Education City hosted a series of community support sessions organised by Go Pilates to promote women’s physical well-being.

The park saw wide participation from dozens of women who benefited from the open spaces and organisational supervision provided by Oxygen Park, ensuring a healthy and integrated environment for the sessions. Experienced Go Pilates instructors also provided support.

The community Pilates classes contributed to women’s health by improving core strength, correcting posture, and enhancing overall physical capabilities in a simple and accessible way.

Movement and breathing techniques helped reduce stress and promote mental flexibility, while the supportive group environment fostered a greater sense of belonging and motivation, positively impacting women’s long-term mental health.

Nouhaila El Mendili, manager

at Go Pilates, said: “Our community classes remind us that strength doesn’t just come from the core – it comes from connection. When women move together, breathe together, and support one another, wellbeing becomes something we build as a collective. Doha’s Oxygen Park gives us the space to rediscover that kind of shared mindfulness and power.”

Pilates is no longer a niche fitness trend – it is becoming a mainstream wellness movement. In the US alone, an estimated 11mn people participate in Pilates each year, with women making up roughly two-thirds of that group.

The 130,000sq m Oxygen Park is designed to integrate aspects of well-being and provide an open space for goers to exercise within a uniquely designed environment. It is an iconic part of Education City where communities can come together to combine mindfulness with body movement and deep connections.

QM announces return of World Wide Walls to Doha for its third edition

Qatar Museums (QM) announced the third edition of the international mural festival, World Wide Walls: Doha (formerly known as Pow! Wow!), taking place between Dec 3 and 9.

The event will bring together more than a dozen artists who will reinvent the Al Aziziyah district into a vibrant open-air gallery by installing newly created, large-scale murals. This latest edition of World Wide Walls: Doha follows the success of previous iterations of the festival in Al Sadd Metro Station (2021) and the Old Doha Port (2023).

Sheikha Reem al-Thani, Deputy

CEO of Al Riwaq, Public Art, and Rubaiya Qatar, said: “World Wide Walls is more than a festival of murals – it is a celebration of creativity, imagination, and the human connections that art brings to life. This year is especially meaningful as QM marks its 20th anniversary, a moment to reflect on two decades of cultural growth and social engagement.

“Hosting the festival in Al Aziziyah allows us to connect even more closely with the neighbourhood, bringing artists and residents together to shape a shared, vibrant, and evolving public realm.”

This year’s edition features a di-



verse lineup of 14 artists and collectives, including Anfal al-Kandari and Fatima Alsharshani, two Qatari artists whose works reflect the country’s growing contemporary art scene and deep cultural roots.

Al-Kandari recently travelled to

Hawaii to participate in other editions of World Wide Walls, while Alsharshani will travel to Hong Kong in 2026 to participate in Hkwalls, as part of artist exchange.

Other participating artists include Ed Oner (Morocco); The

Square Kero (Tunisia); Drew Young (Canada); Wooden Wave (United States); Hitotzuki (Japan); Bao Ho (Hong Kong); Kitt Bennett (Australia); Nevercrew (Switzerland); Wen2 (France); and Enfant Précoce (Cameroon).

The festival also includes the Chilean artist Posh del Futuro and the Argentinian artist Animalitoland in celebration of the Qatar Argentina and Chile 2025 Year of Culture, highlighting the enduring value of artistic and cultural exchange between the nations.

World Wide Walls founder Jasper Wong said: “Seeing these creative voices cross oceans and

share their perspectives has been a powerful reminder of how art can build understanding and connection. This festival has become a genuine cultural bridge. One that brings people together, celebrates our differences, and highlights the universal language of creativity.”

The festival will include a panel discussion at Fire Station on Dec 10.

World Wide Walls: Doha is made possible through the collaboration of Qatar Museums’ Public Art Department with Al Rayyan Municipality, Jotun, Japan Walls, Hawaii Walls, HKwalls, Discover Qatar, and several owners of private buildings.

ANNOUNCEMENT

I, **MOHAMMED SHAHED AHMED SHOMSU MIAH**
holder of
Bangladesh Passport No. A18945789
QID No. 28705002721

hereby change my name

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MOHAMMED SHAHED AHMED SHOMSU MIAH

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MD SHAHAD AHMED

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

CRA offers insight into how it guards communication signals

The Communications Regulatory Authority (CRA) has concluded its national initiative “Everyone Connected, Everyone Engaged”, launched earlier this year to mark the 160th anniversary of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU). The closing activity of the initiative was held in collaboration with “Best Buddies – Qatar”.

The closing activity featured an inclusive visit to the Space Radio Monitoring Centre (SRMC), where participants with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) engaged in interactive learning of CRA’s advanced monitoring

technologies. They explored monitoring vehicles, attended live demonstrations of spectrum activities, and observed the “Al-Shaheen” drone in action, which is used to detect and address interference on radio signals. This experience offered participants valuable insights into how CRA safeguards communication signals and ensures reliability of mobile, Internet, and broadcasting services in Qatar.

Launched on World Telecommunication and Information Society Day, the initiative featured a series of community-focused activities, including digital safety awareness for the elderly in

collaboration with Ehsan Centre, in addition to initiatives empowering people with disabilities, encouraging youth to innovate in the field of Information and Communications Technology (ICT), and promoting digital culture within the community.

Director of the Consumer Affairs Department at CRA Amel Salem al-Hanawi said: “The ‘Everyone Connected, Everyone Engaged’ initiative reflects CRA’s commitment to promoting digital inclusion in the State of Qatar and enabling all members of society to benefit equally from ICT services. This initia-



tive comes as part of CRA’s strategy to develop the ICT sector and support the digital transformation journey, contributing to the ambitious goals of Qatar National Vision 2030 toward a diversified knowledge-based economy.”

Development and Inclusion Lead at Best Buddies Qatar Sheikh Haya al-Thani said: “We deeply value this meaningful collaboration with the Communications Regulatory Authority, which gave our mem-

bers an inspiring opportunity to explore advanced communication technologies. Beyond learning, the visit strengthened their confidence and sense of belonging, reminding us that inclusion is at the heart of every nation’s progress. At Best Buddies Qatar, we’re proud to be part of a shared vision that empowers individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities to take their place in Qatar’s digital future.” (QNA)

Troops kill two Palestinians in West Bank incidents

AFP
Jerusalem

The Israeli military said yesterday it had killed two fighters it said attacked soldiers in separate incidents in the occupied West Bank, with the Palestinian Authority identifying the deceased as a 17 and 18-year-old.

The army said the first attack took place Monday evening near Hebron, in the south of the Palestinian territory, where a female soldier was lightly injured in a car ramming attack.

In a statement, it said that after pursuing the fighter, Israeli forces attempted to apprehend the suspect, during which they shot him dead.

As the army did not return his

body, the Palestinian Authority said it had been informed by Israel of the death of 17-year-old Muhammad Tariq Mohammed al-Zaghir, who was killed by Israeli soldiers “in the city of Hebron,” without elaborating further.

The Israeli military said the second attack took place near Ramallah, in the centre of the West Bank, which Israel has occupied since 1967.

Soldiers were dispatched to the area near the Israeli settlement of Ateret following a report of a suspect, the army said in a brief statement.

Israel’s Magen David Adom (MDA) emergency services reported two lightly wounded men around 20 years old.

The Palestinian Authority said it had been informed by Israel of the death of 18-year-old

Mohammed Raslan Mahmoud Asmar, who was shot by Israeli forces north of Ramallah.

In a statement, the Palestinian Islamic Jihad movement praised the attacks as “heroic operations... against the occupation soldiers”.

Violence in the West Bank has soared since Palestinian Hamas group’s October 2023 storming of Israel triggered the Gaza war. It has not ceased despite the fragile truce between Israel and Hamas coming into effect in October.

Israeli troops or settlers have killed more than 1,000 Palestinians, many of them fighters, but also scores of civilians, in the West Bank since the start of the Gaza war, according to an AFP tally based on Palestinian health ministry figures.

VR headsets take war-scarred children to world away from Gaza

AFP
Al-Zawayda

Children scarred by the war in Gaza are undergoing a therapy programme using virtual reality headsets that transport the youngsters to a world far away from the destruction around them.

The VR therapy is aimed at improving the children’s psychological well-being, with operators saying it can achieve results more quickly than traditional therapy sessions.

Inside a white tent pitched on a sandy patch of ground in Al-Zawayda, in central Gaza, excited chatter swelled as five boys roamed around a virtual world.



Palestinian children wearing goggles and holding a joy stick experience virtual reality as a medical technology support team launches an initiative in the city of Al-Zawayda, in the central Gaza Strip, featuring therapy sessions using virtual reality technology.

there was more to the VR headsets than simply escape.

“Through programmers, we are able to design games with therapeutic, preventive and developmental goals that help prepare the child or enable them to cope and manage their life more effectively,” he told AFP.

“This method has proven its effectiveness over a full year of working with many children, including war-amputee children, injured children and those exposed to extremely traumatic events.”

A fragile ceasefire in the war between Israel and the Palestinian Hamas group has held since October 10. The World Health Organisation says conflict-related injuries carry a mental health toll, and survivors struggle with trauma, loss and daily survival, while psychosocial services remain scarce in Gaza.

Jonathan Crickx, spokesman for the UN children’s agency Unicef, told AFP that around 1mn children, or in other words, “all children in the Gaza Strip, are in need of mental health and psychosocial support after two years of horrendous war”.

The VR sessions rely on programmes specifically designed for traumatised children, taking into account their physical and psychological condition, and help them rebuild positive perceptions of the world.



A medical technology support team member demonstrates to Palestinian youth, how to use virtual reality goggles and a joystick, as part of a medical technology initiative in the city of Al-Zawayda, in the central Gaza Strip, featuring therapy sessions using virtual reality technology.

Abu Shamale said the children were “treated and accompanied through VR sessions, and when we integrated them into these techniques, they showed a very, very strong response and extremely positive results.

