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THURSDAY Vol. XXXXVI No. 13586

December 11, 2025

Jumada II 20, 1447 AH

www.gulf-times.com 2 Riyals

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### SPORT | Page 1

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### QCB cuts interest rates by 0.25%

Qatar Central Bank (QCB) has decided to reduce the current interest rates for deposits, lending and repo by 0.25% or 25 basis points (bps). The new rates will take effect on December 11, QCB announced last night. Qatar Central Bank's deposit rate (QCBDR) will now be 3.85%, lending rate (QCBLR) 4.35% and repo rate (QCBRR) 4.10%. QCB said the rate cut followed its "assessment of the current monetary policy of Qatar".

### Minister unveils key budget figures

HE the Minister of Finance Ali bin Ahmed al-Kuwaiti revealed yesterday the key features of Qatar's General Budget for the year 2026, including sectoral expenditure distribution, government contracting plans, and the financing of the Third National Development Strategy. He presented several initiatives by the Ministry of Finance to empower and engage the Qatari private sector. HE al-Kuwaiti stated that the total expenditure for the 2026 budget amounts to QR220.8bn, distributed as follows: QR69.5bn allocated for salaries and wages, QR81.5bn for current expenditures, QR7bn for minor capital expenditures, and QR62.8bn for major capital expenditures. The minister confirmed that Qatar's credit rating is among the best in the region and the world, reflecting confidence in the Qatari economy. **Business Page 1**

## Web Summit pulls over 130 world partners

• **Snapchat, Amazon, Vodafone, Dell latest to join**

The Permanent Web Summit Qatar Organising Committee announced the latest global tech leaders joining the list of partners for Web Summit Qatar 2026, including Snapchat, Amazon, Vodafone and Dell, bringing the total number to more than 130.

This came during its regular meeting to review the latest preparations ahead of the upcoming third edition taking place from February 1-4.

The committee announced the addition of a new group of leading international speakers at Web Summit Qatar 2026, including Cliff Obrecht, co-founder of Canva; Eric Jing, co-founder and CEO of Genspark AI; Tao Zhang, co-founder of Manus AI; and Allyson Felix, 11-time Olympic medallist.

In this context, Director of the Government Communications Office (GCO) and Chairman of the Permanent Web Summit Qatar Organising Committee Sheikh Jassim bin Mansour bin Jabor al-Thani said: "With less than two months to Web Summit Qatar, the growing number of leading international speakers and part-

ners reflects significant global interest and confidence in Qatar as an attractive destination for innovation, entrepreneurship and investment. We believe this summit will be a launching point for new success stories, opening new horizons for cooperation and building long-term partnerships, and supporting economic diversification and sustainable development."

He noted that Web Summit Qatar is a strategic platform for startups and emerging talent in the region, including content creators who are shaping digital and creative economy.

"Their participation will broadcast the summit to the world and reinforce Qatar's position as a preferred destination for creators, investors and technology leaders," he added.

The committee reviewed plans for the largest tech event in the Mena region, including the Web Summit Creator Programme, designed to connect influencers with the global tech ecosystem and creatively showcase the summit across social media platforms. **To Page 4**

## Amir chairs 3rd SCEAI meeting



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani, Chairman of the Supreme Council for Economic Affairs and Investment (SCEAI), chaired the council's third meeting in 2025, held yesterday at the Amiri Diwan.

In attendance were His Highness the Deputy Amir Sheikh Abdullah bin Hamad al-Thani, Vice-Chairman of the Council, and HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh

Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani, alongside the council members. The council deliberated on the decisions and recommendations of the second meeting in 2025 and the project follow-up report. It was also briefed on the progress report concerning the nation's economic priorities and took appropriate decisions accordingly. The council also discussed the

latest updates from the Ministry of Public Health regarding health insurance for citizens. It was briefed on the proposals of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry on the national direct investment plan and the establishment of a company to manage local assets. The council discussed items on the agenda and took the appropriate decisions accordingly. **(QNA)**

## Cabinet promotes national products

The Cabinet yesterday approved the draft Cabinet decision to specify the items that government agencies are obligated to provide from national products. The draft decision, prepared by the Ministry of Finance, aims to ensure that national products are given priority, and to promote the growth and competitiveness of local industry, which supports maintaining appropriate prices for those products. **Page 4**

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# Cabinet nod for move to give priority to national products

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

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

At the outset of the meeting, the Cabinet welcomed the results of the 8th meeting of the Qatari-Saudi Co-ordination Council, held on Monday in Riyadh, co-chaired by His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani and Saudi Crown Prince and Prime Minister Prince Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdulaziz al-Saud.

The Cabinet affirmed that the deep-rooted historical relations between Qatar and Saudi Arabia have moved to a new stage in light of what was included in the joint statement issued at the conclusion of the Co-ordination Council meeting, and its emphasis on the importance of continuing to support and develop joint co-ordination in priority areas, including political, security, military, energy, industry, economy, investment, trade, technology, infrastructure, culture, tourism and education, in a way that meets the aspirations of the two fraternal peoples and supports security, peace and prosperity in the region.

The Cabinet praised the agreements and memorandums of understanding signed that would open new horizons for the strategic partnership between the two



countries, particularly the agreement to link the two countries by high-speed electric train, which connects the cities of Doha and Riyadh, as it is a major strategic initiative that is consistent with the objectives of Qatar National Vision 2030 and Saudi Arabia Vision 2030, and that contributes to facilitating the movement of tourists and trade and enhancing communication between the two fraternal peoples.

The Cabinet praised the success of the 23rd Doha Forum 2025, which was inaugurated by His Highness the Amir. The two-day forum was held under the theme "justice in Action: Beyond Promises to Progress." This edition was distinguished by holding high-level dialogue sessions, in which an elite group of decision-makers, thought leaders, opinion leaders, and experts participated. The sessions were characterised by depth and objectivity, and addressed the key regional and international issues and how to address current challenges, which confirmed the role of the forum and the strength of its influence, and embodied the approach of Qatar's diplomacy that calls for dialogue and supports peaceful solutions, achieving justice, hu-

man dignity, and respect for the rights of peoples.

The Cabinet welcomed the signing of the historic peace and economic agreement between the Democratic Republic of Congo and Rwanda in Washington, which complements previous agreements that Qatar and the US helped to facilitate and strengthen, and represents an important step toward ending the conflict in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo, consolidating regional stability, and enhancing co-operation in East and Central Africa.

The Cabinet also welcomed the signing by the Government of Colombia and the self-declared EGC of the "Doha Agreement to reinforce the commitment to peace" following two rounds of mediation in Doha, which was reached through the efforts of Qatar and its partners, and included a commitment to alleviate the suffering of the civilian population, end the armed conflict, and open a path for both parties toward building a sustainable peace.

The Cabinet then considered the topics on its agenda. The Cabinet approved the draft decision to specify the items that government agencies are obligated to provide from national products. The draft

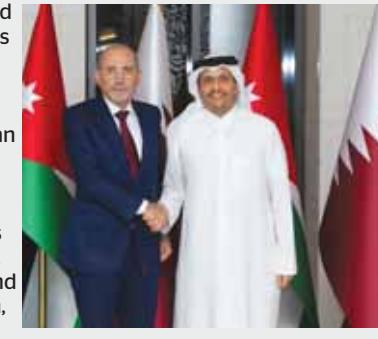
decision, prepared by the Ministry of Finance, aims to ensure that national products are given priority, and to promote the growth and competitiveness of local industry, which supports maintaining appropriate prices for those products.

The Cabinet also approved the draft Cabinet decision to establish and form a committee to manage the work of the International Telecommunication Union Plenipotentiary Conference 2026. The preparation of the draft decision comes within the framework of the Communications Regulatory Authority's preparations to host that conference, which is scheduled to be held in Doha in November 2026.

The Cabinet decided to approve a draft memorandum of understanding (MoU) for co-operation in the field of technical and vocational education and training between the Ministry of Education and Higher Education of Qatar and the Ministry of Culture and Innovation of Hungary, and a draft MoU in the field of academic co-operation between University of Doha for Science and Technology (UDST) in Qatar and the Ministry of Education, Culture and Higher Education of Somalia. (QNA)

## PM, Jordan deputy PM meet

HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani, met yesterday with the visiting Jordanian Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates Dr Ayman al-Safadi. Talks during the meeting dealt with bilateral relations and ways to strengthen them, as well as developments in the region, particularly in the Gaza Strip and the occupied Palestinian territories. HE Sheikh Mohammed reiterated Qatar's support for all regional and international efforts aimed at achieving peace and stability in the region. (QNA)



## Qatar, IRC discuss relations



HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani, met yesterday with the visiting President and CEO of the International Rescue Committee (IRC) David Miliband. Discussions during the meeting dealt with co-operation relations between Qatar and the IRC, and ways to support and develop them. (QNA)

## Al-Misnad meets Somali FM



HE the Minister of State for International Co-operation Dr Maryam bint Ali bin Nasser al-Misnad yesterday met with the visiting Somali Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Co-operation Abdilsalam Abdi Ali. The meeting reviewed bilateral relations. (QNA)

# NHRC stresses right to freedom of expression

HE the Chairperson of the National Human Rights Committee (NHRC), Maryam bint Abdullah al-Attiyah, met yesterday with US Deputy Assistant Secretary of State in the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labour (DRL), Jacob McGee.

