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**SPORT | Page 1**

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# Manama summit lauds Qatar’s mediation efforts for peace

●GCC Supreme Council supports Qatar’s bid to host 2036 Olympic Games



On behalf of Amir, PM attends 46th GCC Summit in Bahrain

On behalf of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani, HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani participated, alongside Their Highnesses, the leaders and heads of delegations of the sisterly Gulf Co-operation Council (GCC) member states, in the 46th Ordinary Session of the GCC Summit, convened in Manama, Bahrain, yesterday.

The session was attended by Their Excellencies members of the official delegation accompanying HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, along with a number of Their Highnesses and Excellencies members of the accompanying official delegations, and the summit guests.

HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani also participated in the second working session of the 46th session of the Supreme Council of the Gulf Co-operation Council (GCC), held in Manama, in the presence of Prime Minister of the Italian Republic Georgia

Meloni, the summit’s guest of honour. During the session, discussions focused on ways to support and develop the historical friendship and close strategic partnership between the GCC states and the Italian Republic, as well as opportunities to enhance co-operation and joint action in various fields to achieve mutual interests and benefits for both sides. **(QNA)**

## GCC leaders stress joint efforts to tackle regional challenges

Their Majesties and Highnesses, the leaders of the Gulf Co-operation Council (GCC) member states, emphasised during the opening session of the 46th GCC Summit in Manama, Bahrain, the importance of constantly pursuing joint efforts to address regional issues, particularly as the summit convenes under the keen attention of GCC leaders to support the Gulf co-operation process and strengthen its institutional capacities. **Page 8**

**QNA**  
Manama

The Supreme Council of the Gulf Co-operation Council (GCC) commended the pivotal role played by Qatar with regional and international parties and guarantor states, and its efforts to achieve a ceasefire in Gaza and secure the release of hostages and detainees.

The Council also praised Qatar’s contribution to completing negotiations and solidifying the agreement, thus paving the way for a just and comprehensive peace process that enhances regional stability.

This came in the final statement issued at the conclusion of the 46th session of the Supreme Council of the GCC, held yesterday in the Bahraini capital, Manama, with the participation of Qatar and under the chairmanship of Bahrain.

The statement was issued at the conclusion of the summit. In its concluding statement, the Supreme Council commended the efforts of US President Donald Trump and the outcomes of the Sharm El Sheikh Peace Summit, held in the Arab Republic of Egypt on Oct 14, 2025.

It also praised the agreement reached regarding Gaza, signed by Qatar, Egypt, Türkiye, and the US, and the commencement of the first phase aimed at ending the war on the Gaza Strip and paving the way for a comprehensive and just peace.

The Council further commended the active role of the guarantor states in reaching this agreement and stressed the necessity for all parties to adhere to the ceasefire agreement. **To Page 11**

# Amir reaffirms Qatar’s unwavering support for Palestinian people



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani reaffirmed Qatar’s unwavering support for the brotherly Palestinian people in their just struggle to restore their land, safeguard their holy sites, and secure their inalienable rights, stressing that this position reflects a moral and fraternal duty grounded in the principles of justice, freedom, and the right of peoples to self-determination.

His Highness emphasised that the Palestinian cause, with its firmly established principles, remains a fundamental test of the fairness of the prevailing international order and its commitment to international law and legitimacy.

The statement was delivered in a message from His Highness the Amir on the occasion of the annual celebration organised by the United Nations Office in Vienna to mark the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People. The message was read on his behalf by Jassim Yaqoub al-Hammadi, ambassador of Qatar and its Permanent Representative

to the United Nations and other international organisations in Vienna.

In the message, His Highness the Amir expressed his pleasure at addressing the occasion, which was designated by the United Nations General Assembly in its 1977 resolution to affirm the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, foremost among them their natural right to self-determination and to establish their independent state with East Jerusalem as its capital.

His Highness noted that the day serves as an opportunity to honour the steadfast struggle of the Palestinian people and to send a clear message to their sons and daughters that the world does not forget their just cause, nor their prolonged suffering and pain. He added that the day also serves as a message to the international community and its free peoples, reminding them of their responsibilities and obligations under international law and of the necessity of upholding the principles of international law and the international order. **To Page 12**

# Shura Council launches 2025-2030 institutional strategy

**QNA**  
Doha

The General Secretariat of the Shura Council yesterday launched its institutional strategy for 2025-2030, in the presence of HE the Speaker of the Shura Council Hassan bin Abdullah al-Ghanem; HE the Minister of Justice and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Ibrahim bin Ali al-Mohannadi and HE the President of the Civil Service and Government Development Bureau and Secretary-General of the National Planning Council Dr Abdulaziz bin Nasser al-Khalifa, along with several Their Excel-

lenceis members of the Council.

The strategy is designed to strengthen the Council’s legislative and oversight functions, raise the efficiency of administrative and operational work, and promote digital transformation and institutional innovation in line with international best practices. It is anchored in a vision of consolidating the Council’s institutional presence, guided by values of efficiency, responsibility, teamwork, excellence, and sustainability.

In remarks at the ceremony, HE the Secretary-General of the Shura Council, Nayef bin Mohammed al-Mahmoud, said the strategy was the product of institutional work and a comprehensive de-

velopment programme based on a clear vision for advancing the Council’s mission. He noted that its foundations were inspired by the directives of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani, and that its preparation involved a review of documents and legislation governing the Council’s work to ensure alignment with Qatar National Vision 2030 and the Third National Development Strategy.

Al-Mahmoud explained that the plan sets out six main objectives: strengthening governance in institutional administration, improving operational efficiency through digital transformation and innovation, supporting legis-



lative and oversight work, developing partnerships and co-operation at local and international

levels, building future-ready human capital, and enhancing community engagement.

He added that the strategy includes 46 projects to be implemented over the next five years, describing it as a new phase in institutional development that provides a practical framework to support the Council’s work and reinforce its role in public life.

Concluding his speech, al-Mahmoud expressed appreciation to the Speaker, members of the Council, and all contributors to the strategy, voicing hope that its implementation will strengthen parliamentary work and the Council’s national role in the coming period, noting that this step builds on an institutional journey dating back to the Council’s establishment in 1972.

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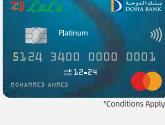
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# Cabinet praises GRSIA's new corporate identity

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

Following the meeting, HE the Minister of Justice and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Ibrahim bin Ali al-Mohannadi stated the following:

At the outset of the meeting, the Cabinet praised the successful and outstanding opening ceremony of the FIFA Arab Cup Qatar 2025, which was inaugurated under the patronage of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani on Monday. The dazzling segments of the ceremony, with their messages and meanings, embodied the authenticity of the Arab nation and its rich heritage, and reflected the feelings of the Arab peoples aspiring to solidarity, co-operation and a better future.

The Cabinet welcomed the heads of delegations from the fraternal Arab countries, the participating teams, representatives of governmental and non-governmental organisations, and guests of the tournament, which constitutes a new addition and a prominent milestone in the record of sporting achievements of Qatar.



The Cabinet also praised the new corporate identity and strategy of the General Retirement and Social Insurance Authority (GRSIA), which was launched under the patronage of HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs. GRSIA's new corporate identity and strategy represent the start of a new phase of insurance protection in Qatar, and contribute to achieving the goals of Qatar National Vision 2030, through the two pillars of human development and social development.

The Cabinet then considered the topics on its agenda. The Cabinet was informed of the Shura Council's approval of the draft general budget of the State for fiscal 2026, and the draft law approving the budget.

The Cabinet approved the draft decision of the Minister of

State for Energy Affairs to extend the deadline for compliance for those addressed by the provisions of Law No 19 of 2024 regulating district cooling services.

The Cabinet decided to approve the draft memorandum of understanding (MoU) for scientific, academic and training co-operation between the Ministry of Interior of Qatar and the Iraqi Ministry of Interior, the draft agreement on the encouragement and reciprocal protection of investments between Qatar and Uruguay, the draft MoU for co-operation in agriculture between the Ministry of Municipality of Qatar and the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries of Portugal, the draft MoU on co-operation in the field of museums between Qatar Museums and the Shanghai Municipal Administration of Culture and Tourism, the draft

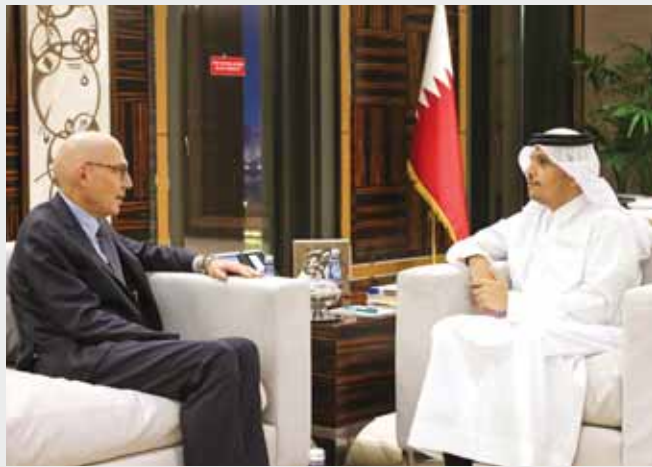
executive programme between the Ministry of Sports and Youth of Qatar and the Ministry of Youth of Algeria for co-operation in the field of youth from 2025 to 2027, and the draft executive programme for the co-operation agreement between the governments Qatar and Algeria in sports from 2025 to 2027.

The Cabinet reviewed three reports and made appropriate decisions regarding them. These included a report on the National Cyber Training Programme (Fresh Graduates Bootcamp), a report on the results of participation in the 35th Meeting of the GCC Ministers of Justice, and a report on the results of participation in the High-Level Conference of the UN Road Safety Fund and the Global Ministerial Conference on Road Safety. (QNA)

## Amir sends written message to Saudi crown prince

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani sent a written message to Crown Prince and Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia Prince Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdulaziz al-Saud pertaining to bilateral relations and ways to support and develop them. Qatar's ambassador to Saudi Arabia Bandar bin Mohammed al-Attiyah delivered the message during a meeting in Riyadh with Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Saudi Arabia Eng Waleed bin Abdulkarim al-Khereiji. (QNA)

## PM meets UN rights official



HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani met yesterday with the visiting UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Turk. During the meeting, they discussed the co-operation relations between Qatar and the United Nations, besides issues of common interest. (QNA)

## Labour minister meets Spanish envoy



HE the Minister of Labour Dr Ali bin Smaikh al-Marri met yesterday with Spain's ambassador Alvaro Renedo Zalba. The meeting discussed bilateral relations and ways to strengthen and further develop them in the labour sector. (QNA)

# Ministry, BWI discuss boosting workers' rights and well-being

**T**he Ministry of Labour, in co-operation with the Building and Wood Workers' International (BWI), concluded yesterday the roundtable discussions held on Dec 1-2, with the participation of a select group of representatives from the relevant government entities, civil society organisations, employers, workers' representatives and the International Labour Organisation (ILO).

The roundtable was attended by the Undersecretary of the Ministry of Labour Sheikhha Najwa bint Abdulrahman al-Thani, Assistant Undersecretary for Migrant Labour Affairs Hamad Faraj Dalmouk, and a number of directors of departments within the ministry.

The roundtable was organised as part of Qatar's efforts to consolidate a safe and encouraging working environment that provides job security and fair opportunities for all members of the workforce, strengthens human rights and supports community well-being, in line with Qatar National Vision 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals.

The session discussed ways to enhance dialogue and exchange views on issues related to the construction sector, including national laws and regulations and international standards relevant to the labour market, with the aim of improving the working environment in the sector and strengthening workers' rights, in addition to matters of occupational safety and health.

The session also addressed the development of a comprehensive vision and implementation plan for Qatar's construction sector, ensuring a safe, fair and sustainable working environment and promoting the alignment of recruitment practices with the best global standards.

Sheikha Najwa emphasised that the convening of this event reflects Qatar's firm commitment to



promoting dialogue on strategic partnerships, exchanging global expertise, and advancing labour policies in accordance with the highest international standards.

She indicated that the construction sector is one of the main pillars of the country's development journey and a cornerstone of the State's ambitious projects aimed at achieving Qatar National Vision 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals.

She said that the meeting is of great significance, as it brings together senior officials, experts and social partners, alongside the BWI, to exchange ideas and explore innovative solutions to the sector's key issues, including labour legislation, occupational safety and health standards, and ways to foster a fair and sustainable working environment.

She stressed that the participants' presence is not merely a formal attendance, but a reflection of a shared commitment to strengthening international co-operation and developing an integrated labour system that contributes to building an advanced, safe and promising construction sector, aligned with national aspirations and best global practices.

The roundtable discussions covered a number of key areas with the aim of setting out a comprehensive vision for improving occupational safety practices in

the sector, enhancing labour governance, aligning local legislation with international standards, improving recruitment and retention practices, and strengthening occupational safety and health procedures.

Participants expressed their aspiration to continue discussions with the aim of proposing practical solutions and tangible initiatives, leading to joint policies that enhance worker protection in the sector.

In their concluding remarks, participants highlighted the importance of maintaining regular dialogue to ensure the implementation of outcomes, noting that this step reinforces Qatar's position as a leading global hub for dialogue and policy development aimed at safeguarding workers' rights as partners in the sustainable development process.

The Ministry of Labour affirmed its commitment to continuing constructive dialogue, activating co-operation mechanisms and strengthening partnerships with all stakeholders in the construction and wood sector, and working to implement the recommendations issued during the roundtable, in a manner that contributes to providing a safe working environment for workers in the sector and supports sustainable social and economic development in the country. (QNA)

# PHCC continues to receive new students for medical checkups

**T**he Primary Health Care Corp (PHCC) announced that it will continue to receive new students for the medical examination required for registration in government schools for academic year 2025/2026.

PHCC stressed that the examination will remain open in all

its health centres throughout the academic year, except for the periods of exams and official holidays for government schools, in line with the circular of the Department of Schools and Student Affairs regarding the continuation of student registration throughout the year.

