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HAYYAKOM TO QATAR



BUSINESS | Page 1

Qatar's marketed natural gas remains stable in 2024: GECF



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Polo AlMarsa: A new game finds its place in Doha

By Staff Reporter
Doha

As dusk settled over Old Doha Port and the Corniche eased into its evening rhythm, the sight was arresting: polo horses surging across a waterfront pitch, mallets flashing against a skyline of glass and steel. This December, that unlikely yet compelling tableau marked the arrival of Polo AlMarsa which is a new entrant on Qatar's sporting calendar and a confident signal of how far the country's ambitions now extend.

Polo AlMarsa transformed Doha's historic port into a three-day celebration of elite sport, culture and social life. With panoramic views of the Arabian Gulf and the city's skyline, the inaugural edition brought international polo out of its traditional enclosures and into a public, festival-like set-

ting: accessible, energetic and unmistakably global.

Players from Argentina and Chile, two of the sport's most revered polo nations, headlined the exhibition matches, reflecting the event's alignment with the Qatar-Argentina-Chile 2025 Years of Culture initiative. That cultural partnership shaped the weekend's tone, blending competition with heritage, live entertainment, gourmet dining and family-friendly activities across the Polo Village.

The opening ceremony underscored the ambition behind the event. Hosted by the Qatar Polo Club, supported by the Social and Sports Activities Support Fund (Daam) and presented by Qatar Calendar, it brought together dignitaries, partners, celebrities and polo enthusiasts along the Corniche, setting the stage for the first awards of what is intended to become a fixture on the national calendar. **To Page 7**

Sheikha Al Mayassa presents Polo AlMarsa Qatar 2025 Championship Cup



HE Sheikha Al Mayassa bint Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani presented the Polo AlMarsa Qatar 2025 Championship Cup to Team Lusail yesterday.

Sport Page 1

Qatar condemns Syria attack

Qatar condemned the terrorist attack that targeted a joint American-Syrian patrol near the city of Palmyra in the centre of the Syrian Arab Republic, killing and wounding several people. In a statement yesterday, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs reaffirmed Qatar's firm stance rejecting violence, terrorism and criminal acts, regardless of their motives or causes. The ministry expressed Qatar's condolences to the families of the victims and to the governments and peoples of the US and Syria, and wished the wounded a speedy recovery. (QNA)

Registration begins for Marmi 2026

The Qatari Society of Al Gannas (QSA) has announced the opening of registration for the championships of the 17th Qatar International Falcons and Hunting Festival (Marmi 2026), scheduled to take place from Dec 21 to 23, 2025, at the QSA's premises at Katara Cultural Village. Registration for the Promising Falconer Championship will be conducted at the festival venue in Sabkhat Marmi in Sealine. **Page 4**

US military personnel killed in IS attack

Three US military personnel - two army soldiers and a civilian interpreter - were killed yesterday by a suspected Islamic State attacker who targeted a convoy of American and Syrian forces, the US military said. Three other US soldiers were wounded. The attack by a lone gunman occurred "as the soldiers were conducting a key leader engagement" in the central Syrian town of Palmyra. The attacker was killed. **Page 8**

Belarus frees 123 political prisoners

Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko freed 123 prisoners yesterday including Nobel Peace Prize winner Ales Bialatski and leading opposition figure Maria Kalesnikava in a deal brokered by an envoy for US President Donald Trump. In return, the US agreed to lift sanctions on Belarusian potash. Trump's envoy John Coale said that around 1,000 remaining political prisoners in Belarus could be released, hopefully in one big group, in the coming months. **Page 9**

MoCI issues new food shelf-life regulation

QNA
Doha

HE the Minister of Commerce and Industry Sheikh Faisal bin Thani bin Faisal al-Thani has issued Ministerial Decision No. (102) of 2025, adopting the Qatari Technical Regulation on Shelf Life of Food Products, No. QS10050:2025.

The new regulation replaces Technical Regulation QS GSO 150-1:2013/Amd1/Amd2:2023, which was adopted under Ministerial Decision No. (17) of 2024, as well as Standard QS GSO 150-2:2013/Amd1:2024, adopted under Ministerial Decision No. (17) of 2025.

The new regulation aims to ensure the safety and quality of food products circulating in the local market by adopting shelf-life periods based on scientific principles and modern international standards. This will help enhance consumer confidence and reduce food waste through



HE the Minister of Commerce and Industry Sheikh Faisal bin Thani bin Faisal al-Thani

the adoption of more flexible shelf-life periods grounded in reliable studies, thereby strengthening the flexibility of the local market by allowing the entry of a wider and more diverse range of products.

The regulation is significant in that it serves as a national reference fully aligned 100 percent with international standards, and contributes to protecting national dairy products in imple-

mentation of the directives of the Council of Ministers. It also addresses challenges previously associated with the application of shelf-life requirements to foods prepared in restaurants and hotels, which arose from conflicting regulations and procedures.

In addition, the new regulation supports national industry by encouraging innovation and enhancing the competitiveness of products in local and global markets. It also facilitates import and export operations by reducing unjustified restrictions related to shelf-life requirements, thereby contributing to greater diversity of food products in the local market.

The regulation specifies shelf-life periods for a number of sensitive food products, including chilled meat and meat products, fresh fish and seafood, infant foods, eggs, fresh and pasteurised juices, and ready-to-eat foods. It also defines the appropriate storage temperatures for each category. **To Page 7**

In Doha, Palestinian children remembered



People attend an exhibition displaying portraits of 241 young victims of the war in Gaza at Msheireb Museums in Doha yesterday. The exhibition organised by Qatar Charity features 241 portraits of sponsored orphan children cared for through the compassion of donors, bringing their presence into a space where their names, faces and stories can be known and remembered. (AFP)

Kahramaa to enforce GCC water-saving standards from 2026

•Initiative part of 'Tarsheed' programme promoting a culture of sustainability

QNA
Doha

Qatar General Electricity and Water Corporation (Kahramaa), in collaboration with the Qatar General Organisation for Standards and Metrology (QGOSM), has announced the implementation of the GCC technical regulation for water conservation devices in Qatar.

In a press release, the corporation confirmed that compliance will be mandatory for all products covered by the regulation starting from February 24, 2026, ensuring alignment with national sustainability goals and enhancing water efficiency in Qatar under the unified GCC framework.

The regulation encompasses a wide range of devices and products, including showerheads, shower faucets and mixers, public and private restroom faucets and mixers, ablation area faucets and mixers, kitchen faucets and mixers, bidet faucets and mixers, flow regulators attached to sanitary fixtures, toilet flushing tanks, and single-flush or dual-flush toilets. All these products must meet stringent technical requirements to ensure water efficiency and compliance with GCC standards.

The regulation also mandates the placement of the GCC Green Label on every covered product. This label provides essential information such as water consumption rate (in litres per minute or per flush), the GCC conformity mark with a traceability code (GCTS) for electronic verification of product registration data, and a star rating indicating the level of water efficiency. This system aims to empower consumers to make informed purchasing decisions and select the most efficient products, thereby reducing water wastage and supporting sustainability objectives.