“The speed of treatment, recovery and reaching stability using VR techniques was faster than in regular sessions. In regular sessions without VR, we usually need about 10 to 12 sessions, while with VR we can achieve results in just five to seven sessions,” he said.

Nigeria names former top general as defence minister

AFP
Abuja

Nigerian President Bola Tinubu yesterday nominated former top military commander General Christopher Musa as new minister of defence as the country grapples with a wave of mass kidnappings.

The nomination of Musa is the latest military leadership shake-up as the Nigerian armed forces face a tumultuous few weeks, and comes as Africa’s most populous country undergoes intense criticism for the handling of its myriad conflicts.

The country faces a long-running militant insurgency in the northeast, while armed “bandit” gangs conduct kidnappings and loot villages in the northwest and farmers and herders clash in the country’s centre over dwindling land and resources.

Musa had been serving as chief



File photo of Christopher Musa.

of defence staff until October, when Tinubu sacked a slew of the country’s top military brass following media reports of a coup attempt.

The administration officially denied the reports of a coup plot, though military, intelligence and government sources said that there had been a foiled plot to oust the country’s civilian leaders and install a junta.

Weeks later, the west African country was hit by a wave of mass kidnappings, including of hundreds of schoolchildren.

While such abductions for ransom are common in the

country, the sharp uptick saw Tinubu declare a “nationwide security emergency”.

Separately, Nigeria has faced a diplomatic offensive from the US, which has alleged that Christians are being killed en masse. On Monday, defence minister Mohammed Badaru Abubakar resigned, citing health reasons.

Musa will need to be confirmed by the Senate to take up his new post.

In a letter to the Senate, Tinubu “expressed confidence in General Musa’s ability to lead the Ministry of Defence and further strengthen Nigeria’s security architecture,” according to a statement from the presidency. Since Boko Haram militants kidnapped nearly 300 schoolgirls from the northeastern town of Chibok in an infamous raid more than a decade ago, Nigeria has struggled to contain mass abductions.

Pope urges halt to attacks in Lebanon as first voyage abroad concludes

AFP
Aboard the Papal Plane

Pope Leo XIV called for an end to hostilities in Lebanon and new approaches for peace in the Middle East before returning to Rome yesterday, ending his inaugural visit abroad as pontiff.

A 150,000-strong mass at Beirut’s waterfront was the highlight of the trip by the head of the world’s Catholics, who arrived in Lebanon on Sunday after visiting Türkiye, the start of his six-day trip.



Pope Leo XIV shakes hands with Lebanon’s President Joseph Aoun during a farewell ceremony before departing from Beirut International Airport at the end of his journey, yesterday.

Before landing in Rome yesterday afternoon, the 70-year-old pontiff told journalists aboard the papal plane that he looked forward to his next international trip, which has yet to be officially confirmed. “I hope to make a trip to Africa, which would possibly be my next trip to confirm,” he said, adding that he hoped to visit Algeria “to visit the places where St Augustine lived”. He also mentioned “Latin America, Argentina, Uruguay” as possible visits.

In Lebanon, the US pontiff received a jubilant welcome in a nation beset by a years-long economic collapse and which is still reeling from last year’s war between Israel and the Hezbollah group, with many fearing renewed hostilities.

Noting that he was unable to visit all of the country, Pope Leo expressed his “aspiration for peace, along with a heartfelt appeal: may the attacks and hostilities cease”.

Israel has continued to launch strikes on Lebanon despite a November 2024 ceasefire with Hezbollah and has escalated attacks in recent weeks – but has not announced any raids during the Pope’s visit.

Under heavy pressure, Lebanon’s government has committed to disarming the group, which however has rejected the idea.

The Pope appealed in his mass “to those who hold political and

social authority here and in all countries marked by war and violence. Listen to the cry of your peoples who are calling for peace”.

He said that “the Middle East needs new approaches in order to reject the mindset of revenge and violence, to overcome political, social and religious divisions, and to open new chapters in the name of reconciliation and peace”.

Later, as he prepared to depart from Beirut airport he declared: “While weapons are lethal, negotiation, mediation and dialogue are constructive. Let us all choose peace as a way, not just as a goal!”

Earlier, the Pope wound his way through the crowd at the outdoor mass in his Popemobile as people offered roses, with senior officials including President Joseph Aoun in attendance. “The Pope puts joy and peace in our hearts and strengthens our hope,” said Samira Khoury, among some 150,000 people in the crowd.

Leo told those gathered: “I especially pray for beloved Lebanon. I ask the international community once again to spare no effort in promoting processes of dialogue and reconciliation.”

Some participants travelled from abroad, including from neighbouring Syria, while migrant workers from countries such as the Philippines and Sri Lanka were

among the crowd. Elias Fadel, 22, said the visit was “a sign of hope for Lebanon. I can feel the peace already just by seeing the people and how happy they are and I can see hope in their eyes for the future of Lebanon”.

Before the service, the Pope prayed at the site of a catastrophic port explosion on August 4, 2020 which killed more than 220 people, injured over 6,500 and devastated swathes of the capital.

Near a monument to those killed, with the facility’s devastated grain silos visible nearby, the Pope spoke with survivors and relatives of victims, many of whom were holding photos of their loved ones.

“I was deeply moved by my brief visit to the Port of Beirut,” the Pope said from the airport.

“I carry with me the pain, and the thirst for truth and justice, of so many families, of an entire country,” he added.

Nobody has been held to account for the Beirut port blast, one of the world’s largest ever non-nuclear explosions.

Cecile Roukoz, a lawyer whose brother died in the explosion, expressed gratitude for the Pope speaking up for victims.

“We need justice for our brothers and all the victims of this explosion,” she said.

Sudan's RSF paramilitary claims control of strategic West Kordofan town

Sudan’s paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) said yesterday that it seized full control of Babanusa, a transport junction in the country’s oil-producing south, though its rival, the Sudanese army, disputed the claim. Reuters reported from Cairo.

In a statement on Monday, the RSF said its “liberation” of Babanusa in West Kordofan state – the latest frontline in the war in Sudan – came as it repelled “a surprise attack” by the Sudanese army in what it called “a clear violation of the humanitarian truce.”

Yesterday, the army denied that the RSF had taken the entire town, and accused its rivals of continuing attacks on Babanusa despite RSF commander Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo’s announcement of a unilateral ceasefire.

In a statement, the army said RSF fighters had launched daily artillery and drone strikes on the

town and that troops had repelled a new assault on Monday. Reuters was not immediately able to verify the claims by the rival forces.

The army dismissed the ceasefire declaration as a political tactic aimed at masking RSF movements and alleged foreign support.

On November 19, US President Donald Trump said he would intervene to stop the conflict, which erupted from a power struggle in April 2023. The United States, the United Arab Emirates, Egypt and Saudi Arabia – known as the Quad – earlier in November proposed a plan for a three-month truce followed by peace talks. The RSF responded by saying it had accepted the plan, but soon after attacked army territory with a barrage of drone strikes.

The RSF’s assault on Babanusa builds on the group’s momentum after it took Al-Fashir, the army’s last holdout in Darfur, in October.

Guinea-Bissau cannot complete presidential election: commission

Reuters
Bissau

Guinea-Bissau’s electoral commission said yesterday it was unable to complete the November 23 presidential election process after armed men seized ballots and vote tallies from its offices, while servers storing the results were destroyed.

Army officers in the West African state seized power on November 26, a day before the electoral commission was due to announce the results of the contested election.

“We do not have the material and logistic conditions to follow through with the electoral process,” Idrissa Djalo, a senior official of the electoral commission, said in a statement.

Buildings including the electoral commission offices came under attack when the army officers took power. Major-General Horta Inta-a was sworn in as the new transi-

tional president on November 27, halting the election process.

Inta-a has promised a one-year transitional period.

Guinea-Bissau’s new military leaders have come under pressure, particularly from the Economic Community of West African States (Ecowas) regional bloc, to restore constitutional order and to allow the electoral process to resume.

A high-level delegation from the bloc, led by Sierra Leone’s President Julius Maada Bio, met with the military leaders and electoral commission officials in Bissau on Monday.

Djalo said the commission had told the delegation that a group of unidentified armed and hooded individuals had stormed and ransacked its premises on November 26. “They confiscated the computers of all 45 staff members who were at the commission that day,” he said, adding that all election tally sheets from the different regions were seized, and the server

where the results were stored had been destroyed.

“It is impossible to complete the electoral process without the tally sheets from the regions,” Djalo said.

Ecowas leaders, who have threatened sanctions against those disrupting the constitutional order, are set to meet on December 14 to discuss the crisis.

The tiny West African coastal nation, wedged between Senegal and Guinea, has experienced repeated instability since gaining independence from Portugal in 1974, with only one president ever completing a full term in office.

The persistent turmoil has turned the country into a key transit point for cocaine shipments from Latin America to Europe, where rival cartels compete for influence in the lucrative drug trade. Inta-a said in his swearing-in that the coup was necessary to ward off a plot by “narco-traffickers” to “capture Guinean democracy”.



White House confirms admiral ordered second strike on alleged drug boat

AFP/Reuters
Washington

A US admiral acting under the authority of Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth ordered a second strike that targeted survivors of an initial attack on an alleged drug smuggling boat, the White House said on Monday.

The legality of the Trump administration's deadly strikes against suspected drug traffickers in the Caribbean and Pacific has been questioned, and reports of the follow-up attack on survivors triggered further accusations of a possible war crime.

Venezuela's leftist leader Nicolas Maduro has accused Washington of using drug trafficking as a pretext for "imposing regime change" in Caracas and rejected

a "slave's peace" for the region, amid mounting fears of US military action.

A total of 11 people were killed in the two strikes in early September, the first in a months-long military campaign that has so far left more than 80 dead.

Trump's administration insists that it is effectively at war with alleged "narco-terrorists", and the White House said Admiral Frank Bradley, who currently leads US Special Operations Command, had acted legally and properly in ordering a second strike.