In a statement, PHCC also

confirmed that all its health centres are ready to receive students and parents, indicating that the medical examination procedures for new students actually began on Nov 2, and that they are carried out according to easy mechanisms that depend on only one visit to the health centre. (QNA)

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# Ooredoo joins Global Child Forum’s ‘Listen Up!’ initiative to advance digital wellbeing



Ooredoo Group has joined ‘Listen Up! – Advancing Digital Wellbeing for Children and Youth’, a Global Child Forum initiative designed to ensure that young people’s voices help shape the digital environments they engage with every day.

The collaboration was formalised at GSMA’s inaugural MWC

Doha, marking the beginning of an intended long-term relationship that cements Ooredoo’s important role in responsible digital leadership and in creating safer, more inclusive digital experiences for children and youth across its global footprint.

Fatima Sultan al-Kuwari, Group Chief Human Resources & Sus-

tainability officer, Ooredoo, said: “We are joining Listen Up! because we want to put an even greater emphasis on supporting children and young people through our services. As a digital enabler, we have a responsibility to ensure that the networks and platforms young people use every day truly contribute to their wellbeing.”

## PTO reveals Kia as official transport partner for Qatar T100 Triathlon World Championship Final

The Professional Triathletes Organisation (PTO) announced that Kia as the Official Transport Partner for the 2025 Qatar T100 Triathlon World Championship Final, taking place in Doha from December 10-13.

This marks Kia’s first partnership with the PTO in the region, supporting the launch of a major global triathlon event in Qatar and bringing the world’s best triathletes and fans together in a thrilling celebration of sport.

Kia joins the T100 Triathlon World Tour as Official Automotive Partner for the Doha event, uniting two brands driven by performance, innovation, and design excellence.

As Kia introduces its latest range of premium vehicles to the market, the partnership provides a powerful platform to showcase its multi-utility capability, refined craftsmanship, and bold new aesthetic.

Kia vehicles will play a central role across the event, supporting the athletes, enhancing the overall experience, and connecting the brand with a global community that shares its spirit of progress and ambition.



Stuart Ramsey, PTO Chief Commercial Officer, said: “We are thrilled to welcome Kia, through its official distributor Al-Attia Motors and Trading Co (AMTC), as a key partner for the Qatar T100. Their support will enhance the experience for athletes, staff, and fans alike, while helping us deliver a first-class, world championship event in a new region. Kia’s brand aligns perfectly with the performance, innovation, and global ambition of the T100 Triathlon.”

Hossam Abu Shadi, Vice-President – Commercial of Kia Qatar, added: “Partnering with the PTO for the Qatar T100 is an exciting opportunity to bring our vehicles into a dynamic, international sporting event.”

The Qatar T100 Triathlon World Championship Final is the culmination of the T100 Race to Qatar, a season-long

global series featuring 100km races – 2km swim, 80km bike, 18km run – across nine iconic locations including Singapore, San Francisco, Vancouver, London, the French Riviera, Spain, Wollongong, and Dubai.

T100 weekends are ‘festivals of multisport’ and feature a range of opportunities for amateur athletes of all levels to get involved. From experienced amateurs tackling the 100km distance to other triathlon distances and first-time swim, bike and run participants taking on single discipline, untimed events.

Event highlights in Qatar include the following and a youth triathlon will also be announced in the coming weeks: **December 10:** Mass 5k/1km fun run for the local community and visiting athletes; **December 11:** Event and fan village opens with dining, entertainment, and expo across Lusail Plaza; **December 12:** Season-long T100 Race To Qatar series concludes with T100 Professional Races, awarding the 2025 World Championship title; **December 13:** Amateur races including the T100 Age-Group World Championship, open-entry 100km distance, and sprint triathlon

## QIB announces Mastercard ‘10mn loyalty points’ international spend campaign draw grand winners

Qatar Islamic Bank (QIB) has announced the grand winners of its 2025 international spend campaign, recognising QIB Mastercard credit and debit cardholders who qualified during the campaign period.

The draws were conducted electronically in the presence of representatives from the Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MoCI) and QIB officials. Four grand winners each received 1mn Absher points, and a total of 60 monthly winners each received 100,000 Absher points throughout the campaign, totalling 10mn loyalty points given away to a total 64 winners.

Absher reward points can be redeemed for booking air tickets, including Qatar Airways, hotel rooms across the world, online shopping, redeem with other loyalty partners, pay for utility bills, top up for QIB prepaid cards. D Anand, QIB’s general manager – Personal Banking Group, said: “We congratulate our grand winners and all monthly winners of this year’s campaign with Mastercard. As our customers transact inter-



nationally, we remain focused on delivering market-leading rewards and seamless digital experience, ensuring greater value with every payment.”

QIB’s Absher rewards programme allows customers to earn points across various banking activities, notably by using their debit and credit cards. Customers can then redeem Absher points for flight tickets, hotel stays, online shopping, and e-vouchers at various partners including supermarkets, cinemas, gift shops as well as food and transport apps.

Absher points can also be used

to settle bills with Ooredoo, Vodafone and Kahramaa, while they can also be converted to airline loyalty programmes including Qatar Airways Avios.

QIB’s longstanding partnership with Mastercard continues to bring customers enhanced value, security, and convenience. Together, both entities remain committed to delivering innovative payment solutions that elevate the international spending experience and reward customers with greater benefits every day.

Customers can apply for QIB credit cards instantly through the QIB mobile app.

# Qatar Charity’s emergency food security project for families launched in Yemen



In a bid to stave off famine and save lives, Qatar Charity (QC) has launched an emergency food security project in Yemen, backed by donors from Qatar.

The initiative aims to rescue thousands of vulnerable families amid what is described as the world’s worst humanitarian crisis. The project kicked off in Taiz Governorate, targeting 1,780 families, and will soon expand to Al Hudaydah Governorate with a similar number, bringing the total beneficiaries to 3,560 families – around 25,000 people.

Under the project, each family will receive three food baskets sufficient for four and a half months, containing essential staples such as wheat, rice, sugar, oil, and legumes. The distribution is being carried out in co-ordination with the Food Security Cluster and local authorities to ensure aid reaches the most vulnerable, including internally displaced persons (IDPs) and fragile communities.

This intervention comes at a critical

**“I fled with my family because of the war. Despite my age and illness, I work for a meagre wage to feed my children. Sometimes we sleep without dinner. This aid is life-saving. Thank you to the generous people of Qatar”**

juncture as many international organisations have withdrawn, and relief programmes have ground to a halt, heightening famine risks across several Yemeni governorates, a QC statement said yesterday. Yemen has endured over a decade of conflict that shattered infrastructure, wiped out livelihoods, and was compounded by climate disasters devastating agriculture – pushing millions to the brink of famine.

In a joint statement issued last October, more than 30 international and local organisations warned that Yemen faces the world’s third-largest food crisis, with half the population struggling with hunger and half of all children under five

suffering from chronic malnutrition. The statement projected that by early next year, over 18mn people will experience acute food insecurity, including 41,000 at risk of famine.

Beneficiaries expressed profound relief. Hammoud Saeed Masad, a displaced father from Taiz, said: “I fled with my family because of the war. Despite my age and illness, I work for a meagre wage to feed my children. Sometimes we sleep without dinner. This aid is life-saving. Thank you to the generous people of Qatar.” Samia Ahmed, shared: “I often go to bed without food. This basket brought me immense joy, and I will pray with all my heart for the generous donors.”

## Ministry recalls Toyota and Mitsubishi models


The Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MoCI), in co-operation with Al Abdulghani Motors, has announced the recall of Toyota Urban Cruiser 2025 model, due to a possible defect in fuel level indicator in combination meter, which may indicate more fuel than what actually remains in the fuel tank.

The ministry, in co-operation with Qatar Automobiles Company, also announced the recall of Mitsubishi Pajero

vehicle 2007-16 models, due to a possible defect in the airbag inflator, which may result in the airbag not functioning effectively if activated. The ministry said the recall campaign comes within the framework of its ongoing 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: 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).



الهلال الأحمر القطري  
Qatar Red Crescent

Qatar Red Crescent – Medical Affairs Division

Tenders Announcement: -

Sr. #	Tender No.	Description	Temporary Tender Bond	Documents Fees (Non-Refundable)	Closing Date
1	QRC/WHC/20-2025	Demolition and Construction of external patient toilet at AI HEMAILA WHC	7,000 Q.R	500 Q.R	17-12-2025

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

Required Documents:

1. Authorization letter to receive tender documents + ID copy of the person will be receiving the documents.

2. Company’s Commercial registration copy.

3. Bank deposit voucher with the value of documents (500 QR) not refunded & account details:

- Account Name: Qatar Red Crescent.

- Bank: Al Rayan.

- Account Number: 0011199970200

- IBAN Number: QA83MAFR000000000011199970200

For more information: please call: (50044554), or

Email whc.tenders@qrqs.org.qa



## QU, ExxonMobil Qatar organise STEM Academy Forum

Qatar University (QU), through the National Center for Educational Development (NCED) at the College of Education, organised the QU-ExxonMobil STEM Academy (Questa) Forum for teachers under the theme 'From Theory to Empowerment... Education Leading the Future'. The event brought together teachers, educational specialists, and experts in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). The forum marked the conclusion of the 11th edition of the academy, which aims to support teachers' professional development and empower them to adopt innovative instructional practices that promote active learning and creative thinking among students. The forum serves as a platform for educators and specialists to exchange experiences and discuss best educational practices



in alignment with national efforts to advance Qatar's educational system and enhance innovation. It contributes to preparing students capable of leading the nation's scientific and technological future in line with Qatar National Vision 2030. Hosted in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MoEHE) and ExxonMobil Qatar – the

academy's strategic partner since its establishment in 2012 – the forum highlighted the outcomes of 15 applied STEM projects implemented by teachers during the 2024-2025 academic year. Prof Asma Abdullah al-Attayah, dean of the College of Education at QU, said: "We take pride in the Questa's notable impact in enabling teachers and equipping

them with the latest pedagogical practices in STEM, fully aligned with the national direction toward building a knowledge-based economy driven by creativity and innovation." Dr Huda al-Kubaisi, director of NCED, explained that the forum showcased the results of approximately 15 STEM-based projects implemented in schools, along with seven concurrent

training workshops and a panel discussion featuring experts from the University of Doha for Science and Technology, the MoEHE, and Qatar Science and Technology Secondary School titled 'A Forward-Looking Vision for the Future of STEM Education in Qatar'. The academy graduated 55 teachers this year, Dr al-Kubaisi stated while appreciating all partners.

Engineer Rashid bin Rashid al-Hajri, vice-president and manager of Public and Government Affairs at ExxonMobil Qatar, said: "Empowering teachers is a foundational step toward equipping an entire generation of students with the tools necessary for critical thinking and innovation, contributing to shaping a sustainable future for Qatar."

## M F Husain Museum aims 'to spark inquiry and discourse'

Martand Khosla, the architect of the newly-opened Lawh Wa Qalam: M F Husain Museum, says that the museum was designed to spark inquiry and discourse.

Khosla says that Education City has buildings designed by some of the great masters – Arata Isozaki, Rem Koolhaas.

"I've always admired the elegance of the architecture in Education City but also how it is rooted in purpose – a great foundation for any urban landscape. I hope that the presence of our building in Education City adds, in some way, to the wider discourse of learning and to broader ideas around architecture."

He noted that the design of the new museum embodies certain South Asian, Central Asian, West Asian, and North African references, bringing together cultures that have, over centuries, had very strong ties.

"Hopefully it will become a space of discourse and another layer to Education City's architectural landscape. It also stands out because of its 'blueness' – that is an important attractor in itself; people can be drawn to a place because they're curious and want to know more," he explained.

"When we were designing it, we were aware that this isn't simply a building to house the artworks of M F Husain; it's a building within Education City. We wanted it to be a space of inquiry, of debate, and it has architectural clues that allude to this: for example, it sits on a plat-



Martand Khosla

form, which we imagined as a stage, a space of discourse. The museum is surrounded by institutes of learning, and making it a place of learning and inquiry in itself was central to this project," he said.

He remarked that architecture is one of the most important subjects or professions in formulating not just an educational institution, but also what cities essentially start to become and the experiences their citizens have. "It's very important that architecture acknowledges the human scale: the journeys that a student or teacher would take across a campus, for example," he said.

Khosla noted that the more someone can take from artworks and architecture, the better; it makes for a far richer and more layered and nuanced understanding of the world. The primary conversation visitors should have is with the artworks – the architecture should complement rather than counter the art experience, and act as a facilitator of the visitor's journey.

"I would hope that everyone who comes to the museum leaves with their own understanding of Husain – who he was, what he meant to India and to this region, and what he means to them – and their own questions and sense of inquiry. They can choose the sequence of how they experience his work, and hopefully that allows them to build their own chronology of Husain," he said.

The architect felt that it is very exciting to think the museum can help to strengthen ties between Qatar and India, and between South and West Asia "I also hope the vision and worldview of Husain becomes a subject of education discourse for students at QF. By bringing universities and places of learning together, QF enables discourse and inquiry and the ability to question, and I hope the museum can be a place of learning where questions about the regional identities of South and West Asia are explored and answered," he highlighted.

"Of much of the architecture around the region, to me the architecture of Education City is probably the most meaningful. It responds to the region, it responds to our times, and it responds to the climate much better than a lot of architecture that may become non-sustainable in the years to come. The importance placed on sustainable architecture at Education City is admirable, and very much the direction I hope the wider region takes a cue from," Khosla said.

## Visit Qatar presents Einaudi live in Doha on January 9

Visit Qatar is set to present one of the world's most celebrated composers and pianists, Ludovico Einaudi, performing live in Doha on January 9, 2026 at the Katara Amphitheatre.

Doors will open at 8pm for an evening promising an extraordinary blend of emotion, artistry, and world-class music.

Known for his minimalist yet deeply evocative compositions, Ludovico Einaudi has captured global audiences with performances that seamlessly fuse classical tradition with contemporary sensibilities. His music, featured in internationally acclaimed films such as Nomadland and The Intouchables, has made him one of the most-streamed classical musicians worldwide.

As Qatar continues to attract visitors from the region and around the world, the highly anticipated Ludovico Einaudi concert reflects Visit Qatar's commitment to hosting world-renowned talent and delivering unforgettable experiences that further enhance the country's appeal as a leading global tourism destination.