HE al-Attiyah stressed, during the meeting, that the right to freedom of opinion and expression, along with the prevention of discrimination, has been among the top priorities of the NHRC since its inception, as the cornerstones of respecting human rights.

She noted the NHRC's efforts in numerous international conferences concerning the freedom of opinion and expression and its pursuit of connecting this attention with the upgrade of national legislations.

The issue of trafficking



in persons tops the NHRC's operational priorities, as the committee receives appeals from individuals and immediately embarks on exploring appropriate legal solutions with the competent authorities, observing the humanitarian dimension in each case, she stressed.

HE al-Attiyah further noted that the committee undertakes a significant role in training and bolstering awareness of relevant international agreements, including the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Traf-

ficking in Persons.

She highlighted that the committee provides training for a variety of community members, enterprises, commercial companies, and university students in co-operation with the Ministry of Labour's National Committee for Combating Human Trafficking.

The training courses the committee provides range from social to legal awareness, and they focus on the National Law on Combating Human Trafficking and its amendments, and the

Business and Human Rights principles, with reference to the competent authorities and contact numbers that should be approached in case of any suspected case, HE al-Attiyah highlighted.

She further emphasised that Qatar conducted amendments to the National Law on Combating Human Trafficking in December 2024, which allow the arrest of suspects for prolonged periods and offer additional time to collect evidence, in addition to facilitating the referral of victims to shelters and care centres.

Throughout this meeting, the Chairperson touched on the primary segments that need care in terms of the Law on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which has recently been issued, noting that this law aligns with the relevant international standards. (QNA)

# Qatar pledges \$1mn to UN emergency fund

Qatar has pledged \$1mn to support the UN Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) out of its belief in the vital role played by the CERF in responding to urgent humanitarian needs and its longstanding partnership with the UN.

Qatar's Permanent Representative to the UN HE Sheikha Alya Ahmed bin Saif al-Thani announced this during her participation in the High-level Pledging Event at the UN headquarters in New

York, in the presence of UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres and Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Co-ordinator Tom Fletcher.

In a statement during the event, HE Sheikha Alya expressed Qatar's deep appreciation for the fund's pivotal role, noting that it has demonstrated a unique capacity to deliver rapid, life-saving assistance in the most urgent and complex humanitarian situations. She highlighted

that CERF has provided food, shelter, medical care, and essential services at critical moments when swift response has meant the difference between life and death.

She also underscored the fund's sustained role in responding to emergencies in conflict zones and in addressing climate-related disasters, stressing its continued importance and indispensable value to the international community. (QNA)

# Web Summit pulls over 130 world partners

## From Page 1

It also highlighted the participation of Visit Qatar, which will have a dedicated booth and VIP space, as well as Qatar Airways' preparations and the benefits it will offer to participants through its flights, and initiatives to support startups, creators, talented people and innovators.

The committee discussed "Runway to Web Summit Qatar," the promotional event scheduled to be held today at Qatar National Library, bringing together representatives of a number of local startups and organisations to highlight

national success stories and reinforce the summit's role as a global platform for ideas, innovation, opportunities and investment.

In preparation for the summit, the Web Summit team held a media briefing this week at GCO headquarters, bringing together over 50 journalists from 25 media outlets to support quality coverage of the event.

Attendees received guidance about media accreditation procedures, interview requests, and other operational details, providing them with the summit's internal workflows and media coordination mechanisms throughout the event.

The Permanent Web Summit Qatar Organising Committee remains dedicated to delivering an exceptional edition that reflects Qatar's leadership in hosting global events, supports digital transformation and the development of a knowledge-based economy, and enhances partnership and investment opportunities in the technology sector.

The committee reaffirms its commitment to providing a distinctive experience for all participants and strengthening Qatar's position as a global centre for innovation and entrepreneurship. (QNA)

**QatarEnergy**

The General, Limited Tenders Committees and Supply Chain Department announces the following Tenders:

**Important Notice:**  
Suppliers and Contractors who are already registered with QatarEnergy via Mushtaryat Portal can "Buy Tender Online and download Tender Document" from QatarEnergy website (Mushtaryat Portal).

Effective from 1st July 2023, bids submitted by a Local company (companies incorporated in Qatar) acting as Tenderer in accordance with this Invitation to Tender, will not be accepted by QatarEnergy without any further notification, if such companies are not in possession of an ICV score in the ICV portal (<https://icv.qa/en-US>) by the specified Original Tender Closing Date or Original date for submission of COMMERCIAL Package in case of two stage Tendering as per ITT. However, any Local company that has been established within last two (2) years is exempt from this mandatory ICV certification requirement.

Sl. No	Tender Number	Tender Sale Period	Tender Start Date	Tender End Date	Tender Closing Date	Tender Bond	Bond Curr.	Tender Fee	Fee Curr.
1	GT25113400	11.12.2025	17.12.2025	01.02.2026	1,500,000.00	QAR	500.00	QAR	

**Title of Tender:** PROVISION OF MUDLOGGING UNITS & SERVICES

**Mid-Tender Meeting Location :** To be advised if required

**Mid-Tender Meeting Date & Time :** To be advised if required

Tender documents can be purchased and downloaded from QatarEnergy Website-> Supply Management-> Tenders page during the Tender Sale Period mentioned above against each Tender. Request for issuance of Tender after the specified Tender Sale Period will not be entertained.

All bidders, Subscribe to Tender Alert to receive notification in your email on new Tenders.

Changes to Tender Sale Period and Bid Closing Date will be updated in QatarEnergy website/Mushtaryat Portal only.

Brief Scope of Work for the above tenders are posted on the QatarEnergy website/Mushtaryat Portal.

Suppliers and Contractors who are in possession of a valid SAP ID issued by QatarEnergy are instructed to maintain their Company Registration and Communication details upto date and valid via QatarEnergy Mushtaryat Portal on urgent basis.

No queries will be entertained, or bids received, from entities who have not purchased tender documents in compliance with the above provisions.

QatarEnergy invites all prospective Suppliers and Contractors interested to participate in QatarEnergy Tenders to register online and obtain a QatarEnergy SAP Vendor Code, a mandatory requirement for the issue of Tender Documents by QatarEnergy.

Prospective Qatar based Suppliers and Contractors interested to participate in future QatarEnergy Tenders shall obtain an ICV score. Relevant information pertaining to ICV, ICV Scorecard, ICV Certification, and ICV Guidelines are available on the ICV Digital Portal - <https://icv.qa/en-US>

**Qatar Foundation**

**INVITATION TO TENDER**

Tender Reference	Description	Tender Fee	Tender Bond	Bid Closing Date
HBKU-RFQ-1731	Supply, Installation & Commissioning of Access & Distribution Switches for HBKU New Remote Building	QAR 1,000	QAR 20,000	11-Jan-26
HBKU-RFQ-1712	Supply, Installation, Integration, and Commissioning of Tape Backup Replacement Solution	QAR 500	QAR 12,000	11-Jan-26
HBKU-RFQ-1736	Palo Alto For (Perimeter, Data Center, Wan) Ngrw, Wildfire, Panorama & Xdr Endpoint Solution Software Licenses Renewal	QAR 1,000	QAR 34,000	11-Jan-26
HBKU-RFQ-1737	Dell Infrastructure Warranty Extension & Support - HBKU	QAR 500	QAR 30,000	18-Jan-26
HBKU-RFQ-1740	Renewal and Support of Digital Encryption Solution for HBKU	QAR 500	QAR 10,000	18-Jan-26
HBKU-RFQ-1748	Purchase, Installation, commissioning, training, warranty, calibration certificates after-sale service for Sun Simulator	QAR 500	QAR 10,000	18-Jan-26

HBKU-University Procurement Service (UPS) is inviting companies to participate in the above-listed public tender. To receive the tender documents, please follow the following steps:

**Supplier Registration:** It is mandatory to be registered as a supplier with QF in order to participate in the above tender(s). Only QF-registered suppliers will be allowed to pay the tender fees online. Therefore, please visit QF website: <https://www.qf.org.qa/supplier-registration> to complete the Supplier Registration process.

**Tender Fee:** Interested bidders can sign in by visiting this link <https://Suppliers.qf.org.qa/abstract> and pay the respective non-refundable and non-transferable tender fee online.

All Tender Fees are to be paid using credit cards only.

**Tender Fee Payment Dates:** Payment of Tender Fee online will be from 11-Dec-25 Until 25-Dec-25

1) All bidders who are registered and have paid the required tender fees online to QF, will then be granted access to download the Tender Document.

2) Technical and Commercial bids need to be submitted and attached online in QF Supplier portal as per the instructions provided in the "Supplier Portal" work instruction.

- The Commercial bid must be valid for 180 Days from the Bid Closing Date.
- The Commercial bid must be accompanied by a Bank Guarantee (QDR) issued by a local bank in Qatar and should be valid for 180 days from the bid closing date (where applicable as per the Tender documents).
- The successful tenderer will be required to submit a Performance Bond as prescribed in each of the above tender documents.
- Qatar Foundation special qualifications, terms and conditions shall apply as stipulated in the tender documents.