Bradley "worked well within his authority and the law directing the engagement to ensure the boat was destroyed and the threat to the United States of America was eliminated", White House Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt told journalists.

Hegseth "authorised Admiral Bradley to conduct these kinetic strikes", she said.

With pressure on the Pentagon chief, Hegseth appeared to stress the decision was Bradley's.

"I stand by him and the combat decisions he has made - on the September 2 mission and all others since," he posted on Monday evening on X, calling Bradley "an American hero".

Some military personnel under the condition of anonymity told the *Washington Post* that this is "protect Pete (expletive)".

Another military official told the publication that Leavitt's statement "left it up to interpretation" who was responsible for the second strike and implored the White House to provide more clarity.

"We will eventually find out what really happened," promised Republican Roger Wicker, chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, who has opened an investigation into the matter.

Democrats also pounced on the issue, with Senator Chris Murphy accusing Hegseth of "passing the buck".

"Both Republicans and Democrats are coming to the conclusion that this was an illegal, wildly immoral act, and he is shifting the blame," Murphy told broadcaster CNN.

Congressman Mike Turner, a Republican on the House Armed Services Committee, said lawmakers have yet to be briefed on the "double-tap" strike.

"People have been very concerned about how these strikes have been operated," Turner said on the same news broadcast.

US media reported last week that an initial September 2 strike left two people alive who were killed in a subsequent attack to fulfil Hegseth's orders, but Pentagon spokesman Sean Parnell insisted that "this entire narrative was false".

Subsequent strikes that left survivors were followed by search-and-rescue efforts that recovered two people in one case and failed to find another later in October.

International humanitarian law prohibits its attacks on incapacitated combatants.

The Pentagon's Law of War Manual states that shipwrecked persons cannot be knowingly attacked and must receive medical care unless they act with hostility or attempt escape.

George Washington University law professor Laura Dickinson said most legal experts do not believe the boat strikes qualify as armed conflict, so lethal force would only be allowed as a last resort.

"It would be murder outside of armed conflict," she said.

Even in war, the killing of survivors "would likely be a war crime".

Honduras election 'tied' as Trump frees ex-president from prison

Reuters/AFP
Tegucigalpa/Washington

Honduran electoral workers were counting vote tallies by hand yesterday with the two presidential frontrunners, Nasry Asfura and Salvador Nasralla, still locked in a virtual tie, two days after an election marked by extraordinary US interference.

As the count continues, former Honduran president Juan Orlando Hernandez of the National Party was released from a US prison on Monday, where he was serving a 45-year prison sentence for drug trafficking and firearms charges, a Federal Bureau of Prisons registry showed.

The former president was convicted of helping to smuggle 400 tonnes of cocaine into the US.

His release came after US President Donald Trump urged Honduran voters to cast their ballots for the National Party candidate, Asfura, and said he would pardon Hernandez.

A White House official confirmed yesterday that Trump had pardoned Hernandez.

The preliminary results released on Monday show Asfura and Nasralla of the Liberal Party each holding just under 40% of

the vote, with Asfura only 515 votes ahead. Rixi Moncada, of the ruling LIBRE Party, was well behind in third with 19% of the vote.

With the razor thin margin, the electoral body declared the race a "technical tie".

Ana Paola Hall, the body's president, called for calm and patience as electoral workers moved into the slower stage of verifying the vote tallies by hand.

The preliminary results are based on tallies digitally transmitted by polling stations across the country.

Trump weighed in on Monday in a social media post in which he alleged, without evidence, that Honduras was "trying to change the results of their Presidential Election".

"If they do there will be hell to pay! The people of Honduras voted in overwhelming numbers on November 30th," Trump said on his Truth Social platform.

There was high voter turnout in Sunday's election, which was peaceful across the country, according to the Organisation of American States, which observed the vote.

It said in a statement on Monday that it "was able to verify that the voting proceeded normally, except for isolated incidents in



The flags of the US and of Honduras flutter alongside the flags of the National Party (centre) - whose candidate was Nasry Asfura - and of the Liberal Party (left) - whose candidate was Salvador Nasralla, at a street stall in Tegucigalpa. - AFP

some municipalities of the country".

Former president Manuel Zelaya, who is also the husband of current President Xiomara Castro, lambasted Trump's interference in the election, saying on X that it was an attempt to stop Moncada's bid, and vowing the Honduran people would stand up for democracy.

"We who fight for liberty are on our feet," he wrote. "We are patriots and nobody yields."

On Monday evening, Moncada said the elections were "still not lost" and alleged that the other parties had manipulated the process.

She also denounced US interference in the election. In the run-up, Trump weighed

St Lucia PM Pierre is re-elected

St Lucian Prime Minister Philip Pierre's Labour Party (SLP) held its legislative majority on Monday, putting Pierre on course for re-election after a campaign centred on economic management, violent crime and passport sales.

Shortly after 10pm (0200 GMT), official election results showed the social democratic SLP winning at least 13 seats in the small Caribbean island's 17-seat House of Assembly, matching its current majority with two seats left to be called.

The results showed Pierre with 57.1% of the popular vote against conservative opposition leader Allen Chastanet's 37.3%.

Chastanet preceded Pierre as prime minister of the country of 180,000 people. - Reuters

Teen killed after entering lion enclosure

Brazilian teenager was mauled to death by a lioness in full view of zoo visitors after scaling a 6m wall and safety fencing and shimmying down a tree into the enclosure, authorities said.

Gerson de Melo Machado, 19, struggled with severe mental health issues and dreamed of being a lion tamer, according to those who knew him.

The municipal government of the northeastern coastal city of Joao Pessoa said that Machado had "deliberately invaded the lioness's enclosure" at the Arruda Camara Zoobotanical Park on Sunday morning.

Flavio Fabres, head of the Joao Pessoa Legal Medical Institute, told AFP that Machado had been identified via his fingerprints.

The cause of death was "bleeding due to injuries to the neck vessels".

On Monday state environmental authorities carried out an on-site inspection at the zoo, which remains closed, according to the municipality and the park. - AFP

US court strikes down appointment of top prosecutor

A US appeals court has struck down an attempt by President Donald Trump to bypass the customary Senate confirmation process and appoint his former personal lawyer to a post as a top federal prosecutor.

A three-judge panel ruled unanimously that Alina Habba, 41, has been unlawfully serving as the US Attorney for the District of New Jersey.

It was the second time in a week that a federal court has ruled that a US attorney picked by Trump was unlawfully appointed.

Last week's ruling led to the dismissal of criminal cases brought against two of Trump's political foes - former Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) director James Comey and New York Attorney-General Letitia James.

In that case, District Judge Cameron Currie disqualified Trump appointee Lindsey Halligan from serving as the acting US Attorney for the Eastern District of Virginia and threw out the indictments she obtained against Comey and James.

Federal prosecutors are subject to Senate confirmation.

Currie said Halligan was unlawfully appointed because her predecessor was also serving in an acting capacity and US law does not allow two successive interim prosecutors.



Alina Habba

Halligan's predecessor as acting US attorney, Erik Siebert, stepped down after reportedly telling Justice Department leaders there was insufficient evidence to charge Comey and James.

In Habba's case, the US Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit panel upheld a lower court ruling that her appointment violated the law regarding the filling of federal vacancies.

"Under the government's delegation the-

ory, Habba may avoid the gauntlet of presidential appointment and Senate confirmation and serve as the de facto US Attorney indefinitely," the judges said.

"This view is so broad that it bypasses the constitutional (appointment and confirmation) process entirely," they said, and "should raise a red flag".

The Justice Department is weighing seeking new indictments against Comey and James, according to two people familiar with the matter.

The department could seek new charges against Comey and James as soon as this week, though the timing was not yet clear, the people added, speaking anonymously in order to discuss non-public department deliberations.

Representatives for James could not be immediately reached for comment. An attorney for Comey declined to comment.

Both Comey and James have been longtime targets of Trump's ire.

Comey as FBI director oversaw an investigation into alleged ties between Trump's 2016 election campaign and the Russian government, and was fired by Trump in 2017.

James, an elected Democrat, successfully sued Trump and his family real estate company for fraud. - AFP/Reuters

Chikungunya and dengue kill 21 children in Cuba

AFP/Reuters
Havana

Twenty-one children are among 33 people who have died in Cuba of the chikungunya and dengue viruses since July, authorities said.

There is no specific treatment for chikungunya, which is spread primarily by the Aedes mosquito species, also a carrier of dengue and Zika.

Most of the deaths were attributed to chikungunya - which is characterised by fever and joint pain that can be debilitating but rarely fatal - while the flu-like dengue claimed 12 lives, the country's deputy health minister, Carilda Pena, revealed on state TV.

The minister did not specify a date range for the deaths.

Pena reported 5,717 new cases of chikungunya in the last week, though officials say many cases go undetected because most patients do not see a doctor or report that they are ill.

The deaths, and still-raging epidemic, are more bad news for Cuba, whose healthcare system is already facing existential struggles due to a gruel-

ing economic crisis that has prompted widespread shortages of food, fuel and medicine.

The chikungunya virus emerged in Cuba's western Matanzas province in July, but soon spread to all 15 provinces of the country of 9.7mn people.

Cuba, long known for its medical and pharmaceutical expertise, was able to deal a swift blow to a previous chikungunya outbreak in 2014.

This time, the one-party state reports, the outbreak spiralled out of control due to "lack of hygiene, accumulated garbage" and people storing water in tanks

to mitigate the intermittent availability of clean tap water.

With the country under US sanctions and its critical tourism sector left in ruins by the coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic, a dearth of foreign currency has seen a steep decline in Cuba's medical services and prevention programmes such as mosquito fumigation.

In July the World Health Organisation issued an urgent call for action to prevent a repeat of an epidemic of the chikungunya virus that swept the globe two decades ago, as new outbreaks linked to the Indian Ocean region spread to Europe and the Americas.