This event forms part of Qatar Calendar's activities, which provides residents and visitors with a comprehensive guide to explore a wide range of events, including concerts, festivals, and exhibitions.



## Qatar Shell GTL Ltd Public Announcement To all Ships, Fisherman and Mariners

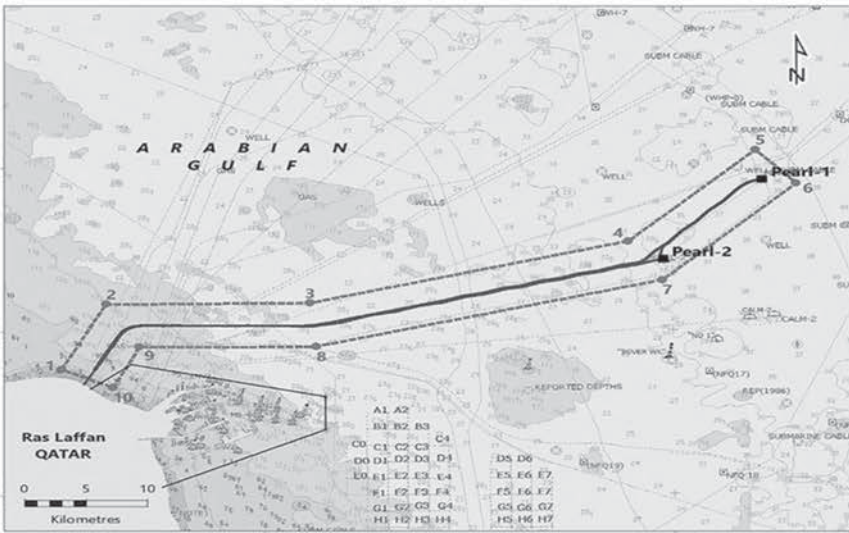


Subsea Survey Works Offshore in North Field (Pearl 1& Pearl 2) & Raslaffan Qatar By the Vessels "Fugro Pegasus" & "Lady Beatrice"

Subsea Survey Works Offshore Qatar from 01/12/2025 to 31/12/2025

In pursuant and under directives from the Seafarers and Registration Department, Ministry of Transport, State of Qatar, this announcement is to inform all Vessels, Mariners and Fisherman that Qatar Shell GTL Ltd intends to undertake subsea survey works by the vessels "Fugro Pegasus" & "Lady Beatrice" in North Field (Pearl 1& Pearl 2) & Raslaffan, Qatar, bound by the coordinates and location map shown below.

Corner Coordinates Covering Survey Area									
Nahrwan 1967, UTM Projection, Zone 39 CM 51° E					WGS84, UTM Projection, Zone 39 CM 51° E				
ID	Easting [m]	Northing [m]	Latitude (N)	Longitude (E)	Easting [m]	Northing [m]	Latitude (N)	Longitude (E)	
1	550 164	2 871 136	25° 57' 36.6"	51° 30' 03.8"	550 262	2 871 569	25° 57' 43.1"	51° 30' 07.4"	
2	553 762	2 878 465	26° 01' 34.4"	51° 32' 14.3"	553 861	2 878 898	26° 01' 40.9"	51° 32' 17.9"	
3	570 391	2 878 610	26° 01' 36.6"	51° 42' 12.6"	570 490	2 879 043	26° 01' 43.0"	51° 42' 16.2"	
4	596 287	2 885 598	26° 05' 18.4"	51° 57' 46.0"	596 385	2 886 031	26° 05' 24.8"	51° 57' 49.7"	
5	606 663	2 895 908	26° 10' 50.8"	52° 04' 02.5"	606 761	2 896 341	26° 10' 57.2"	52° 04' 06.2"	
6	609 990	2 892 143	26° 08' 47.6"	52° 06' 01.2"	610 089	2 892 576	26° 08' 54.0"	52° 06' 05.0"	
7	599 111	2 881 242	26° 02' 56.1"	51° 59' 26.5"	599 209	2 881 675	26° 03' 02.5"	51° 59' 30.2"	
8	570 891	2 873 701	25° 58' 56.9"	51° 42' 29.6"	570 990	2 874 133	25° 59' 03.3"	51° 42' 33.3"	
9	556 487	2 873 627	25° 58' 56.8"	51° 33' 51.6"	556 585	2 874 059	25° 59' 03.2"	51° 33' 55.2"	
10	554 371	2 869 072	25° 56' 29.0"	51° 32' 34.8"	554 469	2 869 505	25° 56' 35.5"	51° 32' 38.4"	



All Vessels, Mariners and Fishermen are expected to keep clear of the survey locations during the operations.

Qatar Shell GTL Ltd takes no responsibilities for any loss or damage caused to outside parties in association with this operations following publication of this notice.

For more details contact  
Tel: 70489890

## QF, ILO partner to help shape Qatar's workforce future

A new partnership designed to produce evidence-based insights that help to guide the future development of Qatar's workforce has been formed between Qatar Foundation (QF) and the International Labour Organisation (ILO).

Data and findings from QF's Alumni Impact Study – a large-scale survey tracking employment outcomes, career trajectories, and perceptions of graduates from QF's universities over the past 25 years – and other labour market-related studies will be used by QF and the ILO to develop five co-authored policy briefs.

These briefs – representing the first formal publication initiative between QF and the ILO since the establishment of the ILO Project Office in Qatar in 2018 – will result in policy-focused insights for the nation's decision-makers, providing recommendations that support Qatar's human capital development goals.

The five areas that will be addressed through the partnership are bridging skills gaps and mismatches between alumni and employers; national talent retention; the extent to which Qatar's higher education system supports entrepreneurship; how higher education in Qatar can better align with the needs of the labour market; and how to advance gender equality and inclusive employment in Qatar. The partnership was formalised through the signing of a memorandum of understanding (MoU) between QF and the ILO during the recent WISE 12 Summit in Doha, hosted by QF's global education initiative WISE. Francisco Marmolejo, president of Higher Education and Education Advisor, QF, said: "This collaboration with ILO enables us to generate evidence-based perspectives aimed at advancing knowledge by contributing to practical policy recommendations that support workforce development and social progress in Qatar and the region.

"In addition, the QF-ILO partnership will support structured dialogue with key national stakeholders to strengthen alignment around areas of national importance such as skills development, graduate pathways, and inclusive employment, as articulated in Qatar's Third National Development Strategy." Francesco d'Ovidio, country office director of the ILO Doha, said: "This partnership marks the first formal collaboration between the International Labour Organisation and Qatar Foundation, and we hope it will be the first of many. By collaborating with QF, gaining structured access to the anonymised dataset of the



ILO's Francesco d'Ovidio and QF's Francisco Marmolejo after signing the MoU.

Alumni Impact Study, the ILO will be able to apply its global analytical frameworks and comparative labour market expertise to generate concrete, evidence-based policy recommendations for Qatar.

"These insights will directly support the ambitions of Qatar National Vision 2030 and the objectives of Qatar's Third National Development Strategy, helping to advance a knowledge-based economy, a future-ready workforce, and labour market policies that are firmly grounded in decent work principles. We look forward to deepening this partnership and contributing to Qatar's long-term human capital development."

QF's Alumni Impact Study has surveyed, over an extensive period, the paths taken by graduates of eight of its universities, including the sectors in which they are employed; the relevance of the skills they have acquired to labour market needs; career mobility; job satisfaction; and their perception of alignment between education and employment.

Drawing on this dataset, the ILO will apply its internationally recognised expertise in labour market analysis, skills development, and employment policy – including comparative global benchmarks and analytical frameworks widely used across ILO member states – as the two organisations co-author and disseminate the five briefs. These publications will be accompanied by national dialogue sessions engaging ministries, universities, employers, and civil society, with the goal of identifying research-backed, actionable pathways for strengthening Qatar's workforce.



# MSDF launches digital platform for people with disabilities

**QNA**  
Doha

The Ministry of Social Development and Family (MSDF) launched a national digital platform developed to empower people with disabilities, their families, caregivers, and service providers to access information and services tailored to them more reliably and clearly.

The launch was attended by HE the Minister of Social Development and Family Buthaina bint Ali al-Jabr al-Nuaimi (**pictured**).

The launch ceremony witnessed the active participation of people with disabilities, reflecting their belief in the importance of including them in projects that address their lives and needs.

The platform is one of MSDF's projects strategy, a step that reflects its commitment to promoting inclusivity and equal opportunities for all members of society.

On this occasion, HE the Minister of Social Development and Family Buthaina bint Ali al-Jabr al-Nuaimi said in her opening remarks that the launch of the platform was in line with the law for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in the State of Qatar, which affirms the right to access technology and information and to participate fully in society without obstacles.

Her Excellency added that the ministry ensured that the platform embodies these principles and translates them into tangible, practical solutions that enhance the independence of individuals and enable them to exercise their rights easily and conveniently.

HE the minister added that the platform was not merely a digital project but an embodiment of a national model based on human rights, placing justice, inclusivity, and equal opportunities at the forefront of its priorities. She added that it also constitutes a fundamental pillar in supporting the implementation of the MSDF's strategy, aiming to build a modern social services system that meets the aspirations of society."

In her address, the Chief Executive Officer of the Assistive



Technology Center (Mada) Maha al-Mansouri emphasised that the platform was not merely an information portal, but a strategic step in building an inclusive digital ecosystem that reflects Qatar's efforts to promote universal accessibility and enhance independence and self-reliance.

It is worth noting that the platform was developed by the Assistive Technology Center according to the highest international digital accessibility standards, ensuring a user experience compatible with assistive technology.

The platform also incorporates solutions based on assistive artificial intelligence technologies to enhance independence and improve the quality of digital services for users.

This project is a comprehensive digital platform that contributes to the implementation of the Law on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and reflects the Ministry

of Social Development and Family's commitment to implementing its strategy aimed at empowering this segment of society and facilitating their access to various services and opportunities.

The project is one of the practical tools adopted by the MSDF to remove obstacles that people with disabilities may face, by providing innovative solutions that support their full inclusion in society and enhance their independence and quality of life.

This aligns with the national directions of Qatar in promoting rights, protection, and empowerment, and with the pillars of Qatar National Vision 2030 by supporting the building of a more inclusive and sustainable society and providing a digital system that facilitates understanding and access to services for people with disabilities, enabling them to exercise their rights and to participate in all aspects of life.

# Al-Misnad meets UN high commissioner for human rights

HE the Minister of State for International Co-operation Dr Maryam bint Ali bin Nasser al-Misnad met yesterday with the visiting UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Turk. Discussions during the meeting dealt with co-operation between Qatar and the United Nations in the areas of human rights protection and human development.

They also discussed the human rights situation in crisis zones, mechanisms for supporting the most vulnerable groups, particularly women and children, and a number of other topics of mutual interest.

During the meeting, the Minister of State for International Co-operation affirmed the Qa-



tar's commitment to supporting UN efforts aimed at promoting human rights and strengthening multilateral partnerships to achieve more effective responses.

For his part, the UN high

commissioner for human rights commended the Qatar's role in humanitarian and diplomatic work and its efforts in supporting protection and promoting human rights at the international level. (**QNA**)

# Foundation laid for Syria power plant developed by Qatar's UCC Urbacon

Under the patronage of Syria's President Ahmed al-Sharaa, Syria's Minister of Energy Mohammed al-Basheer laid the foundation stone announcing the start of construction works for the Deir Ezzor Power Plant with a capacity of approximately 1,000MW.

This project comes as part of a series of projects - with a total capacity of 5,000MW - that were recently signed and will be implemented by an international consortium led by the Qatari company UCC Urbacon, with the participation of Cengiz (Turkiye), Kalyon (Turkiye), and Power International (the US).

This national event reflects the beginning of a new phase in which the country moves toward rebuilding the energy sector and strengthening its electrical security.

The minister was accompanied at the ceremony by Omar Shaqrouq, Deputy Minister of Energy for Electricity Affairs, representatives of the international coalition led by UCC Urbacon, the Governor of Deir Ezzor Ghasan Ahmed, local community figures, and a number of directors from the coalition companies and officials from the Ministry of Energy. This strategic project represents a decisive step in the State's efforts to turn the page on years of severe electricity shortages



Foundation stone laid for the Deir Ezzor Power Plant developed by Qatar's UCC Urbacon.

and move toward a more reliable and sustainable electrical system capable of meeting the needs of citizens and various industrial, commercial, and tourism sectors across the country, thereby driving economic growth.

The Deir Ezzor Power Plant is the first and largest of the power plants to be launched under the Independent Power Producer (IPP) programme. Once operational, it is expected to boost the national grid's production capacity, improve supply stability, and meet the increasing demand for

electricity in the eastern region and the rest of the governorates. The launch of the project is expected to have a positive impact on the region and the national economy by creating tens of thousands of direct and indirect job opportunities during both the construction and operational phases. It will also contribute to localising modern, high-efficiency, low-emission technologies, in accordance with international standards, in addition to developing trained and qualified technical personnel.

# MoECC gets ISO certifications for biological, chemical analyses

The Ministry of Environment and Climate Change (MoECC), represented by the Environmental Monitoring and Inspection Department, Environmental Laboratory Division, has obtained ISO certifications from the International Organisation for Standardisation (ISO) in the fields of biological and chemical analyses.

This milestone came following the successful completion of the third annual assessment of the laboratory quality system in accordance with the international standard ISO/IEC 17025:2017.

In a press release, MoECC highlighted that the Environmental Laboratory Division participated in the evaluation process conducted by the American Association for Laboratory Accreditation (A2LA), including a review and audit of the technical and administrative requirements in accordance with the international standard, an examination of the laboratory's technical procedures, and a review of the administrative documents and records related to the quality management system and analytical operations.

The statement pointed out that the laboratory succeeded in obtaining accreditation for 24 environmental parameters in the fields of advanced chemical analyses and biological testing, qualifying it for official ISO certifications. This accreditation, the statement adds, underscores the ministry's unyielding commitment to applying the highest international quality standards in environmental analyses, while simultaneously advancing its strategic objectives aligned with Qatar National Vision 2030. (**QNA**)



Minister Mohammed al-Basheer was accompanied at the ceremony by Omar Shaqrouq, Deputy Minister of Energy for Electricity Affairs, representatives of the international coalition led by UCC Urbacon, the Governor of Deir Ezzor Ghasan Ahmed, local community figures, and a number of directors from the coalition companies and officials from the Ministry of Energy.