Kahramaa urges all suppliers to prepare early and complete conformity procedures in accordance with international standards un-

der Article 20 of the regulation. Manufacturers are required to implement conformity assessment procedures based on ISO/IEC 17067 through an accredited third party chosen by the manufacturer to issue the conformity certificate and green label after reviewing technical documentation and testing representative samples. This process must be repeated every three years.

The regulation specifies that the responsibility for conformity lies with the manufacturer, not the importer, while linking importer data at the national level across GCC countries.

Through its national programme for conservation and energy efficiency "Tarsheed", Kahramaa continues to conduct awareness campaigns targeting suppliers about technical requirements and necessary documentation, including the use of the green label and GCTS code at points of sale.

A comprehensive workshop will be held on December 16, 2025, bringing together suppliers and all relevant stakeholders to explain implementation mechanisms and address technical inquiries.

This initiative is part of "Tarsheed" programme launched by Kahramaa in 2012, which has achieved significant milestones in improving electricity and water efficiency and promoting a culture of sustainability. The Corp continues its efforts, in collaboration with regulatory bodies and market partners, to raise awareness on electricity and water conservation, update information on water-related devices, and streamline GCC conformity procedures, ensuring product quality and preserving national resources for future generations.





On the occasion of
Qatar National Day, 18th of December

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We extend our heartiest congratulations and greetings to

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and to all the honorable people of Qatar

We hope for more returns of this memorable occasion and wish that Qatar always enjoys security, welfare and prosperity under the wise leadership of His Highness The Amir.

The Chairman, Board of Directors, Group Chief Executive Officer
and all employees of Commercial Bank.



Ministry of Awqaf in strategic partnership with Google Cloud

The Ministry of Endowments (Awqaf) and Islamic Affairs has announced a strategic partnership with Google Cloud to deliver advanced artificial intelligence (AI) projects that accelerate digital transformation across the ministry.

The partnership includes the launch of the Awqaf AI Factory, a unified technology environment featuring high-performance computing infrastructure for data processing and model training, and AI platforms built on the ministry's extensive archives.

The ministry becomes the first government entity to partner with Google Cloud after the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology.

Director of Human Resources and Vice-Chairman of the Business and Systems Development Committee, Mohammed bin Hassan al-Malki, said co-operation began in January 2024, leveraging Google's technolo-



gies to enhance administrative efficiency.

He highlighted key initiatives such as the Smart Khateeb Assistant, Media Agent for video generation, Smart Sermon Evaluator, and Real-Time Sermon Translator.

The Director of Da'wah and Religious Guidance, Jassim bin Abdullah al-Ali, noted that the Smart Sermon Evaluator delivered rapid, high-impact results, identifying assessment aspects beyond traditional methods.

The ministry also migrated Islamweb, one of the world's most visited Islamic platforms, to Google Cloud, strengthening security, scal-

ability, and AI-powered search and fatwa services.

The Assistant Director of Mosques, Mohammed bin Abdul Latif al-Mahmoud, said the Smart Khateeb Assistant supports preachers with reliable scholarly content, relevant topic suggestions, and human-in-the-loop editing to enhance sermon effectiveness.

Engineering Director at Google Cloud Gulf, Hatem al-Muhandis, praised the partnership for demonstrating how AI can preserve Islamic culture while improving operational efficiency, adding that Awqaf is Google Cloud's largest government partner after MCIT. (QNA)

AZF, Suhail Group sign deal to support industrial, sports development in Qatar

Aspire Zone Foundation (AZF) and Suhail Industrial Holding Group signed a strategic co-operation agreement yesterday in support of public-private partnership and in alignment with Qatar National Vision 2030 in sustainable development, sports, and national industry.

The signing ceremony was held in the presence of Sheikh Saud bin Nasser bin Jassim al-Thani, vice-chairman of Suhail Industrial Holding Group, and Abdulaziz Abdullah al-Mahmoud, deputy president/director general, Sports Facility Management at Aspire Zone Foundation.

The agreement aims to strengthen reliance on national products across various Aspire Zone projects and facilities. The



foundation will collaborate with several entities under Saheel Industrial Holding Group, which includes 13 national factories covering multiple industrial sectors. The co-operation contributes to supporting self-sufficiency and achieving sustainable industrial development.

The partnership represents a successful model of integration between the public and private sectors, in line with the state's

direction to boost the national economy and activate the role of local industry in supporting sports projects and related infrastructure.

For its part, Suhail Industrial Holding Group expressed pride in the partnership, which reflects confidence in Qatari national products and reaffirms its readiness and industrial capacity to meet the requirements of major national institutions with world-class quality and competitive standards.

The agreement also marks an important step toward deepening local content and strengthening the position of 'Made in Qatar' as a strategic choice for major national projects, in line with Qatar National Vision 2030.

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SMART HEALTH FOR A CHANGING WORLD: TRENDS AND TOOLS

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DAY 3:
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This activity is an Accredited Group Learning Activity (Category 1) as defined by the Ministry of Public Health's Department of Healthcare Professions-Accreditation Section and is approved for a maximum of 20.00 hours.

The scientific planning committee has reviewed all disclosed financial relationships of speakers, moderators, facilitators and/or authors in advance of this CPD activity and has implemented procedures to manage any potential or real conflicts of interest.

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Health workers trained to manage asthma in students

The Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) has recently organised a training workshop for around 90 health service providers from the Primary Health Care Corp (PHCC) working in government schools, to strengthen their readiness to manage asthma cases within the school environment and equip them with the skills required to apply internationally recognised best health practices.

Director of the Non-Communicable Disease Prevention Programmes Department Sheikh Dr Mohamed bin Hamad al-Thani stressed the importance of the Asthma-Friendly Schools Programme in enhancing student health and ensuring a safe educational environment for students with asthma.

He pointed out that the integration of efforts between the Ministry of Public Health, the Ministry of Education and Higher Education, the PHCC and Hamad Medical Corp constitutes a foundation for strengthening the quality of

healthcare services provided in schools.

He noted that MoPH has achieved, over recent years, remarkable national accomplishments in raising awareness of asthma through large-scale activities organised on World Asthma Day, including media campaigns targeting the public, awareness workshops for the school community, and training programmes for school health staff.

These efforts contribute to promoting an accurate understanding of asthma, enabling students, their families and teachers to manage the condition safely and effectively, and reducing asthma attacks within the school environment, positively reflecting on students' health and academic progress.

Sheikh Dr Mohamed also praised the major role of the PHCC in implementing the Asthma-Friendly Schools Programme by providing school health staff, offering continuous training, fol-

lowing up students with asthma, and connecting them to essential health services.

HMC also participates in the programme through its clinical expertise and advanced specialities by developing the national guidelines for asthma management, providing specialised technical training to healthcare personnel, supporting rapid intervention mechanisms for emergency cases, and enhancing the preparedness of the health system to deal with asthma complications.