Venezuela reauthorises deportation flights carrying migrants from US

AFP
Caracas

Venezuela has announced that it had reauthorised flights carrying migrants deported by the United States, days after suspending them due

to President Donald Trump's demand that Venezuelan airspace be considered "closed".

The aviation authority "has received a request from the US government to resume flights repatriating Venezuelan migrants from that country to Venezuela", said a statement from the min-

istry of transportation. "On the instructions of President Nicolas Maduro, this is authorised."

Trump has ramped up pressure on Venezuela, accusing Maduro's government of being a drug cartel and carrying out military strikes on boats off the country's coast that Washington

says were carrying drugs.

Despite the crisis, flights deporting migrants from the United States to Venezuela - a key part of Trump's hardline anti-immigration policies - had continued until the US leader's threat over Venezuelan airspace.

A new flight had been author-

ised to land in Venezuela today, the transportation ministry said.

An Eastern Airlines flight flying from Phoenix has been authorised to land at Maiquetia, near Caracas, the ministry added.

"To date, 75 flights have been carried out to repatriate 13,956 people," Caracas said on Saturday.

Son of Mexican crime lord 'El Chapo' pleads guilty in drug case

A son of the infamous Mexican drug lord Joaquin "El Chapo" Guzman pleaded guilty on Monday in a Chicago court to drug trafficking charges in a deal that would see him cooperate with US prosecutors for a reduced sentence.

Joaquin Guzman Lopez, one of four sons of the jailed Sinaloa cartel leader, pleaded guilty to drug trafficking and continuing criminal enterprise - reversing the original not guilty stance he took after his July 2024 arrest in Texas, court filings showed.

Under the plea deal filed with the court and seen by AFP, prosecutors agreed that the judge could spare him life imprisonment on the drug charges - depending on his level of co-operation.

"Defendant understands that the decision to depart from the applicable guideline sentence... the mandatory minimum sentence of life imprisonment, rests solely with the Court," the filing said.

Guzman Lopez, who will be sentenced by the judge in the case at a later date, must also pay an \$80mn charge representing the proceeds of his crimes.

Another of his three brothers, Ovidio Guzman - as part of a plea deal struck in exchange for a reduced sentence - pleaded guilty in July 2025 to conspiracy related to drug trafficking and two counts of participating in the activities of a criminal enterprise.

Ovidio Guzman also admitted that he and his brothers, known as "Los Chapitos", had taken over their father's operations within the cartel.

The 68-year-old "El Chapo" is serving a life sentence at a super-max federal prison in Colorado following his 2016 arrest and 2019 conviction.

The Sinaloa cartel is one of six Mexican drug-trafficking groups that US President Donald Trump has designated as global terrorist organisations.

Guzman Lopez was detained in July 2024 after landing in a private plane in the El Paso area.

He was arrested along with Mexican drug kingpin Ismael "El Mayo" Zambada, one of the most consequential traffickers in Mexico's history, who co-founded the Sinaloa Cartel with El Chapo.

Current and former US officials, who sought anonymity to speak candidly about the events, told Reuters at the time that Guzman Lopez had lured Zambada to the US. - AFP/Reuters

Apple to resist India order to preload state-run app as political outcry builds

Reuters
New Delhi

Apple does not plan to comply with a mandate to preload its smartphones with a state-owned cyber safety app and will convey its concerns to New Delhi, three sources said, after the government's move sparked surveillance concerns and a political uproar. The Indian government has confidentially ordered companies including Apple, Samsung and Xiaomi to preload their phones with an app called Sanchar Saathi, or Communication Partner, within 90 days. The app is intended to track stolen phones, block them and prevent them from being misused. The government also wants manufacturers to ensure that the app is not disabled. And for devices already in the supply chain, manufacturers should push the app to phones via software updates, Reuters was first to report on Monday. India's telecom

ministry confirmed the move later, describing it as a security measure to combat "serious endangerment" of cyber security. But Prime Minister Narendra Modi's political opponents and privacy advocates criticised the move, saying it is a way for the government to gain access to India's 730 million smartphones. In the wake of the criticism, India's telecom minister Jyotiraditya M. Scindia yesterday said the app was a "voluntary and democratic system," adding that users can choose to activate it and can "easily delete it from their phone at any time." At present, the app can be deleted by users. Scindia did not comment on or clarify the November 28 confidential directive that ordered smartphone makers to start preloading it and ensure "its functionalities are not disabled or restricted." Apple however does not plan to comply with the directive and will tell the government it does not follow such mandates anywhere in the world as they raise a host of privacy and security issues for the company's iOS ecosystem, said two

of the industry sources who are familiar with Apple's concerns. They declined to be named publicly as the company's strategy is private. "Its not only like taking a sledgehammer, this is like a double-barrel gun," said the first source. Apple and the telecom ministry did not respond to requests for comment. In tackling a recent surge of cyber crime and hacking, India is joining authorities worldwide, most recently in Russia, to frame rules blocking the use of stolen phones for fraud or promoting state-backed government service apps. The order caused a furore both inside and outside Parliament yesterday, with a number of lawmakers accusing the government of introducing an app that would act as a snooping tool. Rahul Gandhi of India's main opposition Congress Party said he planned to speak about the app in Parliament. The Congress Party has called for a rollback of the mandate. On X, KC Venugopal, a top Congress leader, said "Big Brother cannot watch us."

India's Russian oil imports to hit three-year low amid sanctions

Reuters
New Delhi

India's imports of Russian oil may decline for only "a brief period" as Moscow plans to boost supplies, using sophisticated technology to avert the impact of Western sanctions, Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov said yesterday. His remarks came ahead of President Vladimir Putin's two-day visit to New Delhi from tomorrow, looking to restore defence and energy ties as the South Asian nation is set to trim its Russian oil purchases this month to at least a three-year low.

Russia's top buyer of seaborne oil, India has cut crude imports from Moscow under pressure from Western sanctions, particularly by Washington on Moscow's top oil producers Rosneft and Lukoil. "There can be, for a very

brief period of time, insignificant decreases in the volume of oil trade," Peskov told Indian journalists, in response to a question about the impact of sanctions. Russia is the top oil supplier to India, the world's third biggest oil importer and consumer. Moscow is working to build the "necessary environment" for buyers who seek its oil, Peskov said, speaking by video link organised by Russia's Sputnik news agency. "We have deep experience in performing under regime of these illegal sanctions," Peskov added. "We have our own technologies in doing that. We will continue to make those technologies more sophisticated should this practice of sanctions continue."

Trade between Russia and India should be secured from pressure from third countries, he said, adding that payment methods would feature in the leaders' talks. Indian refiners,

such as Mangalore Refinery and Petrochemicals Ltd, Hindustan Petroleum Corp and HPCL-Mittal Energy Ltd, have stopped buying Russian oil.

State-run Indian Oil Corp has placed orders to buy Russian oil from non-sanctioned entities, while Bharat Petroleum Corp is in an advanced stage of negotiations for Russian oil imports.

Russia-backed Indian refiner Nayara Energy, partly owned by Rosneft, is exclusively processing Russian oil after other suppliers pulled back, following British and EU sanctions. Russia wants India to continue to provide support to Nayara to boost its local sale and capacity use.

Reliance Industries, formerly Russia's top Indian client, has said it loaded Russian oil cargoes "precommitted" by October 22, and will process any arriving after November 20 at its refinery geared to domestic supply.

UK banks can handle financial unrest amid AI fears: BoE

AFP
London

The Bank of England (BoE) yesterday said Britain's banks are sufficiently strong to weather renewed financial unrest amid fears of a market bubble caused by an overvalued AI sector.

"The UK banking system is well-capitalised, maintains robust liquidity and funding positions, and asset quality remains strong," the BoE said after its latest stress tests on lenders including HSBG, Barclays and Santander.

"The results of the 2025 Bank Capital Stress Test demonstrate that the UK banking system is able to continue to support growth even if economic and financial conditions turned out to be materially worse than expected."

The BoE added in its latest Financial Policy Committee report that "many risky asset valuations remain materially stretched, particularly for technology companies focused on artificial intelligence."

"The role of debt financing in this sector is increasing quickly as AI-focused firms seek large scale infrastructure investment."

The BoE appeared to step up on its warning in October that technology firms focused on artificial intelligence could be overvalued, posing a risk to financial stability.

The central bank yesterday added that "deeper links between AI firms



The Bank of England in Threadneedle Street, London. The BoE yesterday said Britain's banks are sufficiently strong to weather renewed financial unrest amid fears of a market bubble caused by an overvalued AI sector.

and credit markets, and increasing interconnections between those firms, mean that, should an asset price correction occur, losses on lending could increase financial stability risks".

The AI sector has seen valuations balloon this year, with Nvidia becoming the first \$5-trillion company, before the chip giant's valuation and that of tech rivals recently suffered heavy losses on fears of a bubble, similar to that experienced prior to the dotcom industry crashing in 2000. The BoE is not alone

among major central banks to warn over AI. The European Central Bank last week noted that heightened market exuberance around artificial intelligence and eye-popping levels of government debt could pose risks to eurozone financial stability.

The BoE also warned over large state debt yesterday.

"Global risks remain elevated and material uncertainty in the global macroeconomic outlook persists," it said. "Key sources of risk include geopolitical tensions, fragmentation of trade and financial markets,

and pressures on sovereign debt markets." However in a sign of confidence for UK banks, the BoE cut its estimate for the level of capital reserves that lenders must hold to protect against potential collapse.

The new capital requirements for banks will be lowered to 13 percent from about 14 percent of risk-weighted assets, under BoE proposals. This is how much banks must set aside, under rules introduced following the 2008 global financial crisis, to cushion against risky lending and investments.

Britain plans to curb jury trials to tackle court crisis

Reuters
London

Britain will remove the historic right to trial by jury for defendants in many less serious criminal cases in an effort to tackle a growing crisis in the court system, Justice Secretary David Lammy said yesterday.