# Qatar is a thought leader in precision health: expert

**By Joseph Varghese**  
Staff Reporter

Qatar is a thought leader in precision health and has the potential for several discoveries with the advantage of the genetic heterogeneity of its population, noted an international expert in precision medicine and genomics.

"The unique genetic profile of the Qatari population provides an opportunity to discover gene variations in causing human diseases. Qatar has the talent and the means to mine these data in addition to the appropriate patient population," Dr Edison T Liu, professor and special fellow of The Jackson Laboratory, USA, told *Gulf Times*.

Dr Liu was speaking to *Gulf Times* on the sidelines of the 'Precision Medicine and the Future of Genomics Summit 2025' organised by Sidra Medicine, a Qatar Foundation entity. Dr Liu is



Dr Edison T Liu. **PICTURE:** Shaji Kayamkulam

an international expert in cancer biology and human genetics and was the founding executive director of the Genome Institute of Singapore.

"Qatar is already a leader in the field and the country can convert the upstream discoveries to directly affect patient care. It would be remarkable, when it happens. Qatar can expand this work into clinical implementation and the power of this fundamental science will directly improve patient outcomes," he highlighted.

Dr Liu said that he believes in

small countries, not just to catch up, but to lead the field because of their uniqueness. "Population genetics is key, and genetic heterogeneity is an advantage, not a disadvantage. Since the genetic profile of Qatar differs from those from the West, new genes can be uncovered responsible for diabetes and therefore ideal for discoveries. The size of the population is less relevant than the quality of the data," he explained.

Dr Liu noted that the major challenge globally in this regard is to obtain appropriate funding to maintain the powerful genomic technologies. "I think Qatar is on its way of leading the research. I hope that the decision makers will step on the accelerator because there is a lot of competition now in the region," he noted.

"It is going to be Qatar and some other countries in the region that have such rich data. Qatar with its small size but with rich data can take it to the next level leading to clinical discoveries," added Dr Liu.

**ANNOUNCEMENT**

I, **SAGAR GUNDLA**  
holder of  
**INDIA Passport No. P1405113**  
**QID No. 27935625472**  
hereby change my name  
from  
**SAGAR GUNDLA**  
to  
**BATTU SAGAR**

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

**ANNOUNCEMENT**

I, **THAIMAJAHANARA MOHAMMED ABDULJABBAR**  
holder of  
**Bangladesh Passport No. EH0701417**  
**QID No. 30505000152**  
hereby change my name  
from  
**THAIMAJAHANARA MOHAMMED ABDULJABBAR**  
to  
**THAHIMA JAHANARA**

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



## Saif Ali Khan and Alfardan Corporation celebrate an exclusive evening at The St Regis Marsa Arabia Island, The Pearl - Qatar

In a private gathering that reflected elegance and exclusivity in equal measure, distinguished actor, producer and man of timeless lineage Saif Ali Khan joined senior leadership from Alfardan Corporation for an intimate evening at Chotto Matte at The St Regis Marsa Arabia Island, The Pearl - Qatar.

Held on this iconic island address, the event brought together VIPs, esteemed dignitaries, distinguished guests and partners to celebrate refined living and the promise of premium real estate in Qatar.

Located on a private island within The Pearl, The Residences at The St Regis Marsa Arabia Island continues to set a new benchmark for sophisticated living. Its combination of waterfront views, world-class amenities and the legendary St Regis service ethos, has positioned the development as one of the most sought-after destinations for discerning homeowners and global investors. The St Regis Residences offer 1- to 4-bedroom apartments, townhouses and penthouses with freehold ownership, ensuring privacy and exclusive resort-style living.

Speaking about the occasion, Saif Ali Khan shared: "For me, choosing where you live is not



Saif Ali Khan and Mohamed Sleiman, CEO of Alfardan Properties & Alfardan Hospitality.

only a practical decision, but also a personal one. The Residences at The St Regis Marsa Arabia Island offer a sense of peace and sophistication that is very rare.

It is private, beautifully designed and yet connected. As someone who appreciates a life built on comfort and intuitive service, this felt like the perfect choice



Saif Ali Khan on the balcony at his Marsa Arabia Residence.

for my family and me. Qatar has a special charm; it brings together tradition and modernity in a way that is both inspiring and reassuring."

The evening unfolded as a showcase of the island's unique character: understated in form yet profound in experience. Guests experienced the luxury of space, the island's gastronomic offerings, the serenity of its landscapes and the hallmark services that define life at The Residences. With a curated selection of fine dining, wellness and bespoke lifestyle experiences, the property has

become synonymous with a new standard of contemporary luxury living.

Mohamed Sleiman, CEO of Alfardan Properties and Alfardan Hospitality, remarked on the occasion: "Tonight was a celebration of more than ownership. It reflected the discerning choices that modern global citizens are making; seeking destinations that offer security, privacy and an elevated way of life. The Residences at The St Regis Marsa Arabia Island continue to attract a growing community of families, entrepreneurs and

investors from around the world. We are proud to showcase a development that represents the spirit of Qatar: visionary, dependable and designed with a deep respect for craftsmanship and legacy."

Qatar's luxury real estate market continues to attract international attention. Across the region, Qatar stands apart for its infrastructure, future-ready economy, international mega events, and investor-friendly policies, factors that have contributed to a growing trend of global investors purchasing premium homes in Doha and within signature developments like The St Regis Marsa Arabia Island. The island's portfolio of apartments, penthouses and townhouses offers residents a rare combination of privacy, prestige and enduring value.

At a time when global citizens are seeking destinations that deliver both lifestyle and legacy, The Residences at The St Regis Marsa Arabia Island represent one of the most exclusive addresses in the region. More than an architectural landmark, it is a proposition built on trust, craftsmanship and a vision for exquisite living. The gathering reflected that very spirit; where luxury is not merely showcased but quietly celebrated.



St Regis Marsa Arabia, The Pearl.



Crowd at Chotto Matte, Marsa Arabia.

## Visit Malta expands its GCC outreach with bespoke luxury travel packages and key airline partnerships

By Amjad Vanimal

The Malta Tourism Authority (MTA) reaffirmed its commitment to the Middle East market with its participation at this year's Qatar Travel Mart (QTM), held last week in Doha.

Speaking to Gulf Times on the sidelines of the event, Xiaolong Wu, Senior Marketing Manager at MTA, said the fair offered a "special and meaningful" opportunity to reconnect with travel trade, airline, and



Xiaolong Wu, Senior Marketing Manager at MTA.

media partners, to strengthen Malta's visibility in Qatar and the wider GCC region.

"This is our second time participating in QTM. We first attended in 2023, and this year felt even more special," Wu said. "I met many familiar faces who remembered us from our previous visit. The Middle East market is warm, friendly, and people here truly engage in meaningful communication."

She praised the organisation of the fair, noting that the quality of exhibitors and the level of interest from buyers demonstrated the region's strong tourism potential. "From the buyers we met, we can feel the market has big potential. It's a very good opportunity for us to explore more."

According to Wu, experienced Middle Eastern travellers—many of whom have visited Europe multiple times—are increasingly seeking new, distinctive, and more premium destinations. For these high-end travellers, Malta offers a compelling blend of luxury, exclusivity, and rich heritage, with experiences that feel both familiar and refreshingly different.

"People from this region are seasoned travellers who seek destinations that are new and distinctive — places they can tell their friends, 'I've been somewhere different.' Malta is exactly that kind of destination, not only through its history and culture but also through its cinematic appeal. Many iconic movies and series

have been filmed across the islands, giving visitors the chance to explore locations featured in major productions like Jurassic World, Game of Thrones, and Gladiator," she said.

She highlighted several strengths that make Malta particularly attractive to visitors from Qatar and the neighbouring GCC countries. Safety, halal-friendly services, and a sense of cultural familiarity are among the key factors that resonate strongly with travellers from the region.

"Travellers can rest assured that Malta is a very safe country. It is also a Muslim-friendly destination with halal-friendly dining options," she said. "Historically, Malta has deep connections with Arabic culture, and even the Maltese language shares linguistic roots with Arabic. This helps visitors feel comfortable and relaxed — which sets the right mood for a perfect holiday."

Beyond comfort, Malta's deep history — stretching back 7,000 years — remains a major draw. Whether visitors seek archaeological sites, medieval architecture, cultural experiences, or Instagram-worthy backdrops, Malta delivers on multiple levels.

As an island, it also offers abundant seaside experiences. "Guests can enjoy simple activities like a harbour tour or the Blue Grotto, or more luxurious options like hiring a yacht for a full day," she said. Malta's year-round pleasant weather, especially in winter, adds to its appeal for GCC travellers seeking a warm Mediterranean getaway.

### New tailored tourism experiences for 2026

"Looking ahead, Malta plans to develop more tailor-made travel experiences for the Middle East market in 2026. My recent visits to Qatar, Dubai, and Riyadh have shown that travellers from this region increasingly appreciate bespoke itineraries — whether that means exclusive cultural access, luxury escapes, or private, curated experiences," Wu said.

"Signature Maltese events such as the Rolex Middle Sea Race, the Mdina Classic Car Grand Prix, and the Valletta Baroque Festival offer world-class experiences that showcase Malta's rich heritage and culture."

She added that Visit Malta, in collaboration with AVIAREPS (MTA's Middle East Representative), has recently introduced



Visit Malta booth at QTM 2025.

first-of-its-kind Private Jet Holiday Packages — that enables travellers seeking ultra-luxury experiences to book through concierge desks or top travel agencies across the GCC. "This allows us to curate exclusive Maltese experiences, including hidden gems, private tours, after-hours access to UNESCO sites, luxury yacht charters, and VIP cultural events for high-net-worth travellers who want something truly extraordinary," Wu said.

Wu also sees storytelling and cultural connections as powerful tools. The Maltese language, she noted, shares linguistic roots with Arabic—an angle MTA intends to highlight more in future content and marketing initiatives.

Strengthening ties with regional travel agencies will also remain a core priority. "Travel agents here are extremely professional, and their clients are very loyal to them. Working closely with our trade partners ensures that Malta is presented accurately and effectively to travellers," she said.

Wu added that airline partnerships will continue to play a vital role, particularly as Malta aims to expand accessibility across the GCC region and beyond. She noted that Qatar Airways' launch of direct flights to Malta in July 2025 — offering four non-stop flights per week between Doha and Malta — is a key airline partnership development that MTA warmly welcomed.

### Personal bond with the Middle East

Beyond professional ambitions, Wu shared a personal admiration for the Middle East

and expressed her desire to spend more time exploring its destinations.

"Even though I come for work, I always find new and interesting places to discover. Doha has wonderful museums, shopping malls, and restaurants," she said. She expressed gratitude for the hospitality shown during QTM, noting how many visitors and partners offered to show her around during future visits.

"That was really touching. It made me feel welcomed and special. I hope I can come more often and experience the Middle East from different perspectives," she said. "The region's culture — and especially its people — are genuinely hospitable and welcoming, and spending more time here also helps me better understand what Middle Eastern travellers look for when planning their holidays."

As Malta positions itself to attract more travellers from Qatar and the wider GCC, Wu says the goal extends beyond tourism figures—it is about building long-term relationships.

"For us, it's not only about promoting Malta to the Middle East. It's also about understanding the region, learning from it, and building real friendships," Wu said.

With renewed momentum from this year's Qatar TravelMart, Malta Tourism Authority looks set to deepen its engagement with the Middle East as travellers increasingly seek diverse, culturally rich, and year-round destinations like Malta.



The Ambassador of Malta to the State of Qatar, H.E. Simon Pullicino (6th from left), with representatives from Visit Malta and Qatar Airways during the Malta Trade Roadshow in Doha.





# GCC leaders emphasise unity, pursuit of joint efforts to address regional challenges

**QNA**  
Manama

The leaders of the Gulf Co-operation Council (GCC) member states, emphasised during the opening session of the 46th GCC Summit in Manama, Bahrain, the importance of constantly pursuing joint efforts to address regional issues, particularly as the summit convenes under the keen attention of GCC leaders to support the Gulf co-operation process and strengthen its institutional capacities.

In the opening session of this summit in which the Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni participated, King Hamad bin Isa al-Khalifah of Bahrain stressed that it is vitally important to proceed with the joint endeavour to address regional issues, with the Palestinian cause at the forefront through invoking dialogue, as well as political and diplomatic options that strengthen stability and broaden enduring horizons for advancing the security of the region

and its sustainable development.

Hosting this summit offers an opportunity in which commitment is renewed to maintain the pathway of joint Gulf action, King Hamad underlined, adding that these gains would never have been achieved without the shared vision and unified policies that literally made the Gulf priorities the linchpin of its security.

He highlighted the achievements in the paths of co-operation, particularly those related to Gulf citizenship and economic unity, looking forward to completing the customs union project and the GCC common market, and expanding partnerships in the fields of food and water security, the digital economy, renewable energy, and other critical sectors.

Amir of the State of Kuwait, Sheikh Mishal al-Ahmad al-Jaber al-Sabah, said the GCC, with the awareness of its peoples and their unity, has surmounted complex regional and global circumstances and formidable challenges, culminating in achieving stability through collective security

and common destiny.

He stressed to the generations that unity and concerted efforts are contingent upon overcoming the challenges toward peace.

The Amir of Kuwait reiterated his utmost condemnation of the Israeli treacherous aggression against Qatar, reaffirming full solidarity with Qatar. He stressed that any aggression against any GCC member state is a direct aggression against all members.

Pertaining to the Palestinian issue, the Amir of Kuwait reiterated his condemnation of the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territories, emphasising the necessity of ending it while upholding the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and the establishment of their independent state along the June 4, 1967, borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

He also commended all global efforts undertaken to implement the two-state solution and to end the aggression in Gaza.

Addressing the summit, Secretary-General of the GCC Jassem

Mohammed AlBudaiwi affirmed that the Gulf destiny is one, noting that Qatar's security is inseparable from the security of all GCC states, and that any threat to a Gulf state constitutes a direct threat to all GCC states.