Note: All work instructions for Supplier registration and Supplier portal can be found in the link <https://www.qf.org.qa/supplier-registration>

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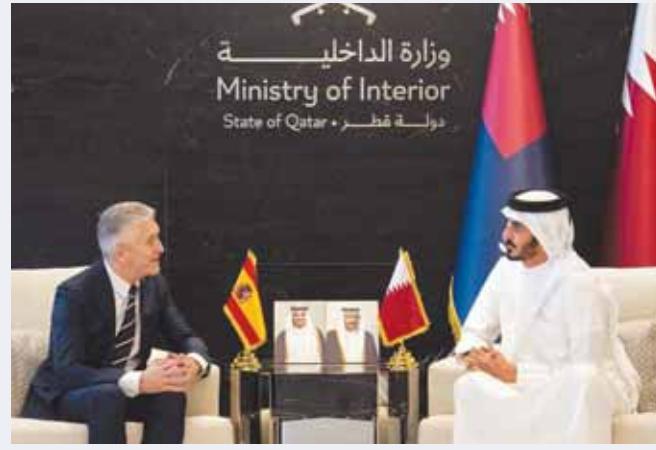
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*With sincere regards*  
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## Qatar, Spain interior ministries sign joint action plan



HE the Minister of Interior and Commander of the Internal Security Force (Lekhwiya) Sheikh Khalifa bin Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani met with Spain's Interior Minister, Fernando Grande-Marlaska Gomez, and the accompanying delegation. The meeting discussed bilateral co-operation in security fields and ways to enhance and further develop them, besides touching on issues of mutual concern. The meeting also witnessed the signing of a joint action plan between the interior ministries of the two countries in the areas of information exchange, counter-terrorism, and crime prevention, along with a joint statement between Lekhwiya and the Spanish interior ministry to advance security co-operation mechanisms. HE Sheikh Khalifa and Gomez signed the agreement on behalf of their respective sides. (QNA)

## Attorney-general says integrity, transparency pillar for achieving justice

Attorney-General HE Dr Issa Saad al-Jafali al-Nuaimi affirmed that integrity and transparency constitute the fundamental pillar for protecting society and achieving justice. This came in a lecture delivered by HE Dr al-Nuaimi at the College of Graduate Studies at the Police Academy to the members of the second batch of the Security Command and Staff Programme. He addressed a number of key themes related to consolidating the rule of law, and the role of security agencies as a key partner in supporting the work of the Public Prosecution and the judiciary. He also reviewed the mechanisms for effective co-operation between judicial and security institutions to confront emerging challenges. The lecture witnessed an



interactive discussion from the participants, during which questions and inquiries were raised about ways to develop legal leadership skills, and the role of security leaders in enhancing the efficiency of criminal procedures. (QNA)

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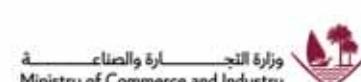


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# National Day 'offers opportunity to instil values in younger generations'

General Manager of the Cultural Village Foundation (Katara) Prof Dr Khalid bin Ibrahim al-Sulaiti has emphasised that the National Day embodies the highest meanings of pride and loyalty to the homeland and highlights the values upon which Qatar was founded since its establishment, such as the values of sincere loyalty to the wise leadership and dedication to the nation's progress and prosperity.

The general manager of Katara said in a statement to Qatar News Agency (QNA) said the National Day is an occasion on which we renew our pledge of loyalty to the leader of the nation His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani, and recall the great efforts made by the founding fathers in building this nation. This occasion is also an opportunity to instil national values in the emerging generations and deepen their connection to the history and authentic cultural identity of their country, he added.

He explained that this year's National Day slogan, 'With You It Rises, From You It Awaits,' expresses in depth the essence of these values, as it reflects the close relationship between the leadership and the people, and emphasise that Qatar's renaissance and advancement are achieved through the dedication and efforts of its sons and daughters, whose contributions elevates the nation which looks to them for hardwork and sacrifice. He added that this



Prof Dr Khalid bin Ibrahim al-Sulaiti

slogan inspires all of them in Katara and in the various state institutions to move forward in a spirit of co-operation and responsibility to build a prosperous nation worthy of its deep-rooted history and solid identity.

Regarding the contribution of the Cultural Village Foundation (Katara) to reinforcing national identity and consolidating National Day values in society, Prof Dr Khalid bin Ibrahim al-Sulaiti noted that since its establishment, Katara has been a leading cultural beacon and a national landmark that effectively contributes to strengthening Qatari identity and enhancing values of belonging and loyalty to the homeland and leadership. He said that Katara believes that culture is the foundation upon which identity is built, and the most profound means of embedding it in the conscience of society. Therefore, at Katara, it

is made sure that all programmes and initiatives are an authentic reflection of the components of the Qatari personality, such as its cultural heritage, value-based traditions, and creative aspirations.

Through literary, artistic, and heritage events, as well as major festivals organised by Katara throughout the year, they work to enhance the spirit of citizenship, connect the younger generations with their cultural roots, and introduce them to the honourable civilisational achievements of their state.

He pointed out that Katara pays special attention to children and youth, considering them the pillars of the future and carriers of national values, adding that the Cultural Village provides the youth with an environment that stimulates creativity and spaces to express their love for their country through art, literature, and theatre, contributing to building a generation that is aware of its identity and is loyal to its homeland. While speaking about the most prominent artistic events, initiatives, or exhibitions organised by Katara to accompany this year's National Day celebrations, the general manager stressed that the Cultural Village is keen every year to present a comprehensive celebratory programme that reflects the spirit of the National Day and translates its lofty meanings into artistic and cultural experiences that delight the public and enriches national sentiment. (QNA)

## QND embodies close ties between values and national strategic planning: NPC chief

Secretary-General of the National Planning Council Dr Abdulaziz bin Nasser bin Mubarak al-Khalifa has affirmed that Qatar National Day (QND) embodies the close relationship between the values upon which the State was founded and the strategic planning approach it adopts today.

In statement to Qatar News Agency (QNA), he said that from the National Planning Council (NPC) perspective, the achievements made were not accidental, but rather the result of conscious and continuous planning that enshrines the principles of efficiency, sustainability, and integration, and places human beings at the heart of the development process as both the goal and the means of development.

The National Day is a deeply rooted national occasion on which we recall the journey of building the modern state upon the foundations laid by the Founder Sheikh Jassim bin Mohammed bin Thani. These foundations are based on faith in national identity, the consolidation of the values of work and giving, self-reliance, and the pursuit of development. He noted that commemorating this occasion each year reflects the commitment of Qatar, its leadership, government, and people, to its national principles and authentic values, and embodies the unity of vision and will towards a prosperous future. It also represents an opportunity to renew the commitment to continue working towards achieving Qatar National Vision 2030 and the national development strategies stemming from it, which aim to achieve comprehensive and sustainable development across all sectors.

The National Day also represents a national occasion to strengthen feelings of loyalty and belonging, instil values of citizenship and responsibility, and deepen collective awareness of the State's efforts and development journey. Celebrating this occasion is not limited to remembering the past; it extends

to affirming the unity between the wise leadership and the people, and embodies a shared goal and vision for Qatar's future, he added. He pointed out that what distinguishes the celebration of National Day is that it reaffirms, year after year, the system of values on which the state was founded: the values of dedication to work, giving, belonging to the homeland, and respect for traditions while being open to the future. He noted that these values form the basis from which Qatar National Vision 2030 is launched, which aims to build a cohesive society capable of achieving sustainable development under a wise leadership that places human beings at the forefront of its priorities.

He emphasised that commemorating this occasion contributes to raising awareness of the importance of community participation in the development process and instils in future generations a sense of their role in continuing to build. The National Day also presents an opportunity to solidify confidence in the capabilities of young people and empower them to actively contribute to shaping the future, as they are the cornerstone of sustainable development and the driving force behind the implementation of the Third National Development Strategy, thus ensuring the continuation of progress and prosperity. He pointed out that celebrating the National Day represents a renewal of the pledge to continue the journey begun by the Founder and the leaders who followed him. It is a national occasion that renews feelings of pride in the nation's history, and on which the Qatari people recall the values of sacrifice, determination, and loyalty that formed the foundation of modern Qatar. He noted that this widespread public engagement with the National Day reflects the deep bond between citizens and their homeland. (QNA)

# Finland envoy says QND reflects Qatari's deep sense of unity, pride

Finland ambassador to Qatar Juha Mustonen has said that Qatar National Day (QND) is a cherished occasion that reflects the deep sense of unity, pride, and belonging shared by the Qatari people, and carries a timeless message that reminds younger generations of the values and principles that shaped the country and to honour the efforts made by those who came before them.

In exclusive statements to Qatar News Agency (QNA), he also said that QND strengthens the bonds of national identity and solidarity among both citizens and residents. It expresses heartfelt gratitude for the collective efforts that continue to shape and build the country, reinforcing a shared commitment to unity, progress, and pride in Qatar's future journey, he added.