Britain's judicial system is creaking, with tens of thousands of criminal cases stuck in a court backlog and jails so full that prisoners are being released early to ease the strain, with instances of convicts being freed by mistake.

Critics of Lammy's plans say years of neglect and under-investment by successive governments, not jury trials, are to blame for the state of the criminal justice system, with its crumbling court buildings and too few judges and staff.

The new measures announced by Lammy, who is also deputy prime minister, would bar defendants from opting for jury trial in cases where a jail sentence was likely to be less than three years. Trial by jury would remain for serious offences, including murder, rape, robbery and arson.

New "Swift Courts" will be created where a judge will sit alone, taking 20% less time than a jury trial, Lammy said, while complex fraud and financial trials will also become judge-only.

"I'm clear that jury trials will continue to be the cornerstone of the system for the most serious offences," Lammy told parliament. "We now face an emergency in the courts and we must act."

The plans, which have to be approved by parliament, apply only to England and Wales. Scotland and Northern Ireland have their own separate legal arrangements.

The government says there are about 78,000 cases awaiting trial by jury in so-called Crown Courts in England and



Britain's Justice Secretary David Lammy.

Wales, and the number is expected to reach 100,000 by 2028, meaning victims face a lengthy wait for justice.

Some trials in London are currently expected to be heard in 2029 or 2030, and there are concerns that some complainants and witnesses are abandoning their cases as a result.

The concept of a right to trial by jury in English law was established by the Magna Carta of 1215. However, more than 90% of criminal cases are already handled by Magistrates' Courts, where a single magistrate or panel of judges adjudicates.

Under the new reforms, Lammy said magistrates' powers will be extended so they can hand down sentences of up to 18 months, meaning fewer cases will need to go to the Crown Courts.

"We're all proud of our justice system rooted in the Magna Carta. But we must never forget that it implores us not to deny or delay justice," Lammy said.

The Bar Council, which represents trial lawyers, said replacing juries with a magistrate or judge sitting alone was not the answer.

"We have continuously opposed proposals to curtail jury trials because there is no evidence that their removal would reduce the backlog, nor has it been set out how an alternative system would be resourced," said Bar Council chair Barbara Mills.

UK delays decision for third time on China's plan for Europe's largest embassy

Reuters
London

Britain delayed yesterday for a third time a decision on whether to approve China's controversial plans to build the largest embassy in Europe in London.

China's plans to build a new embassy on the site of a two-century-old building near the Tower of London have stalled for the past three years because of opposition from local residents, lawmakers and Hong Kong pro-democracy campaigners in Britain.

Concerns that the new embassy could be used as a base for spying have prompted some politicians in Britain and the United States to urge the government to block Beijing's plans. The Department of Housing said in a letter seen by Reuters that it would now rule on whether the project could go ahead by January 20, rather than by December 10, because of delays in receiving responses from the interior and foreign ministries.

A spokesperson for Prime Minister Keir Starmer said the delay was because those ministries had provided

views on "particular" security implications of approving the embassy and a decision should not be taken until they had been considered.

Luke de Pulford, executive director of the Inter-Parliamentary Alliance on China and a long-standing critic of plans for the embassy, said the latest delay was "entirely of the government's own making".

"Rather than this endless deferral, which will only make Beijing more angry, the government should say no, and get it over with," he told Reuters. The Chinese embassy in London

did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

A spokesperson for the Chinese government previously urged the British government to approve the embassy or warned of unspecified "consequences".

The timing of the decision is politically sensitive for Starmer's government after officials were recently accused of playing down the threat China poses to Britain's national security by allowing the collapse of a trial of two British men charged with spying for China.

Hong Kong orders judge-led probe into fire that killed 156

Reuters
Hong Kong

Hong Kong's leader said yesterday a judge-led committee will investigate the cause of the city's deadliest fire in decades and review oversight of building renovations blamed for fanning an inferno that killed at least 156 people. Police have arrested 15 people on suspicion of manslaughter in a criminal inquiry into last week's tragedy at the Wang Fuk Court complex, and 12 have also been arrested in a corruption probe.

It is unclear if any of those people were arrested on both counts. Authorities have pointed to sub-standard plastic mesh and insulation foam used during renovation works at the high-rise estate

for fuelling a blaze that quickly spread to seven of its eight towers, home to more than 4,000 people. "In order to avoid similar tragedies again, I will set up a judge-led independent committee to examine the reason behind the cause and rapid spreading (of the fire) and related issues," John Lee, Hong Kong's chief executive, told a press conference.

Investigators have completed sweeps of all but two of the burnt-out towers, finding residents' bodies in stairwells and on rooftops, trapped as they tried to flee the smoke and flames. Around 30 people are still missing. Some groups in the Chinese-ruled city have called for more transparency and accountability, amid warnings from authorities that any attempts to politicise the disaster would be severely punished.



Mourners fold paper cranes during a vigil held outside the Wang Fuk Court apartment blocks in the aftermath of the deadly November 26 fire in Hong Kong's Tai Po district. Hong Kong's leader said yesterday that an independent committee will investigate the causes of the city's deadliest fire in decades.

A student from one of the groups was detained and later released on bail, and local media reported two

others were being investigated for possible sedition. Police have not commented on the cases.

"I will not tolerate any crimes, particularly crimes that exploit the tragedy that we are facing now," Lee said, when asked about the cases. He did not comment on the specifics.

International rights groups have said the incidents demonstrate government attempts to suppress criticism.

"It's crucially important not to treat those demanding answers for the tragic fire as criminals," said Elaine Pearson, Asia director at Human Rights Watch.

China's national security office has warned individuals against using the disaster to "plunge Hong Kong back into the chaos" of 2019, when massive pro-democracy protests challenged Beijing and triggered a political crisis.

Legislative elections due to take place on Sunday will go ahead as

planned, Lee said. Turnout for that vote - in which only candidates screened by the government as "patriots" can run - could serve as a barometer of public frustration over the handling of the fire.

Residents of Wang Fuk Court were told by authorities last year they faced "relatively low fire risks" after complaining about fire hazards posed by the renovations, the city's Labour Department said. The residents raised concerns in September 2024, including about the potential flammability of the mesh that contractors used to cover the bamboo scaffolding, a department spokesperson said. Tests on several samples of mesh on the buildings at the time of the blaze did not match fire-retardant standards, officials overseeing the investigations told a press conference on Monday.

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GULF TIMES

Occupation and war:
Palestinian economy
suffers worst collapse

For nearly two decades, 2.3mn Palestinians in Gaza have faced severe constraints on trade, movement and access to resources within one of the most densely populated areas on the earth. Limited entry of goods, combined with Israeli restrictions on productive inputs, equipment, and technology, and recurrent military operations, have dismantled Gaza's productive base and created near total dependence on external assistance. The two-year war and economic restrictions in the Israeli-occupied West Bank have triggered the worst collapse in the Palestinian economy on record, wiping out decades of growth, according to a United Nations report last week. The Palestinian economy across the West Bank and Gaza contracted by 30% in 2024 compared with 2022 - the benchmark being used to measure the impact of the two-year Israel-Hamas war, the report by the UN Trade and Development agency (UNCTAD) said.

That is the steepest fall since data collection began in 1972, exceeding previous economic downturns during the many conflicts since then including the Second Intifada after the failure of peace talks in 2000, the report said.

"What we see today is extremely worrying. The prolonged military operation, combined with long-standing restrictions, has pushed the economy of the occupied Palestinian territory into its deepest decline on record," UNCTAD Deputy Secretary-General Pedro Manuel Moreno said.

GDP per capita has returned to that of 2003, erasing 22 years of development progress, the report said, describing the crisis as among the 10 worst globally since 1960.

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The West Bank is also suffering its most severe downturn on record, driven by movement and access restrictions and the loss of economic opportunities. Worsening settler violence against Palestinians in the West Bank is blocking farmers from accessing their crops and animals.

Israel's restrictions and rising fiscal constraints in the Palestinian territories had been severely impacting the economic conditions of Palestinians and hindering their access to timely life-saving healthcare, according a World Bank report in 2023.

The fiscal situation deteriorated sharply after October 2023, making 2024 one of the most challenging years for the Palestinian Government, according to the latest UNCTAD report.

Revenue shortfalls, the withholding of fiscal transfers, a contracting economy and declining external support, have deepened the crisis. Fiscal pressures persisted through 2025, straining the Government's ability to maintain essential services and macroeconomic stability.

Between January 2019 and April 2025, cumulative fiscal deductions and withheld revenues amounted to an estimated \$1.76bn - equivalent to 12.8% of GDP in 2024 and 44% of total net revenues.

The estimated cost of reconstruction and recovery in Gaza exceeds \$70bn, underscoring the magnitude of investment required to rebuild infrastructure and restore livelihoods.

The scale of the damage in Gaza after the two-year war between Israel and Hamas means the enclave will be reliant on extensive international support and recovery could still take decades.

UNCTAD's report calls for immediate and substantial intervention by the international community to halt the economic freefall, address the humanitarian crisis, and lay the groundwork for lasting peace and development.

Palestinian economy is in urgent need of a comprehensive recovery plan with co-ordinated international assistance, restoration of fiscal transfers, and measures to ease constraints on trade, movement and investment.

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'The Dress of Joy'



Palestinians gather on the rubble of building destroyed by the Israeli military to celebrate the mass wedding of 54 couples dubbed the "The Dress of Joy", organised by the Al-Fares Al-Shahm Foundation, in Khan Yunis, southern Gaza Strip, yesterday. 'The Dress of Joy', is a project helping 54 grooms in the the Gaza Strip to get married, an initiative that coincides with United Arab Emirates' 54th National Day. Israel's assault on Gaza has killed over 70,000 people, according to figures from the health ministry that the UN considers reliable. (AFP)

Soft power strategy: Lessons in
leadership and public policy

Doha understands that in a connected world, crises know no borders,
and solidarity builds trust no military power can command



Dr Asma al-Fadala

As the world faces escalating geopolitical and economic crises, Qatar has demonstrated that real influence is built on trust and collaboration, not force or coercion. The Israeli aggression against Doha on September 9, 2025, was merely the latest test of a long-cultivated strategy of soft power. It served as a reminder that even small states can shape the global agenda when guided by a strategic vision, principles and readiness.