He highlighted the two painful incidents that the world witnessed this year, which revealed to all that the Gulf destiny is one and that Gulf security is one security.

On the Iranian missile attacks on Qatar, AlBudaiwi stressed that they were a reprehensible aggression and a flagrant violation of its sovereignty, airspace, and principles of good neighbourliness, as well as a gross breach of international law and the UN Charter.

The brutal Israeli aggression against the Qatar during its mediation efforts to plant the seeds of peace in Gaza, in a brazen assault on global efforts aimed at achieving a ceasefire and securing the release of hostages in Gaza, AlBudaiwi noted.

He noted that all GCC states rallied to support State of Qatar and uphold its security and sov-

ereignty, emphasising that Qatar's security is inseparable from the security of all GCC states, and that any threat to a Gulf state constitutes a direct threat to all of them.

AlBudaiwi further stressed that the positions of GCC states toward the Palestinian cause have been and will remain steadfast, grounded in enduring principles, reflecting the centrality of this issue and the importance of ending the occupation and establishing the independent Palestinian state on the 1967 borders with East Jerusalem as its capital.

Regarding military co-operation, AlBudaiwi affirmed that the GCC has begun executing the decisions and recommendations of the extraordinary session of the Joint Defence Council in the wake of the brutal Israeli aggression against Qatar, in addition to conducting numerous joint military drills.

AlBudaiwi further noted the ongoing Ittihad 25 exercise of the Gulf naval forces, as well as the continued convening of specialised military committee meetings

to bolster joint deterrence capabilities.

He also addressed economic integration and development among the countries of the region, the establishment of the Gulf Civil Aviation Authority, the adoption of amendments to certain provisions of the Unified GCC Value Added and Excise Tax Agreement, and the launch of the Gulf Industrial Platform.

He further highlighted that the GCC likewise strengthened the Gulf Common Market, regulated trade in services, and established mechanisms for the mutual recognition of professional qualifications, in addition to signing a statement initiating free trade negotiations with Malaysia.

In the field of legislative and legal affairs, AlBudaiwi clarified that the GCC Unified Legislation Drafting Guide has been issued, in addition to strengthening integrity through the GCC Anti-Corruption Guides, and the adoption of several decisions by the GCC group at the UN Human Rights Council.

## Sakhir Declaration in Bahrain stresses GCC co-ordination and integration

The leaders of the Gulf Co-operation Council, pledged to continue advancing co-ordination and integration across political, security, economic, and social fields, with the aim of achieving full unity, to serve shared interests and contribute to strengthening security, peace, and prosperity in the region and the world.

This came in the Sakhir Declaration issued at the conclusion of the 46th session of the Supreme Council of the Gulf Co-operation Council at the summit level, held in the Bahraini capital, Manama. The following is the text of the statement:

Based on the deep, historic fraternal bonds that unite the GCC states and their peoples, rooted in common faith, lineage, language and a shared destiny, and reflecting the noble objectives upon which the Council was founded in 1981, Their Majesties and Highnesses, the leaders of the Gulf Co-operation Council (GCC), convening at the 46th session of the Supreme Council in Al Sakhir, Kingdom of Bahrain, affirm their adherence to the following principles:

**First:** Strengthening the solid bonds and integration among the member states, in belief of the noble objectives of the GCC, in continuation of the approach of the founding leaders, and in embodiment of the aspirations of the peoples of the Council for greater stability, security, progress and prosperity. The leaders underlined their determination to continue advancing co-ordination and integration among the GCC states across all political, security, economic and social fields, towards the aspired unity that serves their shared fraternal interests and contributes to establishing the foundations of security, peace and prosperity in the region and the world. The leaders expressed satisfaction with the achievements made in the course of joint GCC action, including integration milestones realised under a cohesive defence and security system, balanced and prudent diplomatic positions, and sustainable development and economic projects. These achievements reflect the Council's political cohesion and alignment in vision, objectives and positions on regional and international issues. They also stressed the importance of continuing efforts at an accelerated pace to achieve further gains for the GCC states and their peoples.

**Second:** Respecting the sovereignty of GCC states and all countries of the region, non-interference in their internal affairs, and rejecting the use of force or the threat thereof. They affirmed that the security and stability of GCC states are indivisible, and that any infringement upon the sovereignty of a member state constitutes a direct threat to their collective security. With the aim of consolidating a just, comprehensive, and lasting peace in the Middle East, and working to resolve regional and international conflicts through peaceful means, the leaders welcomed the outcomes of the Sharm El Sheikh Peace Summit, and affirmed their support for regional and international efforts aimed at ensuring full adherence to the provisions of the agreement to end the war in the Gaza Strip, facilitating the delivery of humanitarian aid, reconstruction, and advancing efforts to establish an independent, sovereign Palestinian state on the June 4, 1967, borders with East Jerusalem as its capital, in accordance with the two-state solution, the Arab Peace Initiative, and international legitimacy.

**Third:** Ensuring continued progress in economic development and technological and scientific

advancement. The leaders stressed the importance of completing the requirements of the GCC Common Market and the Customs Union, enhancing trade and tourism, and encouraging investment in strategic projects, particularly in infrastructure, transport, energy, communications, water, and food. They also emphasised boosting digital infrastructure integration, facilitating e-commerce, and supporting the development of shared systems for digital payments and cloud services, contributing to full economic citizenship and comprehensive, sustainable development. The leaders also underscored the significance of continuing economic diversification pathways and strengthening innovation and sustainability-based economies to ensure long-term prosperity for GCC states and their peoples. They stressed the importance of enhancing co-operation in technology, artificial intelligence, and cybersecurity within the framework of a joint GCC strategy that strengthens knowledge integration, supports the exchange of expertise in digital transformation, combats cybercrime, ensures a secure digital environment for societies, and promotes the effective participation of youth and women in the development process, while emphasising the role of think tanks and research centres in anticipating the future and formulating public policies.

**Fourth:** Affirming environmental responsibility and encouraging sustainable initiatives, while renewing commitment to environmental protection, addressing climate change challenges, reducing carbon emissions, advancing clean and renewable energy projects, and preserving natural and marine resources, aligning with GCC and global initiatives aimed at achieving net-zero emissions and the Sustainable Development Goals.

**Fifth:** Strengthening international co-operation to safeguard regional security, deepening political, security, and economic partnerships with friendly countries, international organisations, and economic blocs, and enhancing collaboration in areas of sustainable development, combating extremism and terrorism in all its forms, countering hate speech and incitement, tackling transnational organised crime, and supporting the efforts of joint naval forces headquartered in Bahrain to enhance energy security, protect maritime navigation, and safeguard international trade. The leaders further stressed working towards making the Middle East a region free of nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction, and averting arms races, to reinforce regional security and stability. The leaders expressed their support for Bahrain in its representation of the Arab Group as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council for the next two years, and expressed confidence in its ability to fulfil the aspirations of the GCC and its Arab sister states. They affirmed Bahrain's role as an active partner in reinforcing international peace and security, prioritising dialogue in resolving disputes, and upholding the values of tolerance. The leaders also expressed their appreciation for the participation of Giorgia Meloni, President of the Council of Ministers of Italy, in the bilateral discussions, which focused on strengthening the deep-rooted historical relations. During the meeting, the two sides agreed to establish a joint action plan to elevate relations to a comprehensive strategic partnership aimed at enhancing their shared interests, reflecting the GCC states' openness to building broad partnerships with friendly nations. (QNA)

## Qatar takes part in Arab Charter for Human Rights Committee session



Qatar has participated in the 28th Session of the Arab Charter for Human Rights Committee, convened yesterday at the headquarters of the Arab League General Secretariat in Cairo. This convention aims to discuss the second periodic report of Kuwait as part of the committee's 66th meeting.

Qatar is represented by Second Secretary at its Permanent Delegation to the Arab League, Mohammed Salem al-Khawar. The session discusses the breakthrough Kuwait has made in living up to its legal obligations based on

the Arab Charter for Human Rights, including the charter's aims, the right to life and physical integrity, equality and non-discrimination, civil and political rights, and the prohibition of slavery and human trafficking.

This is alongside access to justice and the right to effective remedy, the right to freedom of opinion and expression, the right to health and the right to education, and the protection of the family, especially women and children, as core pillars in line with the provisions of the Arab Charter on Human Rights. (QNA)

## Msheireb Downtown Doha comes alive with Arab Cup festivities

**By Shaima Sheriff**  
Doha

Msheireb Downtown Doha has become a thriving centre of football, culture, and family-friendly entertainment as it hosts one of the fan zones for the Arab Cup 2025.

The fan zone offers an immersive experience for Qatar residents and visitors, including many arriving from neighbouring GCC countries. It features interactive activities that include gaming stations like PlayStation kiosks and football-themed games, among others, keeping them engaged and entertained from afternoon until late evening.

A number of visitors lauded the comfort, uniqueness, and diversity of the fan zone experience, citing the welcoming atmosphere and well-designed seating areas that allow fans to enjoy matches in a relaxed setting.

Supporters from abroad attending the tournament also praised the sense of community and shared excitement that fills the area during match days. Imad Mohana, who travelled



MDD's Arab Cup fan zone welcomes visitors. **PICTURE:** Shaima Sheriff

from Dubai to take part in the Arab Cup festivities, told *Gulf Times*: "The vibes here are great. "We're here today to watch Egypt versus Kuwait, and we're looking forward to Jordan's match tomorrow and Palestine versus Tunisia the day after."

Mohana said that while he and his group have tickets to attend some matches at the stadiums, fan zones offer a different way to experience the tournament.

"We will go to the stadium for a few games, but for the other matches we prefer to watch

here at Msheireb and in Lusail. The fan zones give you a different feeling," he added.

About Msheireb, he pointed out: "It's very nice. There are a lot of activities, it's great for families, and the seating area is very comfortable, which makes watching the games even better."

A large screen showcasing live matches has become a focal point, drawing many visitors eager to watch the tournament unfold in a shared, celebratory setting. An official Arab Cup merchandise store also allows fans to take home memorabilia.



# Doha Forum: Youth Edition 2025 opens

The Doha Forum: Youth Edition 2025 opened yesterday at Education City's Student Centre, Multaqa, bringing together more than 150 emerging leaders from more than 100 countries.

The two-day event is jointly organised by QatarDebate Centre and the Doha Forum, in strategic partnership with the Ministry of Sports and Youth and Media City Qatar.

The opening ceremony drew high-level officials, including HE Lolwah bint Rashid AlKhater, Minister of Education and Higher Education, and chairperson of the Board of Directors of QatarDebate Centre; HE Sheikh Dr Abdulla bin Ali al-Thani, chairman of Media City Qatar; Yasser al-Jamal, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Sports and Youth and vice-chairman of QatarDebate; Mubarak Ajlan al-Kuwari, executive director of the Permanent Committee for Organising Conferences; and D Hayat A Maarafi, executive director, QatarDebate, alongside a distinguished group of diplomats and international experts.

Al-Jamal emphasised the pivotal role of youth in shaping the future, addressing the participants by stating: "Your participation today sends a clear message that young people are not merely present on the scene, but are a force capable of transforming dialogue into initiatives, and visions into actionable steps that create real impact," al-Kuwari said: "Justice is not only debated within the halls of conferences but is tested in real-world contexts such as classrooms, digital spaces, workplaces, and communities."

He explained: "The Youth edition of



The Doha Forum: Youth Edition 2025 opened yesterday at Education City's Student Centre, Multaqa, bringing together more than 150 emerging leaders from more than 100 countries.



Signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between QatarDebate Centre and Qatar Foundation for Social Work.

the Doha Forum was launched specifically to ensure that your perspectives, interests, and priorities are genuinely integrated into the discussions before they reach the main stage."

Abdulrahman al-Subaie, director of Administration and Strategy at QatarDebate, said: "The relationship between the QatarDebate Centre and the Doha Forum is not a mere signed document or a partnership preserved in files, but a convergence of visions and a profound recognition that the voice of youth is not a

fleeting echo, but a compass guiding the direction of the future. The event offers a global platform for youth to develop solutions and policy recommendations to be presented at the main Doha Forum. Held under the theme "Justice in Action: Beyond Promises to Progress," the programme tackles key issues in geopolitics, economic development, emerging technologies, cultural diplomacy, and security.

The ceremony also featured a dialogue with Sheikh Dr Abdulla on the role of

media in empowering young people. He said: "Media is the true language of this generation. We are moving beyond simply consuming content; we are building an ecosystem where young creators lead the narrative."

The first day continued with a series of high-level panels examining global challenges. A key session, "Who Holds the Line: Rethinking Responsibility in Geopolitics," explored shifts in global power dynamics and proposed new frameworks for accountability and in-

ternational cooperation driven by young leaders. The first day of the forum also witnessed the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between QatarDebate Centre and Qatar Foundation for Social Work.

The three-year memorandum forms part of a partnership aimed at strengthening dialogue and communication skills within Qatari society through training programmes that foster a sound environment for constructive debate under the supervision of the QatarDebate Centre.

# Doha Forum 2025 to focus on policies, diplomacy, and humanitarian development, says official

QNA  
Doha

The 2025 iteration of the Doha Forum, due to commence on December 6, 2025, will concentrate on a trifecta of core domains, policy, diplomacy, and humanitarian development, and convenes amid a turbulent global landscape, as the world grapples with acute crises across multiple regions, political frictions, mounting social pressures, and rapidly evolving technological shifts whose ramifications are now defeat-proofing no corner of the globe, General Manager of Doha Forum Maha al-Kuwari told Qatar News Agency.

She noted that the forum, held under the theme "Justice in Action: Beyond Promises to Progress", will convene thought leaders and policymakers to transition from proclamations and rhetoric to practical solutions and concrete steps capable of generating the desired impact.

Regarding the pillars on which the Forum will concentrate, al-Kuwari clarified that they encompass policy, diplomacy, and humanitarian development, pointing out that, on the political front, many governments worldwide are contending with political conflicts, economic fragility, and challenges in realising good governance.

Therefore, the forum offers participating thought leaders and policymakers a neutral and credible platform, one that opens the aperture of strategic thinking, enabling them to address pressing global issues and reinforce international co-operation, ensuring that justice and stability remain embedded at the very heart of global decision-making, al-Kuwari underlined.