In her remarks during the workshop, the Supervisor of the Asthma-Friendly Schools Programme, Dr Maya al-Shaiba, said that implementing the programme across all government schools reflects Qatar's commitment to providing a supportive and safe school environment for students with asthma. She also praised the efforts of school health staff and their significant role in improving the quality of services provided to students. (QNA)

Registration for Marmi 2026 Championships begins on Dec 21

The Qatari Society of Al Gannas (QSA) has announced that registration for the championships of the 17th Qatar International Falcons and Hunting Festival (Marmi 2026) is scheduled to take place from Dec 21 to 23, at the QSA's premises at

Katara Cultural Village.

Director of Championships at QSA and President of the Marmi Festival, Metah al-Qahtani, said that registration for the Promising Falconer Championship will be conducted at the festival venue in Sabkhat Marmi in Sealine.

He explained that the date for the participation of promising falconers will be determined after finalising the total number of registrants across all festival competitions and conducting the draw for contestants in all championships. (QNA)

QRCS restores vision of thousands in Niger

Qatar Red Crescent Society (QRCS) has concluded a specialised medical convoy dedicated to treating eye diseases in Niamey, the capital of Niger.

The initiative, in support of Niger's health system, was implemented in collaboration with Hamad Medical Corporation and the National Eye Health Programme (NEHP) under Niger's Ministry of Health, and in co-ordination with QRCS's office in the West African country.

The official launch ceremony follows a formal meeting that brought together the HMC team, officials from the NEHP, the secretary-general of Niger's Ministry of Health, and local medical staff.

The 16-day convoy aimed to deliver comprehensive services, including medical examinations, cataract surgeries, distribution of medicines and eyeglasses, and health education programmes to raise awareness about eye disease prevention, treatment, and management.

A total of 1,463 successful surgeries (663 men and 800 women) were performed, along with the diagnosis and examination of 13,160 cases (6,179 men and 6,981 women). This contributed to reducing the pressure on health centres in Niamey and its surrounding areas, while improving the quality of life for thousands of residents.



QRCS has recently implemented a series of sustainable development and humanitarian projects to support Niger's health sector by strengthening the capacities of national health facilities.

The efforts have given hope to thousands of patients to access specialised treatment and restore their vision. It also comes under an official partnership agreement signed with the NEHP to enhance eye care services in underserved areas lacking vital healthcare.

Canada and Mexico partner countries for Qatar's 2026 Year of Culture

As the Qatar-Argentina-Chile 2025 Year of Culture came to a galloping conclusion during the Polo AlMarsa Years of Culture Championship Trophy, the Years of Culture initiative announced plans for Canada and Mexico as next year's partner countries.

The 2026 Year of Culture with Canada and Mexico carries a special symmetry. The FIFA World Cup 26, co-hosted by Canada, Mexico, and the US, is the same tournament that inspired the creation of the Years of Culture initiative when Qatar won the hosting bid.

Echoing the spirit of global unity represented by the games, this collaboration with the next World Cup hosts will highlight

football's ability to connect cultures. Additional programmes will be presented as legacy projects of Year of Culture Qatar-USA 2021.

Launched in 2012, Years of Culture builds long-term relationships between Qatar and partner nations through a series of cultural, educational, business and creative exchanges.

The initiative reflects Qatar's belief that cultural collaboration supports dialogue, strengthens international ties, and promotes understanding across borders.

Throughout each Year of Culture, Qatar collaborates closely with cultural institutions, embassies, artists, and educators to present a diverse calendar of

exhibitions, festivals, trade fairs, residencies, academic exchanges, and public events in both countries.

Programming often begins in the lead-up to the official year and continues well beyond, creating long-term legacies and relationships. Since its founding, Years of Culture has established partnerships with Japan (2012), the United Kingdom (2013), Brazil (2014), Turkiye (2015), China (2016), Germany (2017), Russia (2018), India (2019), France (2020), the US (2021), the MENASA region (2022), Indonesia (2023), and Morocco (2024). Qatar is currently celebrating a Year of Culture with both Argentina and Chile (2025). (QNA)

On the occasion of Qatar National Day, 18th of December

and in remembrance of the historic day in 1878, when

Sheikh Jassim Bin Mohammed Bin Thani,

founder of the State of Qatar, set up the

pillars of the Modern State of Qatar,

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On the occasion of

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تميم بن حمد

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علي بن علي القابضة
Ali Bin Ali Holding



Officials at the signing of a new MoU between the QFC and the Ministry of Economic Development of Buenos Aires.

Argentina expands economic footprint in Qatar with major market announcements

The Year of Culture partnership has laid the foundation for a deeper economic relationship between Qatar and Argentina, a statement said yesterday.

That groundwork became visible this year with three major commercial announcements delivered during a high-level delegation visit by Hernan Lombardi, Minister of Economic Development for the City of Buenos Aires, and Augusto Ardiles, Undersecretary of Investments.

The agreements mark a significant milestone in Argentina's growing commercial presence in Qatar and reflect the momentum created through sustained institutional engagement during the Year of Culture programme.

Mohammed al-Kuwaiti, former ambassador of Qatar to Mexico and adviser on Latin American Affairs for Years of Culture, said: "Years of Culture has shown that cultural exchange is a foundation for trust, understanding, and sustainable economic partnership. The growing commercial presence in Qatar we see through these agreements is a direct outcome of the relationships built over the past year, and a powerful example of how cultural diplomacy can pave the way for meaningful investment and innovation."

Buenos Aires will open an InvestBA office in Doha in 2026, marking the city's first official representation in the Gulf region and establishing a permanent

platform for trade and investment promotion.

Signalling a robust collaboration pipeline, a new memorandum of understanding (MoU) between The Qatar Financial Centre (QFC), a leading onshore financial and business centre in the region, and the Ministry of Economic Development of Buenos Aires was signed by Minister Lombardi. It seeks to create stronger bilateral investment channels and new support mechanisms for Argentinian companies entering the Gulf market.

Commenting on this partnership, Yousuf Mohamed al-Jaidah, CEO, QFC, said: "This MoU builds on the foundation established through more than 50 years of partnership between Qatar and Argentina. It will enable coherent and effective collaboration between the Qatar Financial Centre and the Ministry of Economic Development of the City of Buenos Aires, reinforcing our shared commitment to supporting business growth. With this MoU, we are creating a more supportive environment that helps our firms expand across borders through smoother market entry and mutual assistance."

To that end, Argentinian Bio-Tech, HealthTech, Multimedia and Applied AI companies are moving towards establishing operations in Qatar via the QFC, deepening Argentina's footprint in the GCC.

Lombardi said: "These agreements reflect the confidence our

team in Buenos Aires places in Qatar as a strategic partner for innovation, investment, and long-term collaboration. Establishing InvestBA in Doha and deepening our institutional ties through the QFC opens a new chapter for Argentinian companies seeking to engage with the Gulf. We look forward to building on this momentum and creating concrete opportunities that benefit both of our economies."