The Finland ambassador pointed out that Qatar has established itself as a respected and effective mediator on the international stage, thanks to its active and principled foreign policy, noting that Qatar has built a reputation as a fair and trustworthy partner in peace efforts by prioritising dialogue and diplomacy over traditional power dynamics. Its approach is based on voluntariness and respect for the ownership of solutions by the parties involved, allowing it to mediate without imposing political pressure, he explained.

In a related context, he said that Doha has hosted key peace talks on many continents like Asia, Africa, America and Europe, and continues to support Palestinian-Israeli peace dialogue, adding that Qatar's humanitarian contributions, such



Finland ambassador to Qatar Juha Mustonen.

as aid to Ukrainian, reflect its ethical commitment to global stability. He noted that Qatar's inclusive mediation model engages governments, civil society, and vulnerable communities, addressing root causes of conflict and promoting sustainable peace.

Through strategic partnerships with countries like Finland and other Nordic countries, Qatar has strengthened its mediation efforts and shared expertise globally, he said, pointing out that its success is the result of long-term investment in diplomatic capacity and a clear vision for peaceful conflict resolution, making it a capital of mediation.

The Finland ambassador has praised the various achievements of Qatar, saying, "I follow with great interest and admiration the impressive progress Qatar has achieved – and continues to achieve – across a wide range of sectors. Guided by Qatar National Vision 2030, which emphasises human, economic, social, and environmental development, the country has made significant strides in education, healthcare,

infrastructure, energy, sustainability, and diplomacy through active mediation efforts."

"As Finland's ambassador to Qatar, I view these accomplishments as a solid foundation for strengthening our bilateral cooperation and deepening the exchange of expertise between our two nations," he added.

He emphasised that Finland-Qatar relations continue to witness steady and dynamic growth, confidently moving toward a future of comprehensive co-operation, noting that this partnership is rooted in a shared commitment to strengthening collaboration across diverse sectors, including economic development, trade, culture, education, and innovation.

He stressed that both nations' leaderships have demonstrated clear dedication to elevating these ties through high-level visits and regular diplomatic exchanges. A defining milestone in this journey was the historic meeting between His Highness Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani and President Alexander Stubb of Finland in Helsinki, which marked a significant turning point and added strategic depth to the bilateral relationship.

The Finland ambassador has congratulated the wise leadership and people of Qatar on this special occasion, affirming that Qatar National Day is a celebration of unity, pride, and progress, and a moment to look ahead with confidence. He conveyed his hopes for ongoing peace, prosperity, and success in all of Qatar's future endeavours, envisioning a future filled with harmony and enduring peace. (QNA)

## Researcher says national identity crucial to Qatar's development

The Qatar National Day (QND) comes to reinforce the importance of identity and its role in achieving comprehensive development for the nation, as well as the great importance of language and education, all of which form the cornerstones of the renaissance, through which the Qatari citizen's ability to innovate and participate in building the nation's future is shaped.

In this context, officials, academics and writers told Qatar News Agency (QNA) that strengthening national identity is a fundamental pillar of any development renaissance, and that the strength of identity is closely linked to the awareness of the nation's citizens and their active role in building the nation, and contributing to the comprehensive development process that makes the nation a model of cohesion and progress.

Director General of Al Wijdan Cultural Center Khalid bin Ghanem al-Maadheed said strengthening national identity is a fundamental pillar of any developmental renaissance. He noted that the strength of identity is closely linked to the awareness of the nation's citizens and their active role in building their country and contributing to the comprehensive development process that makes the nation a model of cohesion and progress.

He told QNA that love for the homeland and belonging to it is the greatest motive for development, as the sons of the homeland pledge to provide every effort that contributes to the development of their country and enhances its civilisational journey, which is reflected in this year's National Day slogan, "With You It Rises, From You It Awaits." Khalid bin Ghanem al-Maadheed, a researcher specialising in the history of Qatar, stressed the importance of national identity as the

framework that distinguishes the individual and society. He indicated that the concept of identity in the modern era has become more complex in light of the rapid cultural and social transformations. He indicated that identity is the set of characteristics that give a society its distinctiveness, and its importance is increasing today in light of social media, which has brought the distances between the cultures of peoples closer and made the world more like a single village. Al-Maadheed addressed the relationship between identity awareness and civilisational and economic development, considering it a close relationship. An individual's awareness of his identity enhances his self-awareness and his position in the path of development and progress.

His Excellency said that this awareness preserves the values and principles of society in the face of Western modernity trends, and prevents the loss of identity under the weight of economic prosperity. He cited Qatar's firm stance on the Palestinian issue as an example, stressing that this stance is understood through the values on which today's generation was raised, and that the principle of 'the end does not justify the means' is not a new value, but rather is rooted in social upbringing since the era of the founder, Sheikh Jassim bin Mohammed bin Thani, which was confirmed by his choice to follow the Ottoman Caliphate at that time. Regarding the role of cultural heritage in supporting Qatar National Vision 2030, His Excellency indicated that the social pillar of the vision focuses on strengthening cultural identity and Qatari and Islamic values, preserving the cohesion of the family and society, and ensuring a decent life for citizens within a safe and stable environment that promotes justice and equality. (QNA)

## Qatar achieved remarkable development success: Malaysian envoy

Ambassador of Malaysia to Qatar Mohammad Faizal Razali has affirmed that Qatar has made great progress and achieved remarkable success in the field of comprehensive development.

In a statement to Qatar News Agency (QNA) on the occasion of Qatar's National Day, he said that the achievements made by Qatar are built upon solid foundations, thanks to the country's wise leadership. On the occasion of Qatar National Day, the Malaysian ambassador to Qatar extended – on behalf of Malaysia's embassy and the Malaysian community in Qatar, his warmest and most sincere congratulations to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani, the government and people of Qatar.

Commemorating its founding in 1878 by Sheikh Jassim bin Mohammed bin Thani, Qatar National Day is considered an occasion for the Qatari people to reaffirm their loyalty and strengthen national identity and solidarity. "This celebratory spirit extends

equally to more than 6,200 Malaysians residing in Qatar, reinforcing the social cohesion and attachment to this amazing country," he said, noting that this day serves as a shared opportunity for Malaysians in Qatar to draw inspiration from its glorious past and commit to a promising future guided by common shared values and vision. He pointed out that Qatar has firmly established itself as an indispensable regional and international mediator, adding that the country's diplomatic effectiveness is rooted in a principled foreign policy that prioritises dialogue, constructive engagement and the maintenance of open communication channels with various global actors. He commended Qatar's unwavering dedication to resolving complex and protracted disputes, which includes successfully mediating political reconciliations across various Arab, African, Asian and European countries, as well as fostering inclusivity in international dialogues.

"Most critically, Qatar has assumed a central and continuous

role as a trusted facilitator in the ongoing negotiations to stop Israeli genocide and aggressions in the Middle East," he continued. He pointed out that Qatar's resolve to pursue peace is all the more commendable, given that, despite the Israeli attack on its land, Qatar has remained steadfast, committed to dialogue and its crucial mediating role. "This principled position demonstrates not only courage, but also an uncompromising belief that peace cannot be achieved through violence but through the sustained effort of diplomati-

c engagement," he added. He indicated that Qatar's tireless efforts to secure ceasefires, and the genocides, facilitate the release of detainees and hostages, and ensure the consistent flow of essential aid to the Palestinians are not merely diplomatic manoeuvres; they represent a deep commitment to the moral imperative for global peace, noting that Qatar is unequivocally telling the world that dialogue and principled mediation are the only viable pathway to achieving a comprehensive, just and lasting peace. The Malaysian ambassador also said that Qatar's rapid transformation and tremendous achievements across economic, human, and social fields are truly outstanding, pointing out that this accomplishment is the direct result of His Highness the Amir's visionary leadership, as well as the government's meticulous planning and strategic implementation of the Qatar National Vision 2030 (QNV 2030).

"The nation has successfully

challenge of modernisation while preserving its rich heritage culture. Qatar's success is vividly visible in its world-class infrastructure, pragmatic strategy for economic diversification, vigorous expansion of Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) production to bolster global energy security and its ambition to become a regional leader in the digital economy and Artificial Intelligence. By investing heavily in human capital, high-quality education and innovation, Qatar is successfully building a competitive, knowledge-based economy that secures a high standard of living for generations to come," he said. With regard to deepening ties with Malaysia and strategic partnership with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean), the Malaysia ambassador to Qatar Mohammad Faizal Razali affirmed that the relationship between Malaysia and Qatar is characterised by profound mutual respect and rapidly accelerating strategic growth. "Our bilateral ties, underpinned by shared economic goals and cultural understanding, have expanded significantly, as evidenced by the

substantial increase in bilateral visits, trade and investment across vital sectors including energy, finance, technology, education and defence," he continued. He also pointed out that Qatar's strategic engagement with Asean is highly significant – positioning the country as the pivotal link for economic and strategic connectivity between the Gulf Co-operation Council (GCC) and Southeast Asia, noting that this was clearly demonstrated by the honourable participation of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani in the 2nd Asean-GCC Summit in Kuala Lumpur on May 27, 2025. "This high-level presence reflects not only Qatar's dedication to regional stability but also the country's vision to become the central hub facilitating immense future growth," he noted, adding that, by focusing on advanced co-operation in digital transformation, food security and sustainable development, Qatar is actively building the infrastructure necessary to ensure mutual prosperity for both vast regions. (QNA)



Malaysian ambassador to Qatar Mohammad Faizal Razali

Officials and others at the auction. **PICTURES:** Shaji Kayamkulam

## QIAF partners with Al Bahie House for first art auction

By Joseph Varghese  
Staff Reporter

The Qatar International Art Festival (QIAF) 2025, held at Katara Halls Building 12, organised its first-ever art auction yesterday with 29 lots.