When Covid-19 crippled healthcare systems worldwide, Qatar acted swiftly and decisively. Its military aircraft delivered respirators to collapsed hospitals in Italy, while cargo planes carried masks and medical supplies to dozens of countries across Asia and Africa. In Lebanon, Qatar established field hospitals to treat those injured as a result of the Beirut explosion. These efforts were not only humanitarian gestures of goodwill, they were deliberate demonstrations of leadership through generosity and competence. Doha understood that in a connected world, crises know no borders, and that solidarity builds a kind of trust no military power can command.

This philosophy has also shaped Qatar's mediation approach. Over the past decade, Doha has quietly hosted talks between parties that refused to meet anywhere else. From the 2020 negotiations between the Taliban and the United States to the ceasefire efforts in Sudan and Yemen, as well as humanitarian coordination for Gaza, these examples reveal a consistent diplomatic strategy. Such negotiations often take place behind closed doors because Qatari diplomats recognise that confidentiality, patience, and trustworthiness are the main factors for success. It's a strategy that is rooted in modesty, an understanding that influence grows stronger when practised responsibly.

Building influence through
education and culture

Qatar's investments in education and culture tell the

same story. Its hosting of the FIFA World Cup 2022, despite intense criticism, showed Qatar's willingness to take risks to bring people together. Education City in Doha, home to international university branches, has become a hub where young people from every continent meet to exchange thoughts that will shape the future. Similarly, the Doha Forum has also become a global platform for addressing issues such as AI governance, global health, and peacebuilding.

The September 9 attacks, and the regional tensions that followed, highlighted the importance of such investments. In a deeply divided world, safe spaces for dialogue have become rare assets, and states that provide them are indispensable in global affairs.

Nurturing next generation
of leaders

Qatar's leadership extends into its civil society and academic institutions, where all are integrated to achieve its global vision. At HBKU's College of Public Policy (CPP), students are trained not only to analyse complex issues, but solve them under pressure and with a sense of responsibility. The curriculum includes simulations of real-time global crises, from pandemics disrupting supply chains to AI technologies reshaping labour markets, as well as geopolitical confrontations requiring diplomacy and discernment. Policy education here is not limited to mastering theoretical frameworks; it is an exercise in resilience, empathy, and foresight, skills that enable students to make consequential decisions in moments of crisis.

Qatar's focus on leadership development aligns seamlessly with its broader soft power strategy; while sending aid planes or hosting summits may seem straightforward, the true challenge lies in nurturing a generation that can sustain this approach. To this end, the CPP does not only educate Qatari students, but also those from Gulf Co-operation Council states, Africa, Asia and Europe. This strategy ensures young leaders can return to their countries equipped with a deep understanding of Qatar's diplomatic approach, with networks of colleagues who may one day become ministers, negotiators or heads of states. In doing so, Qatar invests in a future built on shared collaboration and mutual respect. This investment exceeds the borders of the classrooms; it is a real commitment towards the future fostering regional and global stability.

However, the world these young leaders are preparing to navigate is changing at unprecedented speed. Emerging

technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI) are reshaping global labour markets, bringing both opportunities and significant risks of inequality. Misleading campaigns can destabilise governments and fracture societies overnight. Climate change threatens food security and water supplies in some of the world's most fragile regions, while a polarised geopolitical landscape continues to pressure smaller states caught between great power rivalries.

Yet, Qatar's record suggests it will navigate these challenges with pragmatism and creativity. By investing LNG revenues in sustainable energy and education projects, Qatar is positioning itself for a future less dependent on hydrocarbons. On the other hand, Doha continues to build robust relationships through its credible mediation efforts.

Soft power in action

The September 9 attacks offer the international community a profound lesson - soft power is built on partnership not domination. Qatar has shown that cultural authenticity and global co-operation can coexist. Following the attacks, Doha expressed its outrage at the violation of its sovereignty, while affirming its commitment to protect its people and defend its national security. Despite the gravity of the moment, Doha emphasised that its response would be studied and responsible, combining firmness with a call for international accountability. This balance between rightful

anger and restraint reflects Qatar's constant philosophy, true leadership reveals itself in the hardest times, when crises are transformed into opportunities to enhance dialogue and fairness.

For the Qatari public, these developments represent more than foreign policy, they are a reminder of what their country stands for; generosity in times of crisis, courage in negotiation and a commitment to investing in knowledge.

In a century defined by uncertainty, Qatar continues to prove that leadership is not measured by military power or economic size, but by vision, empathy, and capacity-building. From air bridges during the pandemic to diplomatic breakthroughs, classroom simulations to global forums, Qatar offers the world an alternative model of influence, one that turns trust into action and shows that small nations can lead by example.

As global challenges intensify, the world may come to realise that what Qatar quietly builds in its classrooms and negotiation rooms could be more important than what makes the headlines today.

• Dr Asma al-Fadala is an Assistant Professor, College of Public Policy at Hamad Bin Khalifa University.

(This piece has been submitted by HBKU's Communications Directorate on behalf of its author. The thoughts and views expressed are the author's own and do not necessarily reflect an official University stance).

About Hamad Bin Khalifa University
Innovating Today, Shaping Tomorrow

Hamad Bin Khalifa University (HBKU), a member of Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development (QF), is a leading, innovation-centric university committed to advancing education and research to address critical challenges facing Qatar and beyond. HBKU develops multidisciplinary academic programmes and national research capabilities that drive collaboration with leading global institutions. The university is dedicated to equipping future leaders with an entrepreneurial mindset and advancing innovative solutions that create a positive global impact.

For more information about HBKU, its colleges, research institutes, and initiatives, please visit www.hbku.edu.qa. To stay up to date on our social media activities, follow our accounts on: LinkedIn, Instagram, X, and Facebook. For any media inquiries, please contact: media@hbku.edu.qa.

About the College of Public Policy

The College of Public Policy (CPP) accomplishes HBKU's priority to contribute to effective policy development, evaluation, and dialogue in support of Qatar National Vision 2030. HBKU's CPP is one of the leading public policy schools and knowledge hubs regionally and globally. It provides a uniquely situated venue for public conversation in Qatar, and a centre for teaching and researching responses to policy questions of local and global relevance. Highly dynamic and open to novel ideas and experimentation, the CPP recruits the world's best faculty, builds research capacity, educates future leaders who engage with their communities, and acts as a bridge for policy innovations that positively contribute to global public good. For more information about HBKU's CPP, visit www.hbku.edu.qa/en/cpp.

US, Russia hold high-stakes Ukraine talks

AFP
Moscow

Top US negotiators vying to end the war in Ukraine met with Russian President Vladimir Putin yesterday in a high-stakes meeting happening as Moscow pressed battlefield advances.

Putin, who received Donald Trump's son-in-law Jared Kushner and US special envoy Steve Witkoff in the Kremlin, signalled earlier that his forces were ready to fight on to achieve Russia's initial war goals.

The meeting is a crucial moment for Ukraine in what could be a fraught week following days of frantic diplomacy kicked off by a unilateral US plan to bring peace, which has since been revised under pressure from Kyiv and its European backers.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said on Monday that any plan must actually end the war for good, and not just lead to a pause in the fighting that began with Moscow's offensive in February 2022.

Washington has said it is "optimistic" it can help end Europe's bloodiest conflict since World War II. Kushner and Witkoff were to present Putin with the new version of US plan, which has been hammered out after the initial version raised fears in Kyiv and elsewhere in Europe that it made too many concessions to Moscow.

Russian presidential aide Yuri Ushakov and the Kremlin's business envoy, Kirill Dmitriev, also took part in the meeting, according to a state TV broadcast.

After their Moscow visit, Kushner and Witkoff could go on to



Russian President Vladimir Putin, accompanied by Kremlin economic envoy Kirill Dmitriev and Kremlin aide Yuri Ushakov, meets with US special envoy Steve Witkoff and US President Donald Trump's son-in-law Jared Kushner at the Kremlin in Moscow yesterday. (AFP)

meet a Ukrainian delegation as soon as today, potentially in Brussels, a senior Kyiv official told AFP.

The US wanted to give an update "directly to us after their meeting", Zelensky said during a visit to Ireland, where he was shoring up European support.

"Our common task is to end the war, not just to achieve a pause in hostilities," Zelensky said, adding: "A dignified peace is needed."

Putin, however, appeared to send a hawkish message shortly before the US talks began.

He said that Pokrovsk, an east Ukrainian stronghold recently claimed by Russian forces, was a "good foothold for solving all the tasks set at the beginning of the special military operation", using

the Kremlin's term for the nearly four-year-long war.

The Russian leader also accused Europe of sabotaging a deal on the Ukraine conflict.

Putin added that European changes to Trump's latest plan to end the war "aimed solely at one thing — to completely block the entire peace process and put forward demands that are absolutely unacceptable for Russia".

Kyiv is under pressure on several fronts.

Russian forces advanced fast in November in eastern Ukraine, and Kyiv has been rocked by graft scandals that ended with the resignation of its top negotiator — Zelensky's right-hand man.

Moscow has also stepped up

drone and missile attacks on Ukraine in recent weeks, leaving hundreds of thousands without electricity and heating, with Zelensky accusing the Kremlin of trying to "break" his country.

Zelensky has said he expects to discuss key issues with the US president, including on territory, and suggested Moscow's real motivation for the US talks was to ease Western sanctions.

Putin has demanded that Kyiv surrender territory Moscow claims as its own for any deal to be possible.