In 2025, the Years of Culture initiative played a decisive role in shaping new routes for co-operation by bringing Argentina's innovators into direct and repeated dialogue with Qatar's business, government, and financial institutions. Through curated introductions, sector-focused events, and ongoing institutional engagement, Years of Culture created a climate of trust that accelerated the pace at which bilateral economic relationships could take shape.

Through co-ordinated efforts between Years of Culture and Qatar's Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Argentina participated in several major trade events in Qatar this year, an approach that positioned cultural exchange as a launching pad for business opportunity. Argentina's delegation highlighted wellness-oriented F&B products, customer-intelligence technologies, and multimedia innovation. These sectors align with rising demand in Qatar's rapidly expanding hospitality and creative industries.

The handover ceremony took place at the Pharmaceutical Procurement Centre (Centrale Pharmaceutique d'Achat) in N'Djamena, attended by Dr Abdelmajid Abdelrahim, Minister of Public Health; Zara Mahamat Issa, Minister of Social Welfare; and Lt Gen Issakha Maloua Djamous, Minister of National Defence and Veterans, alongside representatives from the Embassy of Qatar and QC's Chad office.

The initiative underscores QC's commitment to strengthening Chad's health institutions, fostering effective partnerships that

QIB launches Qatar National Day salary transfer campaign

Qatar Islamic Bank (QIB), Qatar's leading digital bank, has launched a special salary transfer campaign on the occasion of Qatar National Day 2025, offering customers 'Absher' Rewards Points and a first-year free credit card when transferring their salaries to QIB during the campaign period, valid until December 20.

The campaign is open to both new and existing customers who transfer a monthly salary of QR10,000 or more to QIB. Eligible customers will be rewarded with 18,000 Absher Rewards Points and a free credit card for the first year, with a special profit rate when they move their liabilities to QIB, subject to the applicable terms and conditions.

QIB General Manager – Personal Banking Group D Anand said, "We are pleased to celebrate Qatar National Day with our customers by rewarding them for choosing QIB as their main banking partner. This special salary transfer campaign reflects the bank's ongoing commitment to providing added value, meaningful rewards, and convenient bank-



ing solutions that support our customers' financial needs and aspirations, while sharing with them the spirit of national occasions." Customers can earn Absher Reward Points every time they engage with QIB's wide range of products and services, including transferring their salaries to QIB for the first time, opening fixed deposit accounts, using their QIB Credit and Debit Cards, registering for the QIB Mobile App, and making international transfers through the App.

These points can be redeemed locally and internationally for a broad range of rewards, such as booking flights with over 900 airlines and reserving rooms at more than 450,000 hotels, as well as for online shopping and e-vouchers with partners including supermarkets, cinemas, gift shops, food and transport apps.

Absher points can also be used to settle bills with Ooredoo, Vodafone and Kahramaa or converted into airline loyalty programmes such as Qatar Airways 'Avios', allowing customers to enjoy even more value from their everyday banking with QIB.

For more information, please visit www.qib.com.qa/en-SalaryTransfer

Qatar Charity supports health, social institutions in Chad

Qatar Charity (QC) has delivered a significant consignment of medical equipment to Chad's Ministry of Public Health, reinforcing efforts to improve healthcare and social services for the country's most vulnerable communities.

The aid, funded by generous donors in Qatar, includes 1,200 blood pressure monitors and 600 wheelchairs. The handover ceremony took place at the Pharmaceutical Procurement Centre (Centrale Pharmaceutique d'Achat) in N'Djamena, attended by Dr Abdelmajid Abdelrahim, Minister of Public Health; Zara Mahamat Issa, Minister of Social Welfare; and Lt Gen Issakha Maloua Djamous, Minister of National Defence and Veterans, alongside representatives from the Embassy of Qatar and QC's Chad office.

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drive human development, improve service quality, and support national efforts to build a modern, inclusive healthcare system for all. Abdelrahim expressed deep appreciation to QC for its role in supporting the health sector and advancing humanitarian development. He noted that the medical equipment addresses urgent needs across several health and social institutions. He also called the initiative a "valuable and symbolic step" that strengthens the health system and improves services nationwide.

Abdoulhamid Mohamed, country director of QC's Chad office, expressed gratitude for the support provided by the Ministry of Public Health to facilitate the organisation's humanitarian and development efforts.



One of the sessions during the workshop.

Qatar Precision Health Institute (QPHI), in collaboration with the Principles and Practice of Clinical Research (PPCR) Programme from Harvard T H Chan School of Public Health and the College of Health Sciences at Qatar University, concluded a joint workshop on Clinical Research in Precision Medicine, Rare Diseases, and Pharmacogenomics recently.

The workshop brought together a distinguished group of specialists and experts from Qatar and abroad, as well as participants, researchers and graduate students from the healthcare sector from over 15 countries.

The workshop, titled 'Clinical Research in Precision Medicine, Rare Diseases, and Pharmacogenomics,' was organised under



Participants in the workshop.

QPHI's Tanawwo' Programme. Participating experts delivered advanced training that combined traditional scientific foundations with modern innovations in artificial intelligence, big data, genomics, and clinical trials.

Dr Radja Badji, co-chair of the workshop and director of Trans-

lational Genomics at QPHI, commented: "Since our future plans include expanding the applications of genomic research to better serve patients, we saw the necessity of enhancing the skills of healthcare professionals in clinical trials. For this reason, we designed this interactive workshop."

Prof Felipe Fregni, chair of the workshop and professor of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation at Harvard Medical School and Professor of Epidemiology at the Harvard T H Chan School of Public Health noted: "This workshop represents a powerful example of how international collaboration can accelerate

the growth of clinical research in precision medicine. By bringing together experts, clinicians, and young researchers, we are building the foundation for a stronger, more innovative research ecosystem that will ultimately improve patient care in Qatar and beyond."

The workshop included a series of specialised lectures, panel discussions, and hands-on training programmes that focused on scientific research ethics tailored to Qatar and the region, regulatory frameworks, adaptive clinical trial design, patients records, pharmacogenomics applications, and AI-based technologies in advancing clinical research.

These sessions contributed to enhancing knowledge exchange and developing researchers' skills, as part of joint efforts to support the precision health ecosystem in Qatar.

Dr Firas al-Ali, director of Scientific Research and Graduate Studies at the Qatar University Health Cluster, added: "This workshop underscores the importance of investing in building research capacities to support the advancement of precision medicine in Qatar. We are proud of our partnership with the Qatar Precision Health Institute and Harvard University, as it contributes to knowledge transfer, enhances researchers' skills, and paves the way for advanced research that brings direct benefits to the health of the community."

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MoPH wraps up workshop on health system performance



Sessions covered key areas such as patient safety, access to care, clinical effectiveness and system capacity

mary Health Care Corporation contributed to the programme.

The workshop focused on strengthening a shared, data-driven approach to understanding how Qatar's health system performs, a statement said.

Sessions covered key areas such as pa-

tient safety, access to care, clinical effectiveness and system capacity.

Participants explored how indicators are defined, measured and interpreted, and discussed how these insights can be used to improve services for patients and communities.