This was the first ever auction since its inception seven years ago and was held in collaboration with the Al Bahie Auction House. There was a large number of participants for the auction and the art works were well bid by the art enthusiasts.

"This is for the first time, we are having an art auction and held in collaboration with Al Bahie Auction House. Al Bahie is a Qatar-based auction house that is registered in Qatar since 1996," Rashmi Agarwal, founder and president of Maps International Limited, and CEO and director of QIAF told *Gulf Times*.

Agarwal said that the auction is live-streamed and those interested have the option for bidding both online and in-person.

"This year we have 32 artworks in 29 lots. These are the works of the artists from about 15 countries. The response for the auction is very positive and we do plan to continue it in every edition of the festival. Next year onwards, we plan to do it on a much bigger scale," said Agarwal.

The official said that overall there is a participation of more than 500 artists in the festival from over 73 countries.

"We have another big event coming up today as part of the festival. We are doing an artistic and sustainable fashion show with participation from Qatari fashion designers and also from international fashion designers. More than 72 fashion designers have registered to participate in this," said Agarwal. She noted that the exhibition that lasts until tomorrow showcases global artistic brilliance, cultural exchange, and creative celebration.

"This year's edition stands out as the largest and most diverse yet, offering a dynamic programme of 15 engaging activities designed to inspire, educate, and connect. The festival schedule features master classes, art workshops, panel discussions, art conferences, live painting sessions, artists' fashion shows, cultural tours, networking dinners, and awards and felicitations.



An artwork being auctioned.



A view of the artworks.



Another view of the artworks.



An artwork at the exhibition.

the numbers which we are having. We are already receiving a very positive response for the next year 2026. Even in 2025, we have had more than 200 applicants in the waiting list. They all want to come next year. We have received inquiries from more than 50 galleries to participate in the 2026 edition of the festival."

She also described that the public response to the exhibition has been very phenomenal. "People are coming and praising. We have also received very good response from a lot of organisations in Qatar. We have got very encouraging words from different embassies. On the red carpet VIP opening, we had a representation of a large number of ambassadors from the embassies in Qatar," added Agarwal.

Agarwal said that the festival has been a tremendous success with greater participation compared to the previous years.

She said: "We are really very happy with the participation and



MoU-signing between Aspire Printing, Aspire City Advertising and Teyseer Group.

## Aspire Printing, Aspire City Advertising sign agreement with Teyseer Group

Aspire Printing, Aspire City Advertising signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Teyseer Group yesterday aimed at enhancing institutional sustainability and increase the visibility of Teyseer Group's brand identity and advertising campaigns across Aspire Zone.

The MoU spans three years and reflects the commitment of all parties to strengthen long-term collaboration and achieve shared strategic objectives that support sustainable development and innovation within the Aspire Zone ecosystem. It also facilitates the optimal utilisation of advertising assets managed

by Aspire Advertising, including digital screens and the Torch Hotel screen, to reach a wider audience and maximise media impact.

Additionally, the MoU ensures that Aspire Printing provides comprehensive and integrated printing services to Teyseer Group, directly contributing to operational sustainability and institutional efficiency within the Division's entities.

The agreement was signed in the presence of Ali Abdulla al-Mutawaa, Chief of Business Development and Enterprise Management Officer at Aspire Zone Foundation (AZF), general manager of Aspire City Projects, and

CEO of Aspire City Advertising and Aspire Printing; Khalifa Abdurrahman al-Mannai, chairman of Teyseer Group; and Hanan Attwan al-Shammary, executive director of Strategic Partnerships, Business and Project Development Division, AZF.

This strategic partnership reflects the commitment of all parties to develop a sustainable environment focused on innovation, providing integrated solutions, and fostering collaboration between the public and private sectors. It aligns with Qatar National Vision 2030 and contributes to enhancing quality of life, sports, and community engagement across the country.

## Ravi Pillai praises QIFF's role in promoting football

Padma Shri Dr B Ravi Pillai, founder and chairman of the RP Group, was presented with the Qatar Indian Football Forum (QIFF) Super Cup 2025 official brochure by Mohammed Shanavas, head of guest management, as part of the formal engagements associated with the ongoing tournament.

During the interaction, Dr Pillai highly appreciated QIFF for their dedicated and consistent initiatives to promote football culture among the Indian and wider expatriate community in Qatar, a statement said. He commended the organisation for successfully creating a platform that encourages talent, enhances community engagement, and nurtures the spirit of sportsmanship.

Dr Pillai extended his best wishes for the 16th season of the QIFF Super Cup, currently taking place in Doha with enthusiastic participation from teams representing various regions. He emphasised the significance of such tournaments in strengthening community bonds and fostering healthy competition.



He also assured his continued support, co-operation, and encouragement for QIFF's future sporting events and development programmes.

QIFF president Sharaf Hameed, along with the executive members, expressed their

gratitude to Dr Pillai for honouring the event with his presence. They acknowledged his unwavering commitment to community initiatives and his longstanding support for sports and youth empowerment, the statement added.



## ICAI Doha holds career counselling session

The Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI), Doha Chapter, conducted a guest session on 'Mastering Your Future - CA Career Counselling' at MIE-SPPU Institute of Higher Education.

The session witnessed participation from over 50 commerce and aspiring CA students, reflecting strong interest in professional career guidance and mentorship, a statement said.

The session was led by chartered accountants Kishore Alex, Arun Somanath and Dinesh Babu. MIE-SPPU president and director (academics) Yasir Nainar, head of operations Dr Bimalendu B Nath, and other officials

Dinesh Bakshi and Dr Saidia Jeelani extended support and encouragement to the students.

The session provided deep insights into the CA qualification pathway; career opportunities in audit, finance, taxation, consulting, and industry; skill development and strategic career planning; and real-world professional expectations and global opportunities for CAs. The speakers also engaged in an interactive Q&A segment, addressing students' queries on exam strategies, internships, work-life balance, and emerging career domains.

Addressing the gathering, Alex highlighted the Doha Chapter's continuous efforts

in nurturing young talent and bridging academia with the professional world. Somanath and Babu shared practical insights from their professional journeys, inspiring students with real-life experiences.

The MIE-SPPU officials appreciated ICAI Doha Chapter's initiative in bringing industry-relevant guidance directly to students, reinforcing the importance of professional education in today's competitive environment.

The session concluded with a vote of thanks and group interactions, leaving students highly motivated and better informed about their future career paths in Chartered Accountancy, the statement added.

## 'Road to Qatar Play' unveiled as innovative gaming experience

The Supreme Committee for Delivery & Legacy has launched Road to Qatar Play, a new gaming experience designed to bring football supporters worldwide into a shared competitive space.

Road to Qatar Play features 12 interactive challenges that cater to all levels of engagement, from casual fans to dedicated football enthusiasts, a statement said. Players can participate in fantasy football experiences, test their knowledge and predict match outcomes to earn points.

The platform also includes social features such as friend invi-



competition. Performance across these challenges contributes to a unified scoring model reflected in leaderboards, where players can track their ranking among friends and users worldwide.

The top three highest-ranking players will receive travel vouchers in recognition of their achievement.

The app is now available in English and Arabic on play.road-toqatar.qa, the iOS App Store and Google Play Store.

More information about the tournament is available by following @arabcpqa and @road-toqatar on all major social media platforms.

## Toyota, Honda, Ford models recalled

The Ministry of Commerce and Industry, in co-operation with Al Abdulghani Motors, has announced the recall of Toyota LC300 (Twin Turbo), LC300 (Hybrid), New Prado 250, Lexus 700h (Hybrid), Lexus LC500 Vehicles 2024-2025 models.

The recall is due to a possible defect in the Parking Assist ECU which may cause the rear-view image to freeze briefly during reverse or rear-view image not display during reverse if the ignition is turned on and off within a specific time.

The ministry, in co-operation with Doha Marketing Services co (Domasco), announced the recall of Honda CBF300 motorcycle 2022 model as the headlight while in use may suddenly flicker and eventually shut off.

The ministry, in co-operation with Almana Motors Company, also announced the recall of Ford Mustang 2024-2025 models due to the possibility of water leaking into the car's body control unit which

may cause loss of connection to the external lighting components.

The ministry said the recall campaign comes within the framework of its ongoing efforts to protect consumers and ensure that car and motorcycle 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 Combating Commercial Fraud Department, which receives complaints, suggestions, and inquiries through the following communication channels: Call Centre: 16001, e-mail: info@moci.gov.qa, ministry's accounts on social media: @mociqatar, ministry's Mobile App: MOCIQATAR (available on iOS and Android devices).