Europe is worried that Washington and Moscow could strike a deal over its head or force Ukraine into making unfair concessions. The original 28-point US plan re-

Putin to Europe: 'If you want war, then Russia will defeat you'

President Vladimir Putin yesterday warned European powers that if they started a war with Russia then Moscow was ready to fight and that the defeat of European powers would be so absolute that there would be no one left to even negotiate a peace deal. Four years into the Ukraine war, the deadliest European conflict in Europe since World War Two, Russia has failed to conquer Ukraine, a much smaller neighbour which has been supported by European powers and the United States.

Ukraine and European powers have repeatedly warned that if Putin wins the Ukraine war then he could attack a Nato member, a claim which Putin has repeatedly dismissed as nonsense.

Asked by a reporter about remarks in the Russian media that Hungarian Foreign Minister Peter Szijarto had cautioned that Europe was preparing a war against Russia, Putin said that Russia did not want a war with Europe.

"If Europe suddenly wants to start a war with us and starts it," Putin said, then it would end so swiftly for Europe that there would be no one to negotiate with in Europe. Putin used the Russian word for "war".

He also suggested that the war in Ukraine was not a full-blown war and that Russia was acting in a "surgical" manner which would not be repeated in a direct confrontation with European powers.

"If Europe suddenly wants to fight with us and starts, we are ready right now," Putin said.

The Kremlin chief accused European powers of hindering US President Donald Trump's attempts to end the war in Ukraine by putting forward proposals they knew would be "absolutely unacceptable" to Moscow so they could then accuse Russia of not wanting peace.

Putin said European powers had locked themselves out of peace talks on Ukraine because they had cut off contacts with Russia.

"They are on the side of war," Putin said of European powers.

Putin also threatened to sever Ukraine's access to the sea in response to drone attacks on tankers of Russia's "shadow fleet" in the Black Sea.

vealed last month hewed so closely to Moscow's demands it prompted accusations that Russia was involved in drafting it, which Washington denied.

Bloomberg last month reported on an audio recording showing that Witkoff helped coach Russian offi-

cials on how Putin should speak to Trump. Witkoff has met with Putin multiple times, but US media reported that it was the first time that Kushner — who also helped broker a ceasefire between Israel and Hamas in Gaza earlier this year — has joined talks with Putin.

Top former EU diplomat arrested in fraud probe

AFP
Brussels



FALL FROM GRACE: Federica Mogherini

The EU's former foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini was taken into custody yesterday as police staged raids probing suspected fraud over contracts to train future European diplomats.

Mogherini, who was high representative for foreign affairs from 2014 to 2019, now leads the College of Europe graduate school whose premises were searched along with the offices of the EEAS diplomatic service.

The 52-year-old Italian was arrested in Brussels along with the training school's deputy head, and Stefano Sannino, a senior EU official who was EEAS secretary-general from 2021 to 2024, according to a source close to the matter.

They can be held in custody for up to 48 hours, before a potential appearance before a magistrate.

The European Public Prosecutor's Office (EPPO) said searches were staged at the College of Europe, in the Belgian city of Bruges, and at the Brussels premises of the European External Action Service — the EU's diplomatic wing.

"Three suspects" were detained as "part of a probe into suspected fraud related to EU-funded training for junior diplomats", said an EPPO statement.

The contract involved was worth some €650,000 (\$750,000), according to a European source.

Carried out by Belgian federal police at the EPPO's request, the searches also targeted the houses of suspects, prosecutors said.

At issue, according to the EPPO, is a nine-month training programme for junior diplomats across EU states, known as the European Union Diplomatic Academy.

The programme was awarded by the EEAS to the College of Europe in Belgium in the period 2021-2022, and the probe focuses on whether the tender process was skewed to favour the school.

Mogherini has headed the College of Europe since 2020, and in 2022 also took the helm of the EU Diplomatic Academy.

"There are strong suspicions that... confidential information related to the ongoing procurement was shared with one of the candidates participating in the tender," said the EPPO statement.

The College of Europe confirmed searches had been conducted at its Bruges campus and vowed to "fully co-operate with the authorities in the interest of transparency and respect for the investigative process."

"The College remains committed to the highest standards of integrity, fairness, and compliance — both in academic and administrative matters," it added in a statement.

The European Commission likewise confirmed the raids at the EEAS buildings.

"This is part of the ongoing investigation of the activities that took place before in the previous mandate," said a commission spokesperson Anitta Hipper.

The current EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs Kaja Kallas, took over the post a year ago from Mogherini's successor, Josep Borrell.

As the EU's top diplomat, Mogherini notably helped steer sensitive negotiations over Iran's nuclear programme. The EPPO said it had requested and obtained the lifting of immunity for several suspects prior to the searches.

If confirmed, the allegations "could constitute procurement fraud, corruption, conflict of interest and violation of professional secrecy", the prosecutor's office said.

"The investigation is ongoing to clarify the facts and assess whether any criminal offences have occurred," it added.

Khan 'healthy' but enduring 'mental torture', says sister

Reuters
Islamabad

Imran Khan, Pakistan's jailed former prime minister, is in good physical health but facing isolation and psychological strain, his sister said yesterday, after a rare supervised visit following weeks in which his family said access had been blocked.

Uzma Khanum, one of Khan's three sisters, was the only family member permitted to meet him in Adiala Jail, where supporters of his Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party had gathered outside to protest against conditions of his detention.

She told reporters her brother "looked healthy" but had been undergoing "mental torture" being confined indoors for long periods with no communication with relatives or aides.

"He is physically well," said

Khanum, who is a doctor. "But he is kept inside all the time and only goes out for a short while. There is no contact with anybody."

The meeting took place under strict supervision and without mobile devices, she said, declining to provide further details.

Khan, 73, who served as prime minister from 2018-2022, has been in jail since his August 2023 arrest on disputed charges and is serving sentences in several cases he says are politically motivated.

PTI says routine visits have been blocked for weeks despite court orders, fuelling rumours about his condition and possible prison transfers.

Minister of State for Interior Talal Chaudhry said decisions about prison visits were up to jail officials and "not under control of the government".

Last week, one of Khan's sons

told Reuters the family had no direct or verifiable contact with him for more than three weeks and "no verifiable information at all" about his condition, saying they feared "something irreversible" might be concealed.

They have also sought renewed access for his personal physician, who has not examined him for over a year.

Pakistan's Human Rights Commission, an independent rights monitor, said in a post on X it was "seriously concerned" by reports that Khan had been subjected to restrictive detention conditions and limits on family meetings.

It called for regular access to relatives and legal counsel, which it described as a "fundamental safeguard against isolation and misuse of detention powers", and urged authorities to comply with constitutional and international standards of humane treatment.

Italy 'to postpone decree on military aid to Ukraine'

Italy's government is set to delay the approval of a decree that would allow Rome to prolong military supplies to Ukraine into next year, sources close to the matter said yesterday.

The hold-up comes amid tensions within Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni's right-wing coalition government over support for Ukraine against Russia's full-scale invasion, now approaching its fourth anniversary.

Meloni has pledged to help Ukraine resist Russian aggression to the end, but her deputy Matteo Salvini, leader of the League party, has questioned the rationale for continued support.

The decree for Ukraine aid was on the agenda of a meeting today set to prepare the next day's cabinet, but was taken off because the agenda was already too full, the sources said, asking not to be

named. Since Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, Italy's government has sent 12 packages of military aid to Ukraine, including the SAMP/T air defence system, as authorised by the decree system.

The authorisation regime allows the government to act without seeking parliamentary approval for each new round of military deliveries. The decree currently in place expires at the end of the year. Once approved by the government, the new decree would be immediately effective, but would need to be ratified by parliament within 60 days. In his criticism of aid to Ukraine, Salvini has referred to the graft scandal that is rocking Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky's administration, while the US continues to press for a peace deal with Russia.

Macron denies 'ministry of truth' plan

AFP
Paris

President Emmanuel Macron yesterday denied having any plan for a "ministry of truth" in France after right-wing and far-right politicians and media charged that his drive against disinformation risked curtailing freedom of press and expression.

Macron has in the last weeks intensified warnings on the risks of disinformation, on Friday calling for changes to French legislation that would allow "false information" online to be urgently blocked.

He has also called for "professional certification" of outlets to distinguish sites and networks that provide reliable information according to ethical rules from others that do not.

But at the weekend, the *Journal du Dimanche* Sunday newspaper, part of the influential media stable of right-wing tycoon Vincent Bolloré, accused Macron in a front-page story of a "totalitarian drift" on the issue.

It also denounced "the temptation of a ministry of truth", referring to the propaganda branch of the totalitarian system in British novelist George Orwell's dystopian fiction *1984*.

This accusation was then repeated on other Bolloré-owned media outlets including the CNews television channel and radio station Europe 1, whose star presenter Pascal Praud lambasted a "president unhappy with his treatment by the media and who wants to impose a single narrative".

The leader of the far-right National Rally (RN) party Jordan Bardella chipped in, telling CNews: "Tampering with freedom of expression is an authoritarian temptation, which corresponds to the solitude of a man... who has lost power and seeks to maintain it by controlling information."

The leader of the right-wing Republicans and former interior minister Bruno Retailleau said on X that "no government has the right to filter the media or dictate the truth."

In a rare such response to criticism, the Elysee on its X account posted excerpts of various comments by Praud and other like-minded commentators with the title "attention false information".

Sheikha Moza attends opening of Sidra Precision Medicine and Genomics Summit

By Joseph Varghese
Staff Reporter

Sidra Medicine, a Qatar Foundation (QF) entity, began its three day Precision Medicine and the Future of Genomics (PMFG) Summit 2025 yesterday with an opening ceremony in the presence of Her Highness Sheikha Moza bint Nasser, Chairperson of Qatar Foundation, highlighting the advancements in genomics and precision medicine.

The opening ceremony was also attended by HE Mansoor bin Ebrahim bin Saad al-Mahmoud, Minister of Public Health; senior officials and government leaders; diplomats as well as high-level representatives from international healthcare and academic institutions.

Speaking on the occasion, Dr Iyabo Tinubu-Karch, chief executive officer, Sidra Medicine, noted that at Sidra Medicine, it is not about research alone.