The event provided an opportunity for participants to engage directly with indicator owners, clarify reporting methods and promote consistency across facilities. The MoPH highlighted that standardised and benchmarked performance measurement remains essential to achieving excellence in healthcare. The workshop marked an important step in supporting this commitment, the statement added.

Polo AlMarsa: A new game finds its place in Doha

From Page 1

On the field, the quality matched the spectacle. The Buenos Aires team – comprising Saleh al-Marri, Milo Mac Donough and Argentine legend Pablo Mac Donough – claimed the Cultural Years Championship Cup after a commanding performance.

Sheikh Nawaf bin Nasser al-Thani presented the trophy to the winners. In the women's competition, the Lusail team, represented by Elizabeth Clarkin, Lucia Mir Portillo and world champion Nina Clarkin, lifted the Al Marsa Ladies' Marina Cup, presented by Ashraf Abu Issa, chairman of the Qatar Polo Club.

One of the most symbolic moments came with the debut of Qatar's first-ever polo players, a milestone that resonated strongly with the crowd. Their appearance marked the sport's transition from international showcase to local aspiration,

signalling the beginnings of a domestic polo pathway.

That sense of continuity was reinforced by the heritage show, a crowd favourite that celebrated Qatar's deep equestrian traditions and bridged them with the modern game. Alongside this, Polo AlMarsa offered a broad social canvas: VIP hospitality, the Mini Mallet Club for children, a Polo Youth Camp for aspiring players, and horse shows staged dramatically by the sea.

As the final matches concluded, Polo AlMarsa stood revealed as more than a tournament. It is part of a wider pattern – one that includes major football, athletics and equestrian events – through which Qatar has steadily burnished its credentials as a global sport hub. By marrying world-class competition with setting, culture and community, Polo AlMarsa signalled that Doha's sporting story is still evolving, and doing so with growing confidence and flair.

FIFA Arab Cup 2025: Quarterfinals push attendance past 1mn

The quarterfinal stage of the 11th edition of the FIFA Arab Cup Qatar 2025 delivered a thrilling blend of technical brilliance and fierce competition, but its most striking achievement was off the pitch: the four matches pushed total tournament attendance past the 1 million mark, a historic milestone that underscores the tournament's growing global stature.

The matches, which concluded Friday, were tightly contested, with razor-thin margins deciding the semifinalists. The level of parity among teams echoed the intensity of the group stage, reinforcing this edition's reputation as one of the most



competitive in the tournament's history, rivaling even continental events in Asia and Africa. The atmosphere evoked memories of the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022,

with similar energy and spectacle. Following the quarterfinals, total turnout soared to 1,022,592 spectators, a milestone that elevates the tournament into the ranks of the

world's most followed competitions. As only the second edition held under FIFA's umbrella, the event reflects a remarkable leap from regional to global relevance, echoing the transformative success of its 2021 predecessor in Doha. The six World Cup-standard stadiums hosting the matches have become vibrant arenas of celebration, with fans from across the Arab world turning each fixture into a festival of colour and culture. Beyond the pitch, Qatar's fan zones and cultural hubs, from Katara and Msheireb to Souq Waqif, Lusail, and The Pearl, have offered immersive experiences blending entertainment and heritage. (QNA)

MoCI issues new food shelf-life regulation

From Page 1

MoCI affirmed that the decision – developed in cooperation with the Ministry of Public Health and the Ministry of Municipality through the Qatar General Organization for Standards and Metrology – represents a qualitative shift in the country's food safety system. It works to unify the standards applied nationwide, ensuring that all food producers and suppliers comply with clear mechanisms for indicating production and expiry dates on packaging, as well as storage and display

requirements, while also reducing waste and losses resulting from product disposal.

The ministry called on all entities operating in the food sector to fully comply with the provisions of the decision, noting that inspection teams from the competent authorities will

begin conducting monitoring campaigns to ensure its implementation and to take the necessary measures against violators in accordance with applicable legislation.

The decision will enter into force on the day following its publication in the Official Gazette.

Iberdrola Innovation ME plants over 50 mangrove saplings in Ras Matbakh

Employees at Iberdrola Innovation Middle East planted more than 50 mangrove saplings at Flowers Each Spring Camp in Ras Matbakh, Al Khor, as part of a year-end sustainability initiative held in collaboration with Mubadara for Social Impact.

The day also combined learning with action through an awareness session on the vital role of grey mangroves (*Avicennia marina*) in safeguarding Qatar's coasts, supporting marine biodiversity, and capturing carbon.

The initiative reinforced the company's long-standing commitment to environmental stewardship and responsible growth, while supporting Qatar National Vision 2030, the country's newly-launched "National Strategy to Combat Desertification 2025-2030" and UN's Sustainable Development Goals 13 (Climate Action), 14 (Life Below Water), and 15 (Life on Land). It also highlighted Iberdrola Innovation Middle East's role in advancing digitalisation and AI-driven solutions that act as a catalyst for sustainability.

Santiago Banales, managing director of Iberdrola Innovation Middle East and CEO of East-West Digital, said: "Initiatives like this show that sustainability starts with people. Every mangrove tree planted by Iberdrola employees is a symbol of how small, practical steps can lead to meaningful change, echoing Qatar's vision and global goals for climate and environment."

Dr Saif Ali al-Hajari, president of Mubadara for Social Impact, said: "As we approach Qatar National Day 2025, this effort reflects the pride we all, as a community, take in preserving our land and natural heritage for future generations."

Each tree planted can absorb up to 15kg of carbon dioxide annually, contributing to the protection of habitats in Qatar that nurture marine life, reptiles, and more than 130 species of coastal and seabirds.

This mangrove planting initiative forms part of Iberdrola Innovation Middle East's broader commitment to promoting environmental responsibility across the country.



Qatar partakes in Gulf meeting on nuclear, radiation oversight in Riyadh

Qatar, represented by the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change along with other national agencies, participated in the technical meeting of leaders and officials responsible for nuclear and radiation regulation in the Gulf Co-operation Council countries, which took place in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. HE Undersecretary of the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Abdulaziz bin Ahmed bin Abdullah al-Mahmoud chaired the Qatari delegation. Discussions focused on strengthening nuclear security and radiation safety systems, improving oversight of facilities that use radiation technologies in medicine, industry, and research, and enhancing emergency response mechanisms in line with international best practices and recommendations from the International Atomic Energy Agency. The programme included field visits to specialised laboratories for radiation analysis and nuclear emergency centres in Saudi Arabia, aimed at exchanging expertise and reviewing the latest technologies and systems used in managing nuclear and radiation emergencies. Qatar's participation reflects its commitment to developing its national nuclear security framework and boosting preparedness for radiation and nuclear emergencies, in order to safeguard people and the environment. (QNA)

End of the Liquidation Announcement

The Liquidator – Samer Hussein Jaghoub Deloitte & Touche – Qatar Branch

Declares

finalizing the procedures
of the Liquidation of

Consult Overseas Limited W.L.L. (the "Company")
Commercial Registry No. (41925)

In accordance with the provisions
of the law, and accordingly, he disclaims
his responsibility from the Company,
and its commercial registration
was cancelled from the
Ministry of Commerce and Industry.