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**GULF TIMES**

## The flip side of fuel economy rollback: higher gas bills will absorb savings

The Trump administration's proposal to roll back Biden-era vehicle fuel-efficiency standards may save automakers in the US tens of billions of dollars and potentially lower upfront purchase costs for American car buyers. But any savings for car buyers will vanish quickly as drivers are forced to shell out more cash at the fuel pump, according to industry experts who analysed the administration's proposal as well as the administration's own projections. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) and the Environmental Protection Agency last Wednesday proposed cutting the fuel-economy requirements for cars to 34.5 miles per gallon on average by 2031, down from the 50.4 miles per gallon (21.4km per litre) set by former President Joe Biden.

As a result, automakers would save \$35bn through 2031 and average upfront vehicle costs would decline by about \$930, assuming the automakers pass along the savings, according to NHTSA's economic analysis in support of the proposal.

But the NHTSA's same economic analysis said the proposal would raise fuel consumption by around 100bn gallons through 2050 relative to the Biden standard, costing Americans up to \$185bn.

"The Department of Transportation is now estimating larger upfront savings on technology costs, but they are also estimating even larger losses in fuel savings," said Jason Schwartz, legal director at New York University's Institute for Policy Integrity.

"As for just how quickly any upfront savings will evaporate in the face of more money spent at the gas pump, very quickly indeed," he said.

Car buyers with long-term financing may not feel even the short-term benefits, as purchase savings would be spread out over time alongside the higher fuel bills.

"From the very first day of driving, it will cost consumers more to operate their less-efficient cars: more for gas, more for

repairs, more time wasted pumping gas," he said.

The Trump administration touted the fuel economy rollback proposal as a boost to the auto industry and a benefit for consumers by potentially allowing for the comeback of less-efficient vehicles such as station wagons, a staple of 1970s and 1980s family travel.

It criticised Biden's standards as a mandate for more electric vehicles that are more expensive, and which American automakers have struggled to produce profitably at scale. Some of the biggest beneficiaries of the proposal include US automakers Ford and GM, along with Europe-based Stellantis, which produces vehicles under the Chrysler, Dodge and Ram brands in the United States, according to the NHTSA's analysis. The administration has said that longer-term cost estimates including fuel prices are more speculative and that its cost-benefit analysis did not factor in maintenance costs.

"Under our proposal, initial vehicle owners will save more upfront relative to fuel costs. Moreover, that savings calculation does not include savings from reduced fines [from non-compliance with higher CAFE standards]," an NHTSA spokesperson said.

Dave Cooke, a senior scientist for the clean transportation programme at Union of Concerned Scientists, said he believed the proposal amounted to a financial hit to consumers.

"It shows that consumers will be paying more in lifetime fuel costs than saved in technology costs beginning in model year 2027 in every single one of their three alternative (scenarios) compared to the original standards under Biden," he said of the NHTSA analysis.

He also criticised the administration's analysis for omitting the foregone financial benefits associated with increased tailpipe pollution and greenhouse gas emissions.

The NHTSA's analysis showed the proposal would raise vehicle carbon dioxide emissions by around 5% relative to the Biden standards. Transport is the top source of US carbon dioxide output, according to the EPA. Trump has called global warming a "con job" and pulled the United States out of international efforts to combat it.

The EPA said its administrator, Lee Zeldin, had made revitalising the American auto industry one of his priorities.

"EPA is committed to delivering on this promise and giving consumers choice through rulemaking within EPA's jurisdiction," the agency said in a statement.

Analysts for Edmunds, a consumer research guide for car buyers, said it may be too early to forecast how quickly the projected upfront savings on vehicles might be offset by higher fuel costs. Edmunds told Reuters that product development cycles are typically planned years in advance, so any meaningful impact would take quite a while to materialise. — Reuters

**Sarkozy out with a book**

Former French president Nicolas Sarkozy arrives for an autograph session of his book *Diary of a Prisoner* on the day of its release at the Lamartine bookshop in Paris yesterday. Excerpts of the 216-page book were published in several French media on Saturday. Sarkozy, who was president from 2007-2012, was protected in prison by two security officers and remained confined to his cell 23 hours a day, except for visiting hours. (AFP)

## Experts say Kennedy vaccine advisers 'turned back the clock' on disease prevention



### New guidance will increase hepatitis B cases, experts warn

By Chad Terhune, Nancy Lapid and Julie Steenhuysen  
Los Angeles

U.S. vaccine advisers' decision to scrap longstanding guidance on hepatitis B shots will expose more children to the harmful virus and may signal how other evidence-based vaccine policies can be undermined, doctors and disease experts said.

Since 1991, US health officials have recommended universal vaccination for infants against hepatitis B, with the first of three shots administered very soon after birth. The move has cut infections dramatically and saved lives, federal data show.

On Friday, an advisory panel appointed by Health Secretary Robert F Kennedy Jr said a birth dose should only be given to newborns whose mother tests positive for hepatitis B or whose status is unknown. In cases where the mother tests negative, parents should decide with their doctors when, or even if, their children should receive any hepatitis B vaccines, the panel said.

The advisers, many of whom share Kennedy's anti-vaccine views, provided no evidence of new harms from the shot. They argued that vaccination was too broad compared to the risk of infection and that US policy was out of step with certain developed countries.

"Do you want to expose your child, your baby, to an intervention that could have some potential harms when the risk is so low?" said Retsef Levi, one of the advisers.



### Medical societies, 12 states, plan to ignore new recommendation



### Trump backs broader review of all childhood immunisations

who supported the new recommendation.

#### Experts warn of risks

Disease experts said that current US infection rates are low thanks to the decades-old vaccination policy and warned that will change if the Trump administration accepts the new recommendation. More families will likely opt out of vaccination without a firm federal policy in place, and children can be easily infected through exposure to household members other than their mothers, who may not be aware they have hepatitis B.

Many people with hepatitis B do not have symptoms and are unaware of their infection. In infants and young children, an initial infection becomes chronic in about 95% of cases, potentially causing liver damage and liver cancer decades later, according to the World Health Organisation.

"This is a watershed moment for our country," said Dr Alex Cevijanovich, a paediatrician in Albuquerque, New Mexico. "I don't think it's going to take long to start seeing cases of hepatitis B come back, and I think that the burden of these cases will lay squarely on the shoulders of a group of people who don't understand the science of vaccines."

#### Trump backs full review of childhood vaccination policy

The repudiation of a safe and successful vaccine also raises concerns over how the advisory panel will conduct a planned review of all routine childhood immunisations, according to former vaccine advisers, paediatricians and experts in infectious diseases.

Late on Friday, President Donald Trump stressed his support for such a review, instructing Kennedy to study how US childhood vaccine policy differs from "peer, developed countries," and make changes where warranted.

"What they are really doing is dismantling the vaccine schedule," said Dr Flor Munoz, an infectious diseases specialist at Texas Children's Hospital. "Every other vaccine is probably going to fall under their plan."

HHS spokesman Andrew Nixon said in a statement to Reuters "there is no way to infer broader change" from the decision on hepatitis B shots or assume that it "sets a template for rolling back other childhood vaccine recommendations."

The decision by the Advisory Committee on Immunisation Practices (ACIP) must be adopted by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's acting director before taking effect. It will help determine states' immunisation requirements, insurance coverage and procurement for the CDC's Vaccines for Children program relied upon by many families.

Robert Malone, vice-chair of the ACIP panel, supported the new recommendation. Public health "is focused on maximising the greatest good for the greatest number," he said. "The counterbalance to that is the need to respect the rights of the individual for self-determination."

US hepatitis B infections have fallen nearly 90% from about 9.6 per 100,000 before vaccination became widespread to approximately one per 100,000 in 2018, according to the CDC.

Major side effects, such as allergic reactions, are very rare.

Before routine vaccination at birth, 18,000 US children contracted the virus each year by age 10, according to the American Academy of Family Physicians.

"Some of these committee members would indeed be pleased if some parents chose never to vaccinate their children against hepatitis B," said Dr William Schaffner, an infectious diseases specialist at Vanderbilt University and a former ACIP member.

"They've turned back the clock to pre-1991."

#### Medical societies to ignore new vaccine guidance

Leading US medical societies, including the American Academy of Pediatrics, and at least 12 states said they would ignore the new recommendation and continue to support the hepatitis B vaccine for all newborns. They include Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Illinois, Massachusetts, Maryland, Michigan, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina and Rhode Island.

The full impact from a reversal will take time to materialise, making it harder to communicate the risks to families, according to paediatricians and disease experts.

Dr Sharon Nachman, chief of paediatric infectious diseases at Stony Brook Children's Hospital in New York, said the concern within the medical community is that more families will buy into the notion promoted by Kennedy, but unsupported by scientific evidence, that vaccines cause more harm than the diseases they prevent. It will take much longer for the worst complications of hepatitis B to show up.

"This is a 20-year ticking time bomb," she said. — Reuters



The Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices votes on the recommendation of the childhood hepatitis B vaccine schedule at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, in Atlanta, Georgia, on Friday. (Reuters)

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## Sheikh Thani honours winners of 11th Sheikh Hamad Award for Translation

By Tawfiq Lamari  
Staff Reporter

On behalf of His Highness the Father Amir Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani, Qatar Museums' Board of Trustees vice-chairman HE Sheikh Thani bin Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani feted the winners of the 11th Sheikh Hamad Award for Translation and International Understanding.