She added that, on the diplomatic level, the forum is widening participation in ways that allow it to move beyond the constraints of traditional policymaking, har-

nessing the soft power of sports, culture, and multidisciplinary dialogue to rebuild trust.

From a humanitarian lens, al-Kuwari stated that the forum will spotlight urgent challenges affecting people's daily lives, such as inequities in education, healthcare, and social development, placing a premium on preserving human dignity. Over more than two decades, Doha Forum has evolved into a leading global platform for dialogue.

Al-Kuwari further highlighted that justice will be at the core of this year's agenda, and translating it into co-operative policies, tangible steps, and actionable solutions is essential. She explained that, through collaboration with global partners and prominent international institutions, the Forum's sessions will delve deep into issues of peace and security, economic resilience, artificial intelligence and emerging technologies, global health, and media integrity.

Al-Kuwari expressed her confidence that this forum will stand among the most prominent since its inception over two decades ago. She indicated that 6,000-plus participants have registered for this year's iteration, accompanied by a notable rise in global participants who chose to attend Doha on their own initiative, alongside a significant surge in digital engagement on the Forum's official website, an indication that the Forum's global footprint continues to expand and permeate social media platforms.

Al-Kuwari further explained that this iteration also witnesses an upsurge in the number of official delegations confirming attendance, a larger presence of senior-level policymakers, a higher number of speakers, and over 100 official delegations, compared with 53 last year. The forum will also convene 125 sessions, with 471 speakers headlining its program, she highlighted.

Reviewing participation



General manager of Doha Forum Maha al-Kuwari in an interview with QNA.

trends, al-Kuwari emphasised that what distinguishes this year's forum is the depth of engagement, reflected across three dimensions, broader regional representation to ensure a wider scope of contributions, increased involvement of foreign ministers, who are ultimately responsible for translating visions and policies into concrete actions, and expanded participation of international institutions and multilateral organisations, reinforcing its standing as a platform dedicated to global governance, humanitarian co-ordination, and developmental planning.

Responding to a question about ensuring that forum deliberations translate into actionable outcomes, al-Kuwari reaffirmed the Forum's commitment to providing diversified formats of dialogue. Alongside public sessions, the forum hosts closed-door discussions, enabling policymakers and experts to speak candidly and explore practical solutions within atmospheres of openness and candour.

This also includes in-depth discussions on Gaza's humanitarian needs following a ceasefire, as well as the situations in Sudan and Yemen. Workshops on applied technology will also be convened, such as the Artificial Intelligence and Mediation workshop, which brings together

mediators, policymakers, and technology experts, in addition to more integrative cross-sector dialogues, all aimed at producing concrete results.

Regarding how the Forum supports co-operation among participating states, she emphasised that the forum has long proven its neutrality and credibility, making it a bridge for communication capable of convening even states with stark political, geographical, or ideological divergences.

The forum literally fosters trust-building through bilateral meetings, off-channel communications, and sustained year-round partnerships. This year, the participation has been expanded through outreach initiatives across Asia, Latin America, and Africa, unlocking new avenues for dialogue and strengthening interregional understanding, al-Kuwari pointed out.

She added that the forum also enhanced the format of panel discussions. Last year, it sought to corral contrasting viewpoints, while this year, voices have been added from communities directly affected or directly benefiting from the policies under discussion. This approach, she said, bolsters credibility, deepens debates, and strengthens engagement.

Al-Kuwari revealed that the 2025 forum will host the tenth

meeting of the Middle East Consultation Group of the Munich Security Conference (MSC). Launched for the first time during last year's edition, the group provides an informal yet highly credible space for dialogue on sensitive issues and files concerning the Middle East.

She explained that this year's edition of the forum will also witness the launch of several new strategic partnerships aimed at strengthening its long-term global impact. Partnerships with the World Economic Forum, the Atlantic Council, the Gates Foundation, Chatham House, the Munich Security Conference, the Japan Institute of International Affairs, the South African Institute of International Affairs, the Observer Research Foundation, and the Center for China and Globalisation enhance the Forum's capacity to lead discussions on topics such as conflict resolution, AI governance, economic transformation, and global health.

Al-Kuwari also addressed how the Forum engages young people, noting that a youth edition for 2025 will precede the main event. Organised in co-operation with QatarDebate, this initiative reflects the Forum's commitment to involving young people in global conversations and future policy-shaping processes.

She noted that these young leaders and change-makers join the main forum's discussions to connect directly with policymakers. Furthermore, the forum integrates youth perspectives into panel discussions, particularly those related to technology, equality, and climate, and provides them with practical training, such as the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) workshop on intercultural negotiation.

She indicated that the Forum's agenda covers regional security, diplomacy, economic transformation, social cohesion, and

technology. It will explore themes such as "The New Wealth of Nations: How Instrumental Capital is Reshaping Geopolitics and Global Finance" and "Iran and the Changing Regional Security Environment," in addition to examining the future of humanitarian work, trade security, and digital governance.

The General Manager of the Doha Forum welcomed participants from more than 150 countries, including several heads of state, nineteen foreign ministers, leaders of international organisations, global experts, senior representatives from the World Economic Forum, the Gates Foundation, and other major institutions, along with figures from the private sector and civil society. She emphasised that this diversity will ensure the launch of broad and inclusive global dialogues.

She noted that, given the current geopolitical landscape, ensuring balanced sessions that reflect multiple regions requires precise collaborative efforts. These challenges, she stressed, have reinforced the commitment to excellence, inclusivity, and neutrality.

In response to a question about the expected outcomes of the forum, al-Kuwari stated that the objective is to shift global dialogue from a mere exchange of views and ideas toward concrete, actionable results, generating new ideas, building partnerships, and supporting practical policy frameworks.

She concluded her interview by underscoring that the value of the Doha Forum lies in its ability to bring together voices that might not otherwise meet, creating a space for shared understanding through which collaborative solutions can be proposed, even among participants with divergent views, while advancing efforts toward building a more just, secure, and sustainable world.

# Doha Debates examines how entertainment shapes people today

The new episode of Qatar Foundation's Doha Debates examines how modern entertainment shapes the attention, creativity, and everyday well-being of people. Moderated by Dureen Abughaida, the debate brings together three influential thinkers to ask whether today's entertainment landscape is enriching us — or overwhelming us.

This week's debate features Marya Bangee, senior adviser at the Pop Culture Collaborative; Dr Anna Lembke, professor of psychiatry at Stanford University and author of *Dopamine Nation*; and Nicholas Carr, Pulitzer Prize finalist and author of *The Shallows*.

For Bangee, the power of entertainment lies in storytelling that reflects lived

human experience and fosters empathy. "I think entertainment today is pervasive. It's something that shapes each person and society. The question is how are we going to make sure we are shaping it back."

Lembke brings a clinical and human-centred lens to the discussion, warning that the design of modern entertainment often overwhelms the brain's reward pathways. "Modern entertainment is not better for us because it hijacks our brain reward pathway. Now we need more pleasure to feel any pleasure at all."

Carr widens the frame further, examining how technology-driven entertainment affects our ability to think deeply and act

collectively. "We've assumed that having more topics, choices and information is always a good thing. Going forward we really need to pay much attention to the drawbacks."

Students add their own reflections. Sara Akbar, 22, from the University of Doha for Science and Technology, shares: "Between 16 to 28, we are all trying to escape reality because of everything happening in the world. And it really affects how we live our lives. Why can't we live a second without Instagram?"

From Georgetown University in Qatar, Ameer Saadi, 18, adds: "With entertainment, the responsibility here is not to make you a better person but to genuinely try to express some form of the human experience."



The new episode of Qatar Foundation's Doha Debates examines how modern entertainment shapes the attention, creativity, and everyday well-being of people.



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GULF TIMES

EU takes small steps in uphill struggle to wean savers off cash

A decade after it began working on a capital markets union, the EU is still struggling to agree a framework that encourages savers to put their cash to work within the bloc rather than in the US, prompting some of its 27 members to go it alone.

After warning in a 2024 report that €300bn (\$349bn) of European Union savings leave the region annually, former Italian Prime Minister Enrico Letta last month said that ploughing funds into US firms that reinvest in Europe was “a kind of collective suicide” caused by continued fragmentation.

Despite more than 60 legislative proposals since 2015, national interests, technical complexity and shifting political priorities have hindered progress on market integration, a European Central Bank (ECB) study said in May. In the five years since the EU’s latest action plan, households have stashed away 15% more in cash and bank deposits, raising the total to €12.1tn, equivalent to roughly 30% of their wealth, while in the US just 11% sits in cash.

And in the eurozone’s biggest and most populous economy the figure is higher still. Germans hold more than 40% of their financial assets in cash or bank deposits and only 12% in equities, its Council on Foreign Relations said last year. Seven countries, led by Spain, have started a pilot project that includes a proposed ‘Finance Europe’ label to help savers select investment products that back EU firms.

After identifying which instruments qualify, countries will assess whether regulations need tweaking and consult the private sector to gauge demand, officials told Reuters.

7 countries have started a pilot project that includes a proposed ‘Finance Europe’ label to help savers

The plan is moving more slowly than expected, but Madrid could make an announcement early in 2026, one said.

Meanwhile, think-tanks in Italy, France, Germany and Spain have proposed scaling Italy’s Savings Investment Plan (PIR), which succeeded in funneling residents’ savings into the local economy, to the EU level. Launched in 2017, the scheme raised €21bn in its first five years, the minimum holding period required to qualify for tax exemptions, provided 70% of assets are invested in Italian companies.

“Instead of 70% in one member state’s economy, it would be the EU economy, perhaps with a small fraction still reserved for domestic investments,” said Fabrizio Pagani, a former Italian finance ministry official who designed PIR and is working on a similar EU-wide initiative. Meanwhile, in its latest bloc-wide push to boost competitiveness against the faster-growing US and China, the EU is due flesh out plans to advance its Savings and Investments Union (SIU) yesterday.

Among the proposals will be handing the European Securities and Markets Authority (ESMA) more power and measures to tackle cross-border barriers for asset managers and market facilities, a European Commission official told Reuters. For Jan van Ewijk, senior policy adviser at the Dutch Authority for the Financial Markets (AFM), the SIU builds on the EU’s Retail Investment Strategy (RIS), which originated in 2020 and awaits adoption into EU law. However, the RIS has been overtaken by events, Van Ewijk told Reuters, pointing to the “new emphasis on simplification and burden reduction for the industry... which was not part of the original narrative”.

Risk aversion is also hurting EU households. A report by former ECB President Mario Draghi noted their net wealth grew by 55% between 2009 and 2023, compared with 151% in the US. That partly reflects the low remuneration of current accounts which in the euro area returned just 0.25% on average in September, rising to 1.78% on deposits with an agreed maturity but still below the 2.2% annual inflation rate.

EBA head José Manuel Campa last week called for “more action” on implementing Draghi’s finance-related proposals and Letta warned last month the SIU would fail if it remained “confined to financial market insiders”.

Money managers such as Milan-based Anthilia SGR welcome the SIU, including a recent proposal for tax-advantaged savings and investment accounts, but say they risk remaining on paper without national follow-through.

Casper Rutting, senior supervision officer at the AFM, called attention to an often overlooked cultural dimension.

“The lack of trust is linked to problems such as biased advice or high fees,” he said.

This is key for retired Italian doctor Renzo Le Pera.

“To invest the fruit of your life’s work you need to be either very savvy or fully confident in those who’d do that for you. I’m neither,” the 73-year-old said.

“My bank is hard to reach by phone, yet they do ring me to propose investments which the fees make rather unappealing: I may be no expert, but I’m not stupid,” he added. — Reuters

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In San Salvador, fiery performance



A performer spits fire during a parade marking National Clown Day in San Salvador, El Salvador, yesterday. (Reuters)

A just transition for land

By Andrea Meza Murillo and Bradley Hiller  
Bonn/Jeddah

With the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP30) and the G20 Leaders’ Summit now concluded, attention turns to this week’s gathering of the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) in Panama. Whether the event delivers progress on sustainable land management and drought resilience in a just and equitable manner hinges largely on one familiar factor: finance.

Insufficient funding has emerged as a stumbling block in advancing multiple Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), with SDG15 – focused on the protection, restoration, and sustainable use of land and terrestrial ecosystems – receiving some of the lowest levels of finance. But human well-being, and progress towards many other SDGs, depends directly on healthy soil, water, and terrestrial biodiversity.

Already, up to 40% of our planet’s lands are degraded and deteriorating, jeopardising the health and livelihoods of more than three billion people, especially poor rural communities, small-scale farmers, women, youth, Indigenous peoples, and other at-risk groups. Annual economic losses linked to desertification, land degradation, and drought amount to \$878bn – far more than the investments needed to address them. A just transition from an exploitative land economy to one that is restorative, inclusive, and resilient is urgently needed.

The concept of a just transition has become central to discussions on climate action – in particular, the energy transition. For example, it is understood that European communities dependent on coal production need support, so that they can secure good jobs in emerging clean industries. Globally, numerous initiatives have been created to support a just energy transition. But no equivalent exists for the land sector (which includes agriculture, forestry, and other land use), even though the need for a “just land transition” to support interconnected climate, nature, and human-development imperatives is at least as great.

Land-related activities account for nearly a quarter of greenhouse-gas emissions and employ over 20 times more workers than the energy sector globally. Moreover, unlike energy-sector workers – who tend to be formally employed, with regular, reasonably strong wages – many land workers are self-employed or seasonal, meaning that they have minimal safety nets and low financial resilience. In fact, extreme poverty is typically concentrated in degraded rural communities, which are often among the most exposed to climate and non-climate shocks.

Now, these communities are being forced to pursue their own transitions, with minimal support from the international community – including the countries that are most responsible for climate change. For example, climate change has left nomadic pastoralists in the Horn of Africa, whose own carbon footprint is negligible, with no choice but to alter millennia-old migration routes, owing to water scarcity and land degradation. Such unstructured and risky transitions exacerbate poverty, inequality, and marginalisation, increasing the risk of instability, out-migration, and conflict – and underscoring the need to support vulnerable communities and ecosystems on the frontline of climate change, nature loss, and land degradation.