TENDER ADVERTISEMENT

ORYX GTL Limited is pleased to announce the following tender(s):

S. No.	Tender Ref.	Tender Title:	Tender Bond QAR	Bid Closing Date & Tender Bond Validity Period
1	TC-CN-035-25-FM	Staff Transportation Services for ORYX GTL-RLIC (CNG Coach with Drivers)	408,300	21 January 2026 at 12.00 noon & 180 days

Companies wishing to register their interest and obtain Tender Document(s) for the above Tender(s) must pay a non-refundable registration fee and register with ORYX GTL as detailed below:

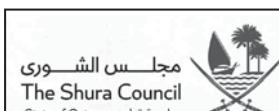
Tender Registration Fee	QAR 500/- (Non-refundable) per Tender
Payable to	ORYX GTL Limited
IBAN (29 Digits)	QA23QNBA00000000013010705001
Bank	Qatar National Bank – HQ or any branch (cash only)
Registration Dates	From 14 Dec 2025 to 21 Dec 2025 8:00 am to 1:00 pm
Registration Process and Requirements:	Write an e-mail to oryxgtltenders@oryxgtl.qa with the following attachments: 1.Copy of Commercial Registration (CR) 2.Copy of bank deposit slip of the Tender Registration Fee. 3. Copy of ICV Certificate

COMPANIES WHO HAVE PAID THE NON-REFUNDABLE REGISTRATION FEE BUT FAILED TO FORMALLY REGISTER AT THE DATE AND TIME STATED ABOVE WILL NOT BE CONSIDERED AS ACCEPTABLE TENDERER.

TENDER BOND SHALL BE ISSUED BY A BANK REGISTERED IN THE STATE OF QATAR.

Effective from 1st July 2023, bids from Local Suppliers and Contractors (companies established under the Laws of State of Qatar with local Commercial Registration) who are not in possession of an ICV score in the ICV portal by Tender Closing Date (or commercial bid submission date if separately mentioned/notified) will not be accepted. Local Company that has been established for less than 2 years are exempted from this requirement. For further details please visit ICV Digital Portal- <https://icv.qa>

For more information about ORYX GTL and its tenders, please visit our website: <http://www.oryxgtl.com.qa>



Announcement of open tender (Technical/commercial proposal)

Tender No.	Subject	Closing Date
2025/6	Cleaning Services Tender for the Shura Council Building for 3 years Classified Companies : First category (two-envelopes system:Technical - Financial)	1/1/2026

The Tender and Auctions Committee of the Shura Council is pleased to invite you to participate in the above-mentioned tender in accordance with the following:

- The company must notify the Shura Council- Tenders and Auctions Committee – confirming receipt of the invitation, as well as in the event of declining to participate in the tender.
- The company must obtain the tender documents from the Tender and Auctions Committee – Procurement and Supplies Department, Shura Council (White Palace, in exchange for a non-refundable amount of QAR 7,500 to be deposited into the Shura Council's account (Account No.: 0013-005853-001), IBAN: QA91QNBA0000000000013005853001 – QNB.
- The bidder must provide a temporary guarantee of 5% of the tender value and attach it to the financial bid. The guarantee must be valid for no less than 120 days from the bid submission date. The winning bidder must submit a final guarantee equal to 10% of the contract value, valid throughout the contract execution period.
- The validity period for bids is 120 days from the closing date. The guarantee must remain valid during this period.
- Deadline for submission:** 12:00 PM on Thursday, 1/1/2026, the Committee reserves the right to increase or decrease quantities or works according to the contract terms.
- Bids must be submitted in sealed envelopes indicating the tender number and subject, without the company name, and placed in the designated tender box.
- To obtain the tender documents, the following must be presented:
 - A deposit receipt for the document purchase amount mentioned in item (2) above
 - Copy of the Company Commercial Registration.
 - Copy of the ID of the authorized signatory.
- The bidder may submit two offers for requested services.

For inquiries: Tender@shura.gov.qa – Tel: 44221036 / 44221049
Tender and Auctions Committee - Shura Council – State of Qatar



Sudanese take to the street during a rally in support of the Sudanese armed forces in their battle against the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces in Omdurman, part of greater Khartoum, yesterday.

Strike hits UN building in Sudan's Kordofan, kills 6

AFP
Port Sudan

A strike on a UN facility in Sudan's southern Kordofan region killed at least six people, a medical source said yesterday.

Witnesses said that the victims of the attack on the besieged South Kordofan state capital of Kadugli were UN employees.

"Six people were killed in a bombing of the UN headquarters while they were inside the building," the medical source at the city's hospital told AFP.

The Sudanese government in a statement condemned the attack that hit the UN facility.

Witnesses said a drone had struck the UN building.

The army-aligned government based in Port Sudan accused the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) of being behind the attack.

In a statement, the Sovereignty Council headed by army chief General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan called the attack a "dangerous escalation".

Kadugli, where famine was declared in early November, has been besieged for a year and a half by the RSF.

Kordofan is a vast agricultural region split into three states. It lies between RSF-controlled Darfur in the west and army-held areas in the north, east and centre.

Its position is important for maintaining supply lines and moving troops.

The RSF has been at war with the military since April 2023 and has deployed fighters, drones and allied militias to the fertile region.

Analysts say the RSF seek to punch through the army's defences around central Sudan, paving the way for recapturing Khartoum.



This handout picture released by the office of Iraq's Prime Minister Mohammed S al-Sudani yesterday shows him (right) shaking hands with United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres during a meeting in Baghdad.

cies and programmes will continue to operate in Iraq.

During a press conference earlier with Iraq's Prime Minister Mohammed S al-Sudani, Guterres said: "There is one thing the world must understand, Iraq is now a normal country.

"Relations between the UN and Iraq will become normal relations with the end of UNAMI."

Sudani meanwhile said that the end of the UNAMI mandate "marks the beginning of a new chapter of co-operation".

"Our relationship with the United Nations through UNAMI was pivotal and effective in meeting Iraq's needs and supporting it until it reached the stage of full self-reliance," he added.

Guterres reveals end of UN political mission in Iraq

AFP
Baghdad

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres yesterday marked in Baghdad the end of the United Nations' political mission in Iraq, which supported the country's transition following the US-led invasion.

At Baghdad's request, the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) will shut down its operations after 22 years of assisting the country in its transition following the 2003 invasion and occupation that toppled longtime ruler Saddam Hussein.

"UNAMI was honoured and humbled to walk side-by-side with the Iraqi people," Guterres said at the mission's closing ceremony. But "while a mission may conclude, the United Nations will always walk alongside the people of Iraq on the path towards peace, sustainable development and human rights," he added. UN agen-

ties and programmes will continue to operate in Iraq.

During a press conference earlier with Iraq's Prime Minister Mohammed S al-Sudani, Guterres said: "There is one thing the world must understand, Iraq is now a normal country.

"Relations between the UN and Iraq will become normal relations with the end of UNAMI."