The ceremony was attended by a number of Their Excellencies, Ministers, and members of the diplomatic corps accredited to Qatar, among other dignitaries. The award's 11th edition witnessed wide participation from 32 countries, and five languages were included in this year's categories.

In the category of translation from German to Arabic, three translators were recognised for their work. Mohammed Ahmed Abu Zeid won second place for his translation of *Work, Customs, and*



HE Sheikh Thani bin Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani with officials and winners of the Award.

*Traditions in Palestine*, and Omar al-Ghoul shared second place for his translation of *Jerusalem and its Natural Surroundings*. Haroun Ahmed Suleiman Ahmed won third place for his translation of *The Time of the Magicians: The Golden Age of Philosophy 1919-1929* by Wolfram Ellenberger. The first prize in this category was not awarded. In the category of translation from Arabic to German, Larissa Bender

won first place for her translation of Mustafa Khalifa's *The Shell: A Voyeur's Diary*. In the category of translation from Turkish to Arabic, Mohamed Abdel-Aati Mohamed won second place for his translation of *The Rebellion of Muhammad Ali Pasha: The Egyptian Question from 1831-1841*, followed by Abdell-Razzak Barakat in third place for his translation of *A History of Contemporary Turkish Thought*.

In the Arabic-Turkish translation category, Davut Eltas won first place for his translation of *Mir'at al-Usul fi Sharh Mirqat al-Wusul* by Mulla Khusraw. He shared first place with Mehmet Yusha Ozmen for his translation of *Ahl al-Sunna wa al-Jama'a: Maqala fi al-Nash'a wa al-Zuhur* (The People of the Sunna and the Community: An Essay on Origin and Emergence). Elif Baga won second place for her translation of *Al-Mumti' fi Sharh al-*

*Muqni'* (The Enjoyable Explanation of al-Muqni'), and Cahit Senel shared second place with her for his translation of *Jawami' al-Sama' al-Tab'i* (Compendiums of Natural Hearing).

Mustafa Ismail Donmez won third place for his translation of *Zaman al-Khuyul al-Bayda'* (The Time of White Horses) by Ibrahim Nasrallah. In the Arabic-English translation category, Hamada Hassanin and Janz Scheiner won third place for their translation of *Futuh al-Sham* (The Conquest of Damascus).

An encouragement award was given to translator Khalil Muhammad Uthman Budufou. In the English-Arabic translation category, Muhammad Abdur Abu al-Ala won third place for his translation of *Hudud al-Liberality: Al-Turath wa al-Nazia' al-Fardiyya wa Azmat al-Hurriya* (The Limits of Liberalism: Heritage, Individualism, and the Crisis of Freedom). The awards ceremony also honoured the winning

institutions and individuals in the Achievement category, with the Namaa Foundation winning first place. For research and studies on the English language, the Turkish language achievement awards were distributed to the Baqaa Publishing House, Vahdettin Inca Publishing House, and Ankara Okulu Publishing House.

In the German language achievement category, the award went to the Institute of Oriental Studies at the University of Leipzig. The award also honoured three winners in the Thai language category: Amnawai Efendi Beker Ajin, the Association of Graduates of Arab Universities in Thailand, and Arun Jalaluddin.

In the Albanian language category, the achievement awards were given to Muhammad Muwafaq al-Arnaut, Logos-A Publishing House, Viti Mahdi, the Department of Oriental Studies at the University of Pristina, and Sulejman Tumcini.

## Qatar launches 2025 National Day festivities at Darb Al Saai

**'With You It Rises, From You It Awaits'**

**H**e Minister of Culture Sheikh Abdulrahman bin Hamad al-Thani yesterday inaugurated the National Day celebrations at Darb Al Saai in Umm Salal, marking the start of 11 days of cultural and heritage activities organised by the Ministry of Culture from December 10-20.

The ceremony featured the raising of the national flag in the main square, accompanied by patriotic songs, and a Darb Al Saai parade that included purebred Arabian horses, camels and the traditional Qatari Ardah. The opening drew a large turnout of citizens and residents eager to experience the festive atmosphere from the outset.

Following the ceremony, HE the Minister toured a wide range of cultural, artistic and heritage activities spread across 150,000sq m, accompanied by diplomats representing various countries and senior officials. Darb Al Saai, now a permanent national venue, is designed to bring the community together around Qatar's history, values and identity.

Dr Ghanem bin Mubarak al-Ali, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Culture and General Supervisor of the National Day celebrations, said this year's events embody the National Day slogan, noting that Darb Al Saai represents a renewed national message that celebrates pride



in an authentic past while looking confidently toward the future.

He said the venue continues to develop as a dynamic cultural and heritage platform, showcasing the depth of Qatar's history through diverse programming that blends heritage, culture, education and entertainment. This year's edition, he added, places particular emphasis on strengthening na-

tional identity and engaging all segments of society through modern, innovative presentations of Qatari heritage.

A wide range of ministries and State institutions are taking part, including the Ministries of Defence, Interior, and Communications and Information Technology, as well as the Qatar Documentary House, the National Cybersecurity



Agency, the Qatar Cultural Center for the Deaf, the Qatar Photography Center, the Social and Cultural Center for the Blind, Qatar Reads and Qatar Islamic Bank.

The programme features traditional displays of Qatar's past on land and sea, the Qatari house, and the old market that reflects the country's social history. Key heritage components include Al-Maqtar – a recreation of Bedouin life with poetry sessions, riddles, and specialised heritage houses such as the Falconry House and the Sadu and Weaving House – and Al-Ezbah, where children learn camel riding and experience traditional nomadic life.

A major maritime heritage zone, Al-Bidaa showcases traditional seafaring culture through the na-khuda majlis, the nahham, the tawwash, the teacher's house and a dedicated maritime museum, alongside traditional games and cultural competitions. Children's programming is extensive, including outdoor sports and Sana Qatar, a digital exhibition offering immersive experiences using advanced display technologies and interactive content.

The main stage will host daily cultural activities, including seminars and poetry evenings, while several art exhibitions explore different facets of Qatar's history and

identity. Among them is the 'Year of the Drowning' exhibition, highlighting one of the Gulf's most significant maritime tragedies.

Other showcases include Yousef Ahmed's 'Palm Tree' exhibition, featuring handmade paper crafted from palm fronds, and Mohammed al-Jaidah's 'Features of Life' documenting scenes from Qatar's past.

Darb Al Saai is open to the public daily from 3pm to 11pm at its permanent location, which blends Qatari architectural heritage with contemporary design and provides enhanced facilities to ensure a comfortable and safe visitor experience.

## L'Heure du Diamant Chopard, the Master of Jewellery Watches

The history of jewellery watches at Chopard is a tale of innovation, craftsmanship, and artistic excellence, interwoven with the legacy of the Scheufele family. Since its founding in 1860 by Louis-Ulysse Chopard, the Maison has remained at the forefront of fine watchmaking, with a distinctive expertise in jewellery watches emerging over time. Parallel to this, the Scheufele family's heritage in Pforzheim – a historic centre of jewellery and watchmaking – laid the foundation for a tradition of precision and artistry. In 1904, Karl Scheufele I established his own Manufacture, Eszeha, specialising in jewellery watches and luxury items crafted in gold and platinum, which confirmed his reputation as 'The Master of Jewellery Watches'. The era's Belle Epoque aesthetic, with its delicate, transformable designs and the use of platinum, greatly influenced his creations.

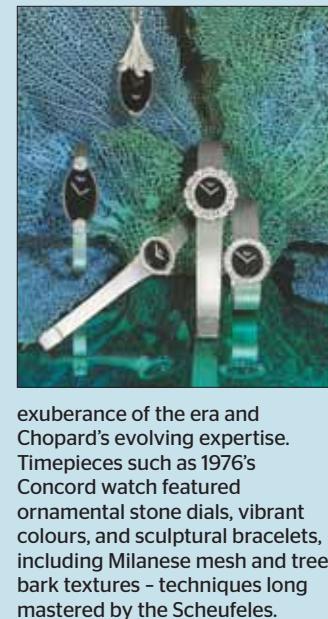
In 1912, he introduced an innovative clip that allowed a pocket watch to be worn on the wrist, an elegant precursor to the modern wristwatch. By the 1920s, Eszeha had embraced the Art Deco movement, producing timepieces distinguished by their daring geometric shapes, stylised diamond settings, and platinum cases.

Following the challenges of World



War I, Karl Scheufele I focused his collection increasingly on watches, incorporating Swiss movements into his meticulously crafted cases. This expertise was carried forward by his son, Karl Scheufele II, who steered the Maison through the post-war years and positioned it for expansion. In 1958, at just 20 years old, Karl Scheufele III assumed leadership, alongside his wife, Karin. Seeking to broaden the Maison's reach, he set his sights on acquiring a Swiss watch manufacturer – an ambition realised in 1963 with the purchase of Chopard. Fortunately for him, Louis-Ulysse Chopard's heir quickly realised their mutual alignment in terms of values and vision and was therefore open to passing the baton to the Scheufele family.