But the news isn’t all bad. Momentum is gathering around land and soil restoration. China has long been a land-restoration pioneer, exemplified by the Three-North Shelterbelt Forest Program that began in 1978. And a growing number of countries are emulating such initiatives with local efforts to strengthen resilience increasingly complemented by national plans for halting and reversing land degradation and improving drought management.

Progress is also being made at the regional level. Africa’s Great Green Wall initiative – which aims to restore 100mn hectares of degraded land, sequester 250mn tonnes of

carbon, and create 10mn green jobs by 2030 – is being implemented in 22 countries. The Middle East Green Initiative, backed by up to \$2.5bn in seed funding from Saudi Arabia, includes the world’s largest landscape-restoration programme.

At the global level, frameworks like the 30x30 land conservation goal, the UNCCD-led Land Degradation Neutrality initiative, and the G20 Global Land Initiative point to a growing consensus on the importance of land protection and restoration. The recently announced Riyadh Global Drought Resilience Partnership aims to support the world’s most drought-vulnerable countries. Yet finance is still lagging behind ambition. At last year’s UNCCD gathering in Riyadh, participants pledged over \$12bn in funding for “drought resilience, land restoration, and the fight against land degradation”, which is a step in the right direction, but nowhere near enough to meet global goals. For that, the world must mobilise \$278bn annually.

To address this shortfall requires an innovative combination of financing mechanisms. Private finance can be mobilised through specialised debt instruments, such as green or restoration bonds. These are already gaining traction: the global sustainable bond market reached \$1.1tn in 2024. Moreover, companies can invest in land-based communities, in order to secure sustainable commodity supply chains, restore soil health, and support resilient livelihoods.

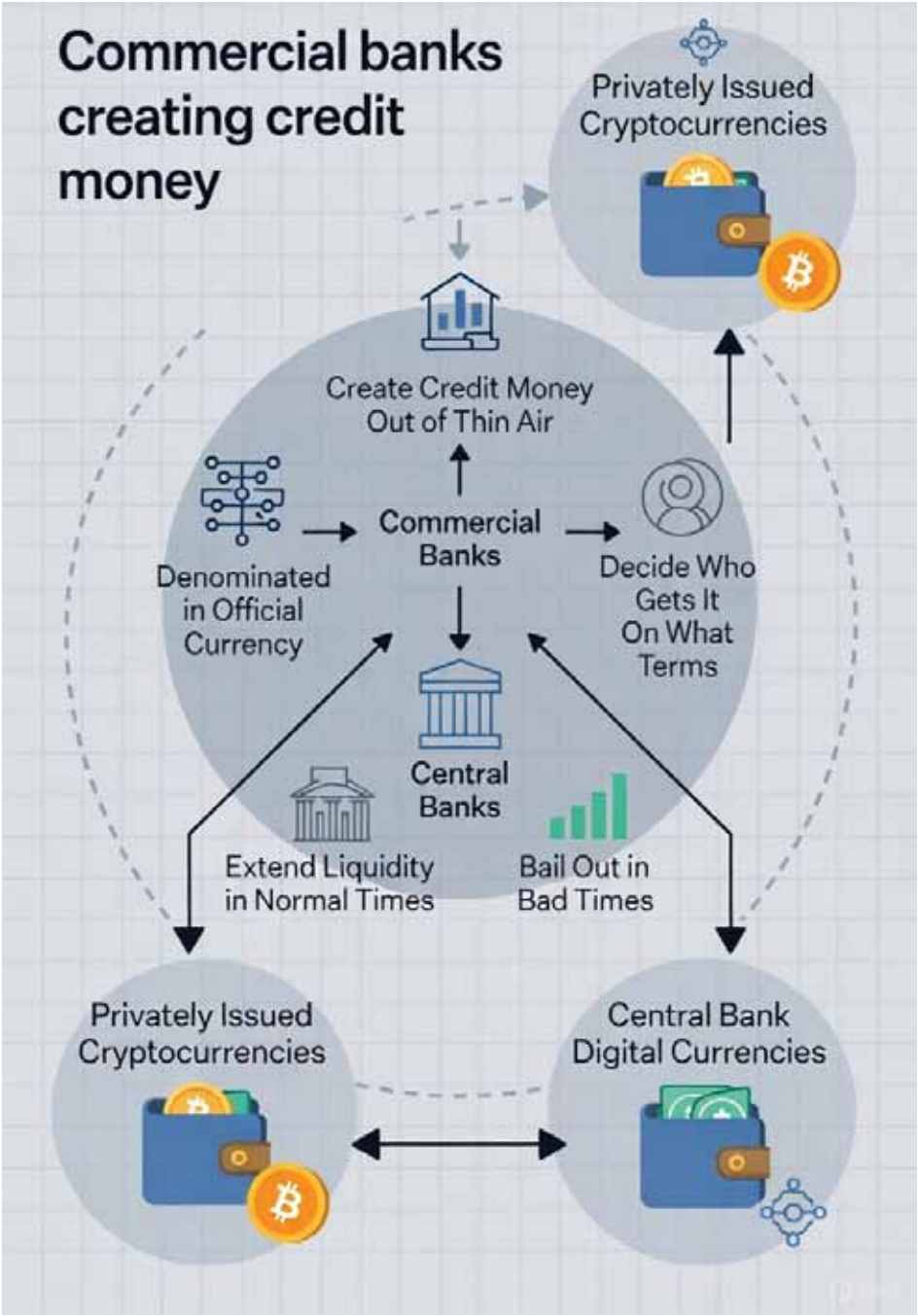
Blended finance models – which combine, say, philanthropic grants with concessional lending – can ensure that support reaches remote communities. Meanwhile, development institutions can back national efforts, and parametric (index-based)

insurance linked to early-warning systems can provide a safety net when shocks arrive. Other possible sources of finance include emerging carbon and biodiversity markets, remittances, crowdfunding, Islamic finance, and special-purpose financing vehicles. The embrace of digital platforms and AI tools may facilitate improvements in access and affordability.

Policy also has a crucial role to play. Unlocking financing at scale requires efforts to lower capital costs, remove barriers to access, and create the right incentives. Stronger land tenure, fiscal reform, and targeted subsidies and tariffs can also help to support sustainable land and soil systems. Policies that empower women, youth, and Indigenous communities are critical. At the global level, UNCCD, the Convention on Biological Diversity, and the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change should not each operate in a vacuum; land, biodiversity, and climate are inextricably linked, and should be treated as such.

Like the climate transition more broadly, a land transition is occurring, whether we like it or not. The question is whether it will be unfair, chaotic, and reactive, or whether world leaders, development institutions, and other stakeholders will act now to ensure that it is just, effective, and leaves no one behind. — Project Syndicate

● Andrea Meza Murillo, a former minister of environment and energy of Costa Rica, is Deputy Executive Secretary of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification.  
● Bradley Hiller is Lead Climate Change Specialist at the Islamic Development Bank and a collaborator at the Centre for Sustainable Development at the University of Cambridge.





## GCC summit approves gradual implementation of customs data exchange platform

From Page 1

The final statement of the 46th Gulf Co-operation Council (GCC) Summit commended Qatar’s diplomatic efforts in reaching the Doha Framework Agreement for Peace between the government of the Democratic Republic of Congo and the Congo River Alliance (M23 Movement), signed in Doha on Nov 15. The statement affirmed the commitment of both parties to addressing the root causes of the conflict through structured dialogue, confidence-building measures, respect for human rights, ensuring the safe and dignified return of displaced persons, and supporting national reconciliation and unity. This is all within the framework of the peace process facilitated by Qatar, based on the Doha Declaration of Principles signed on July 19, 2025. The Supreme Council welcomed the unanimous adoption by the Human Rights Council, on Oct 7, 2025, of the resolution submitted by Qatar on Promoting and Protecting the Human Rights of Women and Children in Conflict and Post-Conflict Situations. It also commended Qatar’s successful hosting of the Second World Summit for Social Development, held in Doha in November 2025. Furthermore, the Council welcomed the Doha Political Declaration issued by the Summit, which affirmed the completion of a new phase in the global effort to consolidate social justice and place human beings at the heart of development. The final statement of the 46th Summit reiterated its praise for Qatar’s efforts and its announcement of the opening of the natural gas pipeline between Türkiye and Syria, noting the efforts of all GCC member states to support Syria’s recovery and stability. The Supreme Council welcomed the agreement on an immediate ceasefire between Pakistan and Afghanistan and the establishment of mechanisms to

consolidate lasting peace and stability between the two countries, commending in this regard the diplomatic efforts and constructive role played by both Qatar and Türkiye. The Supreme Council, in its final statement issued at the Manama Summit, also praised Qatar’s successful mediation in reuniting Ukrainian and Russian children with their families, noting the efforts of all GCC member states and their success in mediating the exchange of prisoners between the two sides, stemming from their commitment to humanitarian principles and international solidarity in building peace and stability. The Supreme Council of the Co-operation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf (GCC) congratulated the State of Qatar on the success of the FIFA U-17 World Cup, which Doha hosted in November 2025. The Supreme Council also expressed its best wishes to Qatar for success in the 11th edition of the Arab Cup, organised by FIFA. Furthermore, the Supreme Council expressed its support for Qatar’s bid to host the 2036 Olympic and Paralympic Games, wishing the country every success in hosting this global sporting event. The Supreme Council of the Gulf Co-operation Council (GCC) stressed that the security of the GCC states is indivisible, and that any attack on any one of them is an attack on all, in accordance with the GCC Charter and the Joint Defence Agreement. This reaffirms the statements issued in the statement of its extraordinary session and the statement of the emergency Arab-Islamic Summit held in Doha on Sept 15, 2025. In the final statement, the Supreme Council affirmed its commitment to the strength and cohesion of the GCC, the unity of its members, and achieving greater co-ordination, integration, and co-operation in all fields, to fulfil the aspirations of the citizens of the GCC states. It also emphasised that its member states stand united in the face of any threat to any of them.

The Council approved the gradual implementation of the customs data exchange platform during the second half of 2026. It tasked the relevant ministerial committees with finalising the remaining requirements for the Customs Union and submitting an executive action plan and timetable as soon as possible. Within the framework of the Gulf Common Market, the Supreme Council emphasised the need to establish mechanisms for monitoring the implementation of regulations governing cross-border trade in services among GCC countries, periodically measuring their economic and social impact, and defining mechanisms for the mutual recognition of professional qualifications and service licenses among member states. The final statement expressed the Supreme Council’s support for the proposal to hold the “Made in the Gulf” Forum and Exhibition in October 2026, to showcase the distinguished industrial capabilities of the GCC countries and enhance industrial integration. The Council also approved the establishment of the GCC Civil Aviation Authority, headquartered in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), and the General Agreement for Linking the GCC States to the Railway Project. Furthermore, the Supreme Council approved the unified rules for owners of jointly owned properties in the GCC countries. The Supreme Council commended the achievements and efforts of member states in the field of Islamic affairs and endowments, promoting and disseminating a correct understanding of Islam and showcasing its true image, and adopted the Gulf Week for Strengthening Religious and Moral Values for the Family. The Council emphasised the importance of supporting the stability of global energy markets, adopting a balanced approach that does not exclude any energy sources, and working to develop technologies that enable

the management of emissions and the efficient utilisation of all energy sources to enable sustainable economic growth for all. It also commended the achievements and efforts of member states in the circular carbon economy approach and encouraged co-operation among GCC countries to implement this approach in relevant policies, mechanisms, strategies, plans, and initiatives. The GCC leaders have reiterated their commitment to preserving the stability and security of the Gulf region, safeguarding the prosperity of its peoples and strengthening the GCC’s role in promoting peace and sustainable development. Leaders stressed adherence to the principles of sovereignty and non-interference, rejecting any threats to member states and affirming that the security of the six nations is indivisible. The council delivered some of its most forceful language on the war in Gaza, expressing full support for the Palestinian people and calling for an end to the blockade on the territory. It demanded the opening of all crossings to allow sustained flow of humanitarian aid, protection for civilians, and full compliance with international law. Gulf leaders warned against any attempts to forcibly displace residents of Gaza and reiterated support for the establishment of an independent Palestinian state on the 1967 borders with East Jerusalem as its capital. Israel, they said, bears full responsibility for the ongoing violations in Gaza, which they noted have resulted in tens of thousands of civilian deaths, mostly women and children. The communique also condemned Israeli actions in the West Bank and called for intensified international efforts to resolve the conflict. On Iran, the GCC stressed the need for constructive co-operation between Tehran and the International Atomic Energy Agency, while condemning Israeli strikes on Iranian nuclear facilities, warning these posed a threat to regional and global security.

The statement reaffirmed the UAE’s sovereignty over the three disputed islands (Greater Tunb, Lesser Tunb and Abu Musa) currently controlled by Iran. On Iraq, the council voiced support for efforts to safeguard the country’s stability, unity, and Arab identity. It also backed Yemen’s Presidential Leadership Council and praised the UN-led push for a comprehensive political settlement, urging continued commitment to the truce. Regarding Syria, the leaders reiterated support for the country’s sovereignty and condemned repeated Israeli attacks inside Syrian territory. They called on Syrian parties to pursue dialogue and reject division. In Lebanon, the GCC emphasised support for the fragile ceasefire reached in November 2024 and condemned continued Israeli strikes that have caused mass displacement and damage to civilian infrastructure. It also voiced concern over attacks targeting UN peacekeepers. The communique backed efforts to achieve peace in Sudan, calling for civilian protection, unhindered humanitarian access and progress toward a civilian-led government. On Libya, the council renewed support for a Libyan-led political process, the withdrawal of foreign forces, and UN efforts to pave the way for elections and institutional unity. The GCC also reiterated its support for Somalia’s stability and called on the international community to bolster assistance to the country. Gulf leaders restated their longstanding support for Morocco’s sovereignty over Western Sahara and welcomed the UN Security Council’s recent endorsement of Morocco’s autonomy plan as a realistic basis for resolving the dispute. The council highlighted the importance of protecting regional waterways, warning against attacks on commercial shipping and energy infrastructure. It urged all parties to pursue de-escalation and diplomacy to avert further instability.