'Never again' – Benin demonstration slams coup attempt

AFP
Cotonou

Hundreds of mainly young people gathered in Benin's capital Cotonou yesterday to decry last Sunday's abortive coup.

Participants waving national flags and with raised fists brandished slogans such as "Never Again" as they demanded peace, stability and respect for constitutional order.

"We are attached to a certain kind of democracy, which means power has to be won through elections," said Youssouf Issa, an entrepreneur who will stand in legislative polls slated for January.

Last Sunday, mutineers claimed on state television to have overthrown President Patrice Talon, but hours later the army thwarted the putsch with help from Niger-

ia and France. Elias Satowakou, known as Gros Griot and with a large following on social media, recalled Benin's political past, which saw several coups in the 1960s and 70s.

"Our parents learned from this. We fear that coups will lead to total destruction and push us back 30 years," he said.

"The message is also for the countries in the region – never again military coups," warned Dieudonne N'Boa, a political science student, who was holding the national flag. West Africa has been shaken by political instability since the beginning of the decade with Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger, Guinea and Guinea-Bissau all undergoing coups since 2020.

"I was very afraid my country would descend into instability. It is important to preserve the gains of the last ten years," said

another protester, Fridaousse Ifabi.

Talon, who will step down af-



Young people hold placards and flags as they sing the national anthem during a rally organised by youth in support of Beninese President Patrice Talon and the preservation of democracy at Amazon Square in Cotonou, yesterday.

Unicef warns of disease outbreak risk in Gaza Strip

QNA
New York

The UN Children's Fund (Unicef) warned yesterday of the growing risk of disease outbreaks among children in the Gaza Strip, urging for intensifying the entry of humanitarian aid, particularly winter clothing and tents, amid harsh weather conditions.

Palestine's news agency (WAFA) yesterday quoted Unicef as saying that the current situation poses an escalating threat to children's safety given severe weather and the delay in the delivery of essential supplies.

Unicef urged that humanitarian aid, including large quantities of winter supplies currently stockpiled at the Gaza border, to be allowed into the Strip safely, quickly, and without obstruction.



Displaced Palestinians walk through rainwater as they shelter in a flooded tent camp on a rainy day in Nuseirat, central Gaza Strip.

According to Unicef's nutrition assessments conducted with its partners in Gaza in November, 9,300 of the Strip's children under the age of five are suffering from acute malnutrition.

US troops in Syria killed in IS ambush attack

AFP
Damascus

Two American troops and an interpreter were killed in central Syria yesterday after an alleged member of the Islamic State group opened fire on a joint US-Syrian patrol, officials said.

US Central Command (Centcom) announced the deaths on X after Syria's state media earlier reported that an attack in the city of Palmyra had wounded American and Syrian troops.

"An ambush by a lone ISIS gunman" resulted in the deaths and injuries to three additional troops, said Centcom, which oversees the US military in the Middle East.

"The gunman was engaged and killed," it said.

Pentagon spokesman Sean Parnell said the attack occurred as the soldiers "were conducting a key leader engagement" in support of counter-terrorism operations, while US envoy to Syria Tom Barrack said the ambush targeted "a joint US-Syrian government patrol." "The savage who perpetrated this attack was killed by partner forces," US Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth wrote on X.

Parnell said the identities of the deceased troops

would be withheld until after their families were notified. The incident is the first of its kind reported since conservatives-led forces overthrew longtime Syrian ruler Bashar al-Assad in December last year, and rekindled the country's ties with the US.

A Pentagon official, speaking on the condition of anonymity, said the attack "took place in an area where the Syrian President does not have control."

Syrian state news agency SANA, quoting a security source, earlier reported that several US troops and two Syrian service members had been wounded in the attack.

The soldiers were taking part in a "joint field tour" in Palmyra, which was once under the control of the Islamic State (IS) group, SANA reported.

A Syrian military official who requested anonymity said that the shots were fired "during a meeting between Syrian and American officers" at a Syrian base in Palmyra.

A witness, who asked to remain anonymous, said he heard the shots coming from inside the base.

According to the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights monitor, which has a wide network of sources inside Syria, the meeting came as part of an "American strategy to strengthen its presence and foothold in the Syrian desert".

Libya's Red Castle museum opens for first time since fall of Gaddafi

Reuters
Tripoli

Libya's national museum, formerly known as As-Saraya Al-Hamra or the Red Castle, has reopened in Tripoli, allowing the public access to some of the country's finest historical treasures for the first time since the revolt that toppled Muammar Gaddafi.

The museum, Libya's largest, was closed in 2011 during a Nato-backed uprising against longtime ruler Gaddafi, who appeared on the castle's ramparts to deliver a fiery speech. Renovations were started in March 2023 by the Tripoli-based Government of National Unity (GNU), which came to power in 2021 in a UN-backed political process.

"The reopening of the National Museum is not just a cultural moment but a live testimony that Libya is building its institutions," GNU Prime Minister Abdulhamid al-Dbeibah said at a reopening ceremony.

Built in the 1980s, the museum's



Libya's Prime Minister Abdulhamid al-Dbeibah visits the National Museum, the largest in Tripoli, following its reopening after nearly 14 years of closure.

10,000 square metres of gallery space features mosaics and murals, sculptures, coins, and artefacts dating back to prehistoric times and stretching through Libya's Roman, Greek and Islamic periods.

The collection also includes millennia-old mummies from the ancient settlements of Uan Muuh-giag in Libya's deep south, and Jaghbub near its eastern border with Egypt. "The current programme focuses on enabling schools to visit

the museum during this period, until it is officially opened to the public at the beginning of the year," museum director Fatima Abdullah Ahmed told Reuters. Libya has since recovered 21 artefacts that were smuggled out of the country after Gaddafi's fall, notably from France, Switzerland, and the United States, the chairman of the board of directors of the antiquities department Mohamed Farj Shakshiki told Reuters ahead of the opening.

detractors of treating the opposition repressively. His chosen successor, Finance Minister Romuald Wadagni, is expected to win easily given that the main opposition party is barred from standing after obtaining an insufficient number of endorsements. After the attempted coup, Benin issued an international arrest warrant for Kemi Seba, a pan-Africanist and anti-Western figure, for "justifying crimes against state security and inciting rebellion". Former Beninese defence minister Candide Azanmai, a key opposition figure, has meanwhile been taken into custody on charges of "conspiracy against state authority and incitement to rebellion", a judicial source reported yesterday. The abortive coup leader, Lieutenant Colonel Pascal Tigri, remains at large along with several associates.

Belarus frees Nobel winner, leading opposition figures

Reuters/AFP
Vilnius/Kyiv

Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko freed 123 prisoners yesterday, including Nobel Peace Prize winner Ales Bialatski and leading opposition figure Maria Kalesnikava (also spelt Kolesnikova) after two days of talks with an envoy for President Donald Trump.

In return, the United States agreed to lift sanctions on Belarusian potash.

Potash is a key component in fertilisers, and the former Soviet state is a leading global producer.

The prisoner release was by far the biggest by Lukashenko since Trump's administration opened talks this year with the veteran authoritarian leader, a close ally of Russian President Vladimir Putin.