From then on, their stewardship of Chopard ushered in a new era of creativity and technical refinement. Jewellery watches became central to the Maison's identity, with diamond-set designs showcasing an exceptional interplay of baguette and brilliant-cut stones. By the late 1960s, the Maison had gained international recognition for its artistry and innovation, winning 15 Golden Rose of Baden-Baden awards – known at the time as the 'Oscars' of jewellery. The period also saw Chopard's early advertisements feature the slogan 'Maitres de la montre-bijou' (Masters of Jewellery Watches), cementing its growing reputation in the field. The 1970s brought a bold new aesthetic, reflecting both the



exuberance of the era and Chopard's evolving expertise. Timepieces such as 1976's Concord watch featured ornamental stone dials, vibrant colours, and sculptural bracelets, including Milanese mesh and tree-bark textures – techniques long mastered by the Scheufleles. This savoir-faire became intrinsic to Chopard's visual universe, seamlessly blending goldsmithing traditions with Swiss horological precision. The decade also saw the launch of the Belle Epoque collection, reinterpreting the curving, floral motifs of the early 20th century for a contemporary audience. By the 1990s, renowned for its jewellery watches, Chopard created the world's most precious watch in 1997, the groundbreaking



'Chopardissimo', which required 2000 hours of work and sparkled with 874 diamonds totalling 163 carats. The launch of the L'Heure du Diamant collection in 2012 further cemented Chopard's and the Scheufele family's shared heritage of creating 'jewels that tell the time.' One model from the collection even went on to earn the Jewellery Watch Prize at the Grand Prix d'Horlogerie de Genève the following year.

In 2018, Chopard became the first luxury watch and jewellery Maison to commit to using 100% ethical gold in the production of its watch and jewellery creations, including L'Heure du Diamant, reaffirming its 'Journey to Sustainable Luxury'. In 2024, the introduction of the 10.01 Calibre, dedicated to L'Heure du Diamant, marked



# Safari Hypermarket inaugurates 7th outlet at Ezdan Mall in Al Gharafa

Safari Hypermarket, which has been scripting a remarkable success story in Qatar for the past two decades, opened its doors at Ezdan Mall, Gharafa, yesterday, a statement said.

The inauguration ceremony was held by Safari Group of Companies chairman Hamad Dafar al-Ahbab, deputy chairman and managing director Zainul Abideen, and general manager Surendranath, along with guests including Doha Bank's corporate banking acting head Fadi Fadel, and Mohammed Ahmed al-Omairi (Makkah, Saudi Arabia). Other representatives of Safari management and staff were also present.

In connection with the opening, Safari has launched two mega raffle draw promotions. Anyone visiting Safari Hypermarket at Ezdan Mall will receive a free coupon through the 'Visit and Win' promotion, without making any purchase, and two Tesla Model Y cars will be given away through the raffle draw.

This is the first time in Qatar that two Tesla cars are being offered as

prizes through a mega raffle without any purchase requirement. The first draw of this promotion will be held on January 8, 2026, and the second draw on February 19, 2026, at Safari Hypermarket, Ezdan Mall.

Along with this, Safari is also launching its newest mega promotion offering 30 Bestune cars. Customers will receive an e-raffle coupon with every QR50 purchase from any Safari outlet, and 30 Bestune cars will be given away as prizes.

Four Bestune cars will be given away in each draw, and five cars in the final draw. This Shop & Win promotion will be available at all Safari outlets. The first draw will be held on January 5, 2026, and the final draw on September 13, 2026.

Safari has opened its first outlet inside a shopping mall, marking a significant milestone for the brand. Located in Ezdan Mall, Gharafa – one of Qatar's largest malls spread across 35,000sq m – the new hypermarket benefits from the mall's extensive facilities, including base-



ment parking for more than 2,000 vehicles. The Safari Hypermarket offers a wide and complete range of products across all categories, including fresh food, bakery and hot food, frozen items, groceries, household goods, cosmetics, sta-

tionery and toys, readymade garments, footwear and ladies' bags, home appliances, entertainment, IT, and general electronics.

Adding to the convenience for shoppers, Ezdan Mall also features a spacious food court, a prayer

within Ezdan Mall. Safari has also announced several 'unbeatable' opening offers: 700g Sadia chicken for QR3.75, 2.25kg Anchor milk powder for QR46.75, 400g Nutella for QR13.75, solid perfume set for QR27.75, travel trolley for QR25, kids' bicycle for QR49, Samsung vacuum cleaner for QR99, and Apple iPad 11 for QR979.

Additionally, in celebration of the opening of the ninth branch of Safari Mobile Shop, the iPhone 17 Pro Max 256GB is available for only QR3,999, and the iPhone 17 Pro 256GB for QR3,749. Huge discounts are also being offered on Samsung, Oppo, Redmi and other major brands.

A variety of programmes and events will also be held for three days as part of the inauguration celebrations. Cultural performances such as Ardha dance, music parade, and Soory dance, along with family fun activities like magic show, science show, balloon twister, and bubble art, will go on until December 13 at Safari Hypermarket, Ezdan Mall.

## WEEKEND DEALS

العرض متاح في جميع منافذ سفاري بتاريخ: ١١-١٢-٢٠٢٥ في جميع منافذ سفاري  
Promotion available at all Safari outlets on: 11-12-2025 at all Safari Outlets  
Purchase limit may apply. Offer valid until stocks last.



لحم بقري باكستاني بالعظم اكجم  
Pakistan Beef with Bone 1 kg



لحم جاموس هندي اكجم  
Indian Buffalo Meat 1 kg



لحم ضاني هندي اكجم  
Indian Mutton 1 kg



سمك دليس عمان اكجم  
Fresh Sea Bream Oman 1 kg



جمبري وسط إيران اكجم  
Fresh Prawns Medium Iran 1 kg



بصل هندي اكجم  
Onion India 1 kg



بطاطس باكستاني اكجم  
Potato Pakistan 1 kg



موه اكونا اكجم  
Banana Ecuador 1 kg



مندرن باكستاني اكجم  
Mandarin Pakistan 1 kg



دارجون فروت فيتنام اكجم  
Dragon Fruit Vietnam 1 kg



بابا هندي اكجم  
Papaya Fruit India 1 kg



بروك بوند شاي اكجم ٢٠٢٥  
Shop with Confidence 14/01/2025 18/23/2025



نيدو حليب مجفف اكجم ٢٠٢٥  
Shop with Confidence 14/01/2025 18/23/2025



صل زيت طبخ اكجم ٢٠٢٥  
Shop with Confidence 14/01/2025 18/23/2025



اري سيمسي كوهينور اليومي اكجم ٤.٥  
Shop with Confidence 14/01/2025 18/23/2025



ساديا دجاج شفافه اكجم ١٣٠٠  
Shop with Confidence 14/01/2025 18/23/2025

**SAFARI HYPERMARKET**  
EZDAN MALL-AL GHARAFFA  
**GRAND OPENING MEGA OFFER**

VISIT SAFARI HYPERMARKET,  
EZDAN MALL- AL GHARAFFA & GET YOUR  
FREE COUPON TO WIN

**VISIT & WIN**  
NO PURCHASE REQUIRED!!

**2**  
TESLA MODEL Y CARS

**SHOP & DRIVE**  
**WIN**  
**30**

SPEND QR.50 & GET  
AN E-RAFFLE COUPON TO WIN  
BESTUNE CARS

**WIN 4 CARS**  
IN EVERY LUCKY DRAW  
Promotion Valid Till: 12-09-2026  
This promotion is available at all Safari outlets across Qatar



1<sup>st</sup> Lucky Draw: 08-01-2026  
at Safari Hypermarket, Ezdan Mall- Al Gharaffa (1 Winner)  
2<sup>nd</sup> Lucky Draw: 19-02-2026  
at Safari Hypermarket, Ezdan Mall- Al Gharaffa (1 Winner)  
Promotion Valid Till: 18-02-2026

1<sup>st</sup> Lucky Draw on: 05-01-2026 2<sup>nd</sup> Lucky Draw on: 15-02-2026 3<sup>rd</sup> Lucky Draw on: 29-03-2026 4<sup>th</sup> Lucky Draw on: 10-05-2026 5<sup>th</sup> Lucky Draw on: 21-06-2026 6<sup>th</sup> Lucky Draw on: 02-08-2026 7<sup>th</sup> Lucky Draw on: 13-09-2026

**SAFARI MALL**  
Abu Hamour  
Tel: +974 441 91 441

**SAFARI HYPERMARKET**  
Salwa Road  
Tel: +974 400 01 004

**SAFARI HYPERMARKET**  
Al Khor  
Tel: +974 400 01 050

**SAFARI HYPERMARKET**  
Barwa Village  
Tel: +974 441 18 704

**SAFARI HYPERMARKET**  
Industrial Area  
Tel: +974 446 89 058

**SAFARI HYPERMARKET**  
Birkat Al Awamer  
Tel: +974 441 88 699

**SAFARI HYPERMARKET**  
Ezdan Mall, Al Gharaffa  
Tel: +974 414 74 844