## EU proposes using frozen Russia assets or borrowing to give Ukraine €90bn

Reuters  
Brussels

The European Commission proposed yesterday an unprecedented use of frozen Russian assets or international borrowing to raise €90bn (\$105bn) for Ukraine to cover its struggling military and basic services against Russia’s war. The European Union’s executive body has declared it favours a “reparations loan” using Russian state assets immobilised in the EU due to Russia’s invasion of Ukraine. But Belgium, which holds most of the assets, has voiced a range of concerns that it said had not been satisfactorily addressed by the proposals. “We are proposing to cover two-thirds of Ukraine’s financing needs for the next two years. That’s 90bn euros. The remainder would be for international partners to cover,” Commission President Ursula von der Leyen told reporters. “Since pressure is the only language the Kremlin responds to, we can also dial it up,” she said. “We have to increase the costs of war for (Russian President Vladimir) Putin’s aggression and today’s proposal gives us the means to do this.” She said the proposal to EU member states had taken into account almost all the concerns raised by Belgium, whose Brussels-based financial institution Euroclear is the main holder of the assets. The proposal would now also cover other financial institutions in the EU that hold Russian assets, von der Leyen said. EU officials said France, Germany, Sweden and Cyprus also held such assets. Russia has warned the EU and Belgium against using its assets, which it says would be an act of theft. The Commission says the

scheme does not amount to confiscation as the money would be in the form of a loan – although Ukraine would only have to redeem it if Russia pays reparations. The complexities around the scheme increased after a US-backed 28-point plan to end the war in Ukraine proposed that some of the assets be used in a joint American-Russian investment vehicle. But von der Leyen said she had informed US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent of her plan to move forward with the reparations loan and it had been “positively received”. Economy Commissioner Valdis Dombrovskis said the EU was also seeking to persuade other international partners to provide support in the first quarter of next year as the EU money would probably not be available until the second quarter. The Commission said the EU could proceed with the scheme if 15 out of 27 member countries, representing at least 65% of the bloc’s population, voted in favour.



(From left) International Energy Agency Executive Director Fatih Birol, European Commission President Ursula Von der Leyen and EU Commissioner for Energy and Housing Dan Jorgensen during the press conference in Brussels yesterday. (AFP)

EU officials said this would also apply to ensure Russia’s sanctioned assets remain immobilised, an essential part of the reparations loans, under EU law allowing financial assistance in instances of “severe difficulties”. Sanctions roll-overs normally require unanimity. The other option – borrowing on international markets using the EU budget – would also normally require unanimity among EU countries – a potentially difficult hurdle as Hungary’s Russia-friendly government has opposed previous funding for Ukraine. European Central Bank President Christine Lagarde told a European Parliament hearing that using a reparations loan would be a stretch from a legal and financial standpoint though it would “hopefully” respect international law and financial stability. Hours earlier, before the Commission’s legal proposals were presented, Belgian Foreign Minister Maxime Prevot declared that they fell short of Belgium’s requirements.

## India revokes state-run security app order for smartphones

Reuters  
New Delhi

India revoked its order to smartphone makers yesterday to preload a state-run cybersecurity app days after the plan triggered a major backlash from Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s opponents and privacy activists over surveillance fears. The Indian government had confidentially ordered companies including Apple, Samsung and Xiaomi to preload new phones with an app called Sanchar Saathi, or Communication Partner, within 90 days, Reuters was first to report on Monday. “Government has decided not to make the pre-installation mandatory for mobile manufacturers,” India’s communications ministry said in a press statement. The move comes after days of protests from opposition parties over the issue, while newspaper editorials joined privacy advocates in denouncing the move. The government also found itself at odds with phone manufacturers, as Apple and Samsung had plans to not comply with the directive, sources said. The plan had become a hot issue on Indian prime time news, with politicians and privacy advocates sparring over its pros and cons. The government had said the app only helps track and block stolen phones and prevents them from being misused. Earlier yesterday, senior

Congress leader Randeep Singh Surjewala said in a notice to the parliament that the government needed to clarify the legal authority for “mandating a non-removable app” and called for the house to debate privacy and security risks. “The grave, serious and real apprehension is also that such compulsorily installed app can have a backdoor, thereby absolutely compromising the data and privacy of the user,” he added. Modi’s plan had little precedent, according to industry sources. Russia may be the only other known example. Moscow in August ordered that a state-backed messenger application called MAX, a rival to WhatsApp that critics say could be used to track users, must be pre-installed on all mobile phones and tablets. “The app is secure and purely meant to help citizens from bad actors in the cyber world,” the government said in its statement yesterday, saying it was taking the decision given the app was finding wide user acceptance anyway. Data from market intelligence firm Sensor Tower showed a 13% jump in daily downloads of the app on Monday from a day earlier, to 78,000. Modi has faced criticism over issues of privacy before. In 2020, his government came under fire for a Covid-19 contact-tracing app compulsory for use by office workers. That measure was later diluted to a request when privacy advocates protested.

## No deal after fresh round of Pak-Afghan talks

Reuters  
Peshawar

A new round of peace talks between Pakistan and Afghanistan has failed to produce a breakthrough to end tensions between the South Asian neighbours, although they agreed to continue their fragile ceasefire, officials from both countries said yesterday. The talks in Saudi Arabia last weekend were the latest in a series of meetings hosted by Qatar, Türkiye and Saudi Arabia aimed at cooling tensions following deadly border clashes in October. A ceasefire agreed in Doha has largely held, though efforts to secure a longer-term arrangement through follow-up talks in Istanbul last month failed to produce a peace agreement. Three Afghan and two Pakistani officials told Reuters the latest talks followed a Saudi initiative and included representatives from Pakistan’s military, intelligence services and foreign office. Both sides agreed to maintain the ceasefire, they said. At the heart of the dispute, Islamabad says Afghan-based militants have carried out recent attacks in Pakistan, including suicide bombings involving Afghan nationals. Kabul denies the charge, saying it cannot be held responsible for security inside Pakistan. Afghan Foreign Minister Amir Khan Muttaqi did not comment on the location of the talks or confirm whether they were held in Saudi Arabia. However, in remarks to political analysts in Kabul he rejected Islamabad’s accusations that Afghan soil is used by anti-Pakistan militants, calling the allegations shifting and inconsistent.

## Russia claims battlefield edge in Ukraine talks

AFP  
Moscow

The Kremlin said yesterday that its army’s recent battlefield successes in Ukraine had bolstered its position in talks to end the fighting, as both Moscow and Kyiv prepared for more negotiations with the United States. US President Donald Trump’s envoy Steve Witkoff and son-in-law Jared Kushner negotiated into the early hours with Vladimir Putin but no breakthrough for a peace settlement was announced.

The Kremlin said the two sides had failed to find a “compromise” on the crucial issue of territories and that Ukraine’s participation in Nato remained a “key” question in the talks. The White House had previously voiced optimism about its plan to end Europe’s worst conflict since World War II but that hope appeared to fade yesterday, with Moscow saying it had found parts of the plan “unacceptable”. Witkoff and Kushner brought an updated version of a US plan to end the war. Russia’s advance in eastern

Ukraine gathered pace last month and Putin has said in recent days that Moscow is ready to fight on to seize the rest of the land it claims if Kyiv does not surrender it. “The progress and nature of the negotiations were influenced by the successes of the Russian army on the battlefield in recent weeks,” Kremlin aide Yuri Ushakov – who took part in the US-Russia talks – told reporters, including AFP. “Our Russian soldiers, through their military exploits, have helped make the assessments of our foreign partners regarding the paths to a peace settlement more

appropriate,” he added. Moscow insisted it was incorrect to say Putin rejected the plan in its entirety. It also said Russia was still committed to diplomacy, despite Putin’s stark warning that Moscow was prepared to fight Europe if it wanted war. “We are still ready to meet as many times as is needed to reach a peace settlement,” Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said. The fresh talks come as Nato pledges to buy hundreds of millions of dollars worth of US arms for Kyiv.

Nato chief Mark Rutte said it was positive that peace talks were ongoing but that the alliance should make sure that “Ukraine is in the strongest possible position to keep the fight going”. Russian troops have been grinding forward across the front line against outgunned and outnumbered Ukrainian forces. Earlier this week, Moscow claimed to have captured the important stronghold of Pokrovsk but a Ukraine army unit fighting in the city said urban combat was still ongoing.



Russian President Vladimir Putin takes part in a ceremony for presenting the “WeAreTogether” International Award at Moscow’s World Trade Centre in Moscow, Russia yesterday. (Reuters)



MoI wins Best Awareness Film award from Arab Interior Ministers Council



The Ministry of Interior (MoI) won the Best Awareness Film award in the competition held annually by the General Secretariat of the Arab Interior Ministers Council as part of efforts to raise awareness about crime and prevent its dangers. The winning film aims to encourage drug addicts to seek treatment at addiction centres. The announcement of the win came during the 49th Conference of Arab Police and Security Leaders held in the Tunisian capital, Tunis. The award was received by Director General of Public Security Major General Mohammed Jassim al-Saliti. This recognition reflects the leading role of the Ministry of Interior in security awareness and producing professional and impactful media content that contributes to enhancing community awareness and promoting security culture at the Arab level. (QNA)

Qatar’s permanent representative to UN meets administrator of UNDP



HE the Permanent Representative of the State of Qatar to the United Nations Sheikhha Alya Ahmed bin Saif al-Thani met with Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Alexander De Croo, who assumed his duties yesterday, at the programme’s headquarters in New York. During the meeting, the Permanent Representative of the State of Qatar affirmed that Qatar places great importance on strengthening its co-operation and strategic partnerships with the UNDP. For his part, the UNDP administrator expressed his gratitude to Qatar for its continued support of the UN’s efforts and initiatives, emphasising his eagerness to work closely with the State of Qatar to serve the Sustainable Development Goals. (QNA)

Amir reaffirms Qatar’s unwavering support for Palestinian people

**From Page 1**

His Highness the Amir said that the excessive use of force against the unarmed Palestinian people, along with the continued double standards in the enforcement of international law, international humanitarian law, and human rights law with regard to Palestine, undermines confidence in the international community and encourages further violations. While welcoming the voices of conscience and the forces of peace around the world, His Highness stressed that the Palestinian cause is not an issue of terrorism, but rather the cause of a people living under a prolonged occupation that must come to an end, affirming that only a just peace can guarantee security for both the Palestinian and Israeli peoples. His Highness further stated that the developments witnessed over the past two years, including the unprecedented escalation of violence, repressive measures, and Israeli violations against the brotherly Palestinian people, place a moral and legal responsibility on the international community to support a just settlement of the Palestinian issue. He added that these developments further underscore the urgent need to intensify efforts to ensure protection for the Palestinian people and their holy sites. His Highness the Amir added that the unprecedented human tragedies that have unfolded in the Gaza Strip, and whose repercussions have extended to the West Bank and the wider region, have laid bare the urgent need to put an end to the historical injustice endured by the Palestinian people. He said that for more than two years, Qatar has worked with determination and perseverance, exerting every possible effort through responsible mediation to facilitate reaching an agreement that would bring an end to the brutal Israeli war and the resulting bloodshed and unprecedented human suffering, in a manner that lays the foundation for a political path toward a just and comprehensive peace. His Highness also reviewed the efforts exerted by Qatar, in co-ordination with other countries in the region, to end the war on Gaza. He said that following the declaration signed with the presidents of the United States, Egypt, and Türkiye on October 13 in Sharm El Sheikh, the success of the ceasefire agreement in the Gaza Strip and the US peace initiative adopted by the UN Security Council has become a collective responsibility that requires ensuring its full implementation in order to achieve peace and stability. In this context, His Highness stressed that the international community must redouble its efforts to attain a just and lasting peace for the Palestinian cause, noting that the entire world has now come to realise that the status quo is no longer viable and that occupation cannot be peaceful or civilised. He affirmed that the establishment of an independent Palestinian state within the June 4, 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital, remains the only path to peace in Palestine, Israel, and the entire region. His Highness the Amir reiterated his welcome of the adoption of the "New York Declaration on the Peaceful Settlement of the Palestinian Question and the Implementation of the Two-State Solution". He also commended the growing wave of international recognition of the State of Palestine by more than 150 countries, noting that this reflects an international consensus in support of the establishment of the Palestinian state and its right to full membership in the United Nations. His Highness further emphasised that the Gaza Strip remains an integral part of the Palestinian territories and the State of Palestine. His Highness also condemned all unilateral measures that undermine the two-state solution and entrench annexation and settlement activity, including Israeli laws that seek to impose so-called "sovereignty" over the West Bank and plans for settlement expansion. He reiterated Qatar’s strong condemnation of the repeated attacks on the Al-Aqsa Mosque, stressing that any attempts to alter the historical and legal status quo of the Islamic and Christian holy sites in occupied East Jerusalem are null and void under international law and relevant United Nations resolutions. His Highness the Amir affirmed that Qatar remains firmly committed to providing various forms of political and humanitarian support to the brotherly Palestinian people and to highlighting their just cause. In this context, His Highness noted that following the signing of the peace agreement in Sharm El Sheikh, Qatar swiftly moved to extend assistance to the people of the Gaza Strip, including support for the Gaza Municipality through the Qatari Committee for the Reconstruction of Gaza to remove rubble and reopen streets, in addition to providing tens of thousands of shelter tents, as well as food and medical supplies. He added that Qatar will continue to fulfil its humanitarian and fraternal duty toward the Palestinian people through sustained humanitarian, relief, and development support, particularly in the Gaza Strip, which has endured a siege for seventeen years under severe Israeli restrictions on the movement of people and goods. His Highness expressed appreciation to the United Nations and its secretary-general for the pivotal role and indispensable efforts exerted by the international organisation, its agencies, and partners in providing support to the brotherly Palestinian people, including Palestinian refugees. He also commended the great sacrifices made by United Nations staff in the Gaza Strip, especially UNRWA. His Highness noted that Qatar has continued its financial contributions to the agency to support the pivotal role it plays in the international response to the Gaza crisis. His Highness concluded the message by expressing his appreciation to the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People (CEIRPP), the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories (UNSCCIP), and the United Nations Division for Palestinian Rights, commending their efforts in highlighting the Palestinian cause and mobilising international support for the rights of the Palestinian people.

# WEEKEND DEALS

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Rozana Indian Basmati Rice 5 kg x 1 pc

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