Dr Tinubu-Karch explained: "It is about transforming lives through empathy, personalisation and innovation. Over the past few years, we have seen our vision taking shape and impacting thousands of lives in powerful ways."

"Our work is deeply aligned with Qatar's national priorities. Through precision medicine research and biotechnology, we are supporting economic diversification, the development of human capital, and a resilient health ecosystem, advancing the goals of Qatar National Vision 2030 and the

ambitions of Qatar Foundation," continued the CEO.

The official noted that Sidra Medicine is part of a framework that is building a healthier future, not only for one patient, but for the nation and for future generations. "The real outcome is personalised, empathetic care. Together, let us shape a future where innovation, compassion, and national purpose converge, where healthcare is not only advanced, but deeply human," she added.

Marking the start of the three-day summit, the opening ceremony featured keynote speeches by Julia Vitarello, founder and CEO of Mila's Miracle Foundation, and Prof Ed Liu from The Jackson Laboratory. It concluded with a summit flagship opening panel "From Personalised to Population-Scale: Building a Thriving Precision Medicine Sector in Qatar".

In his opening remarks, Prof Khalid Fakhro, chief research officer, Sidra Medicine said that Sidra Medicine stands as an integrated academic medical centre that combines research, education and clinical care bridging the gap between laboratory discoveries and clinical applications.

"It contributes to strengthening Qatar's leading role in precision medicine and advanced therapies globally. Today, we take pride in seeing our scientists from various national institutions leading the way regionally and internationally, paving the path toward the medicine of the future — medicine built on personalised treatments that align with each individual's genetic



Her Highness Sheikha Moza bint Nasser attends the opening of Precision Medicine and the Future of Genomics Summit. **PICTURE:** Aisha al-Musallam



Dr Iyabo Tinubu-Karch

makeup and disease mechanisms," stated Prof Fakhro.

"Qatar has long recognised — through a far-sighted vision — that



Some of the dignitaries at the opening session. **PICTURES:** Shaji Kayamkulam

true progress can only be achieved through a solid base of science and knowledge. The fruits of this vision are evident in many places, most notably Education City, where schools, universities and research institutes have turned strategic vision into tangible reality,

becoming beacons of science and innovation across diverse fields, while also serving as engines of the knowledge economy and pillars of sustainability," he highlighted.

The PMFG Summit 2025, focuses on three major transformative pillars: AI in Genomics, Clinical

Trials and Real-World Implementation; and Precision Medicine Implementation/Population Genomics & Future Frontiers, mirroring a comprehensive direction to integrate research, technology, and clinical care into population-scale practice.

Going forward, LDCs should participate fully and effectively in global economy: al-Misnad



QNA
Doha

The high-level meeting for Least Developed Countries (LDCs) opened yesterday, in the presence of Chairman of the Board of Directors of Qatar Fund for Development HE Sheikh Thani bin Hamad al-Thani, along with several distinguished officials.

HE the Minister of State for International Co-operation Dr Maryam bint Ali bin Nasser al-Misnad affirmed in the opening address that the meeting comes at a critical stage in which developing countries face major challenges, but at the same

time possess opportunities that can turn into real achievements if the right partnerships, adequate financing, and supportive international environment are available.

HE the minister pointed out that international documents have emphasised that these challenges are not an inevitable fate, but rather an opportunity to renew commitment, build the capacities of these countries, strengthen infrastructure, and transfer technology.

She said that innovation has become an indispensable necessity for achieving development, whether through digital transformation, human resource development, or innovative financing solutions. She stressed that traditional policies were



Qatar aspires to become a service economy and a leader in the field of technology: PM

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His Excellency indicated that during the past decades, Qatar has been able to build national entities that have a global presence; Qatar Airways has emerged as a prestigious international brand in the aviation sector, QatarEnergy has become a global player in the field of gas supplies, Qatar National Bank continues its presence extending to Southeast Asia, and Ooredoo operates in more than 20 countries.

His Excellency said that despite Qatar's small size, its impact on the global stage has been very influential. Today, adding a technological dimension to this landscape will enhance and develop Qatar's economic performance, and building national entities in this sector is a priority for it. This makes it easier for Qatar to develop the digital infrastructure and make it a technology-friendly environment, in addition to the fact that the country's 5G network is among the most advanced globally. Leveraging these capabilities will bring about broad transformations in people's lives, in the course of business, and in various fields. His Excellency added that the Qatar Investment Authority's investments in technology companies abroad are one of the tools that will contribute to building an integrated environment within the country that allows the technology sector to flourish, thus enhancing the ability of local companies to grow and compete globally. HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs noted that artificial intelligence will become an inevitable necessity, not just an option, within

the next two years, indicating that Qatar has already begun to adopt these technologies within government agencies.

In this regard, His Excellency added that Qatar has signed agreements with international companies to develop AI applications for public services. Qatar hopes to develop 50 AI-powered government services by 2029. Qatar is also working on introducing fundamental transformations in sectors where it has leading national entities, such as the aviation sector, to explore how AI can reshape this sector.

For his part, CEO of Dow Jones Almar Latour affirmed that the State of Qatar plays a pivotal role in developing the field of artificial intelligence in the region, noting that this is one of the reasons for organising the *Wall Street Journal* Tech Live Conference (WSJ Tech Live) in Qatar to collectively anticipate the contours of the future.

Latour said at the opening of the *Wall Street Journal* Tech Live Qatar 2025 conference, hosted by Qatar for the first time in the Middle East and North Africa, that in the coming days, all will witness the benefits of this event and the impact of the journalism provided by the *Wall Street Journal*, which has become increasingly important recently, adding that all will also certainly see Qatar's passion for investing in the industry of the future. Today, he added, all stand at a rising global convergence point that brings together capital, technology, and talent, both in this region and beyond. Anyone who has visited this country realises that Qatar has become a hub for education,

technology, arts, architecture, and sports, and even more achievements lie ahead in the future.

Over the course of the three-day conference, a series of high-level sessions will be held, with the participation of a select group of top global business leaders and investors, including tennis legend Serena Williams, founder and CEO of Fanatics Michael Rubin, CEO of United Talent Agency David Kramer, founder and CEO of Authentic Brands Group Jimmy Salter, co-founder of Reddit and founder and general partner of Seven Seven Six Alexis Ohanian, and chairman and CEO of A-Rod Corp and co-owner of the Minnesota Timberwolves and Lynx Alex Rodriguez.

The main discussion topics cover a number of issues shaping the future of the digital industry, including the future of sports, gaming, and media; the future of privacy, regulation, and consumer trust; and the development of talent, media, and entertainment. The sessions will also highlight the latest innovations in the future of fintech, cryptocurrencies, and digital currencies, in addition to reviewing transformations in the future of space and defence technologies.

The Tech Live conference is held within a long-term strategic partnership between the Government Communications Office and Dow Jones, reflecting international confidence in Qatar as a pivotal destination for hosting major specialised global events, and providing local companies and talents the opportunity to access a global network of decision-makers, investors, and technology pioneers.

QND celebrations to be held at Darb Al Saai from Dec 10-20

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This year's events attract a host of entities, including the Ministry of Defence, the Ministry of Interior, National Cyber Security Agency, Ministry of Communications and Information Technology, The National Archives of Qatar, Doha Forum, Qatar Cultural Center for the Deaf, Qatar Photography Center, Qatar Social and Cultural Center for the Blind, Qatar Reads, and Qatar Islamic Bank.

AI Muqfir and Al Izbah Heritage Camps emerge as the most consequential heritage pillars of these events, as contiguous houses represent a vivid simulation of life in the Qatari desert, hosting sessions of poetry and riddle games aimed at developing young people's skills and familiarising them with tribal dialects, desert routes, and landmarks.

The encampment features several heritage houses, including the Falconry and Hunting House, the Sadu and Weaving House showcasing women's crafts, and the Dairy Production House. Al Izbah Heritage Camp allows children to learn camel riding and camel-handling techniques, providing a living model of the ancestral nomadic lifestyle and their steadfast adherence to traditional customs and practices.

Darb Al Saai also boasts of hosting a side event of the maritime heritage through the Al Bidda event, featuring the Majlis Al Bidda, Bait Al Mutawa, the traditional cafe, Majlis Al Nokhatha, Al Nahham, and Akkas Al Freej, showcasing conventional sea-heritage

enabling digital transformation, and strengthening capacity-building were essential elements for achieving sustainable graduation.

HE al-Misnad noted that the future being sought was one where Least Developed Countries participate fully and effectively in the global economy, without leaving anyone behind. She highlighted that the meeting was an important step toward this goal.

HE the Minister of State for International Co-operation concluded by expressing Qatar's confident expectations for the outcomes of this meeting, reaffirming the country's commitment to international partnership in support of the Least Developed Countries.

games, cultural contests, and a maritime museum documenting Qatar's seafaring history.

Interestingly, bountiful events will be devoted to children as the organising committee intends to organise activities in open areas, such as diverse sporting activities, with the main theatre hosting daily cultural events such as symposia and poetry evenings showcasing diverse patriotic and cultural content. HE Assistant Undersecretary for Cultural Affairs at the Ministry and General Supervisor of QND celebrations, Dr Ghanem bin Mubarak al-Ali, said this year's motto reflects the commitment to maximising investment in fellow citizens and benefiting from their energies to have a supreme and prosperous nation.

The events of QND are laser-focused on deepening the notion of capacity-building as an institutional and societal culture and making sure that values of innovation, giving, and excellence are propagated, in addition to promoting the notions of responsibility, rights, and duties of institutions and individuals, Dr al-Ali underlined.

Noteworthy, Darb Al Saai will be opening its doors to the public daily from 3pm-11pm at its permanent premises, which were designed in a style that fuses Qatari architectural heritage with epochal touches, offering top-notch services and facilities that ensure comfortable and secure moments for visitors and participating entities. Pavilions and booths are meticulously distributed, enhancing the visual dimension and highlighting Qatari identity in all its details.