Western governments had previously shunned him because of his crushing of dissent and backing for Russia's war in Ukraine.

Nine of the released prisoners left Belarus for Lithuania and 114 were taken to Ukraine, officials said.

Bialatski, co-winner of the 2022 Nobel Peace Prize, is a human rights campaigner who fought for years on behalf of political prisoners before becoming one himself.

He had been in jail since July 2021.

Visibly aged since he was last seen in public, he smiled broadly as he embraced exiled opposition leader Svetlana Tsikhanouskaya on arrival at the US embassy in Lithuania.

The Norwegian Nobel Committee expressed "profound relief and heartfelt joy" at his release.

Kalesnikava, a leader of mass protests against Lukashenko in 2020, was among the large group taken by bus to Ukraine.

"Of course, it's a feeling of incredible happiness first of all: to see with your eyes the people who are dear to you, to hug them, and understand that now we are all free people. It's a great joy to see my first free sunset," she said in a video published by the Ukrainian Telegram channel Khochu Zhit.

It showed her embracing Viktor Babaryka, an opposition politician arrested in 2020 while preparing to

run against Lukashenko in an election.

Babaryka said his son Eduard was still in prison in Belarus.

Kalesnikava called for the release of all political prisoners.

"I'm thinking of those who are not yet free, and I'm very much looking forward to the moment when we can all embrace, when we can all see one another, and when we will all be free," she said in the video interview.

Tatsiana Khomich, Kalesnikava's sister, told Reuters that she had been worried she might refuse to leave Belarus and had been prepared to try to persuade her.

"I very much look forward to hugging Maria... the last five years was very hard for us, but now I talked to her (by phone) and I feel as if the five years did not happen," she said.

US officials have told Reuters that engaging with Lukashenko is part of an effort to peel him away from Putin's influence, at least to a degree – an effort that the Belarus opposition, until now, has viewed with extreme scepticism.

Trump's envoy, John Coale, had

earlier told reporters in Minsk: "Per the instructions of President Trump, we, the United States, will be lifting sanctions on potash."

The US and the European Union imposed wide-ranging sanctions on Belarus after Minsk launched a violent crackdown on protesters following a disputed election in 2020, jailing nearly all opponents of Lukashenko who did not flee abroad.

Sanctions were tightened after Lukashenko allowed Belarus to serve as a staging ground for Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022.

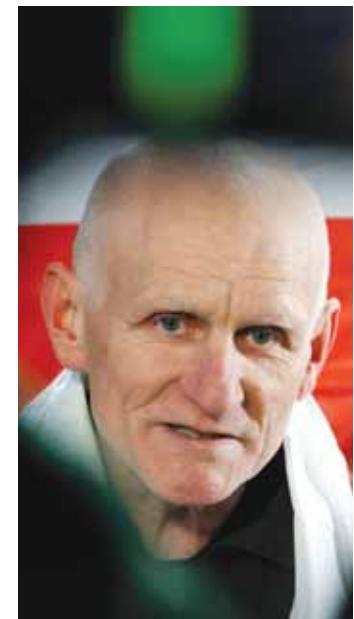
The exiled Belarusian opposition expressed gratitude to Trump and said the fact that Lukashenko had agreed to release prisoners in return for the concessions on potash was proof of the effectiveness of sanctions.

The opposition has consistently said it sees Trump's outreach to Lukashenko as a humanitarian effort, but that EU sanctions should stay in place.

"US sanctions are about people. EU sanctions are about systemic change – stopping the war, enabling democratic transition, and



This picture taken in 2020 shows Maria Kalesnikava (also spelt Kolesnikova). - AFP



Right: Belarusian Nobel Prize winner Ales Bialatski speaking to journalists at the US embassy in Vilnius after his release. - AFP

ensuring accountability. These approaches do not contradict each other; they complement each other," exiled opposition leader Svetlana Tsikhanouskaya said.

Lukashenko has previously denied there are political prisoners in Belarus and described the people in question as "bandits".

As recently as August, he asked why he should free people he sees as opponents of the state who might "again wage war against us".

Trump has referred to Lukashenko as "the highly respected president of Belarus", a description that jars with the opposition who see him as a dictator.

He has urged him to free up to 1,300 or 1,400 prisoners whom Trump has described as "hostages".

"The United States stands ready for additional engagement with Belarus that advances US interests and will continue to pursue diplomatic efforts to free remaining political prisoners in Belarus," the US embassy in Lithuania said.

Belarusian human rights group Viasna – which is designated by Minsk as an extremist organisation – put the number of political prisoners at 1,227 on the eve of yesterday's releases.

First urban cable car unveiled outside Paris

Gondolas floated above a cityscape in the southeastern suburbs of Paris yesterday as the first urban cable car in the French capital's region was unveiled.

Officials inaugurated the C1 line in the suburb of Limeil-Brévannes in the presence of Valérie Pécresse, the head of the Ile-de-France region, and the mayors of the towns served by the cable car.

The 4.5km route connects Creteil to Ville-neuve-Saint-Georges and passes through Limeil-Brévannes and Valenton.

The cable car will carry some 11,000 passengers per day in its 105 gondolas, each able to accommodate ten seated passengers.

The total journey will take 18 minutes, including stops along the way, compared to around 40 minutes by bus or car, connecting the isolated neighbourhoods to the Paris metro's line 8.

The €138m project was cheaper to build than a subway, officials said.

"An underground metro would never have seen the light of day because the budget of more than €1bn could never have been financed," said Grégoire de Lasteyrie, vice-president of the Ile-de-France regional council in charge of transport.

It is France's seventh urban cable car, with aerial tramways already operating in cities including Brest, Saint-Denis de La Réunion and Toulouse.

Historically used to cross rugged mountain



This photograph shows the first urban cable car in Ile-de-France region on the day of its official launch, between Crétel Pointe du Lac et Limeil-Brévannes, on the outskirts of Paris. - AFP

terrain, such systems are increasingly being used to link up isolated neighbourhoods.

France's first urban cable car was built in Gre-

noble, nestled at the foot of the Alps, in 1934.

The iconic "bubbles" have become one of the symbols of the southeastern city. - AFP

Cambodia shuts border crossings with Thailand

AFP/Reuters
Bangkok

Cambodia shut its border crossings with Thailand yesterday, after Bangkok denied US President Donald Trump's claim that a truce had been agreed to end days of deadly fighting.

Violence between the southeast Asian neighbours, which stems from a long-running dispute over the colonial-era demarcation of their 800km (500-mile) border, has displaced around half a million people on both sides.

At least 25 people have died this week, including four Thai soldiers the defence ministry said were killed in the border area yesterday.

The latest fatalities were followed by Phnom Penh announcing

it would immediately "suspend all entry and exit movements at all Cambodia-Thailand border crossings", the interior ministry said.

Each side blamed the other for reigniting the conflict, before Trump said a truce had been agreed.

Thai Prime Minister Anutin Charnvirakul said Trump "didn't mention whether we should make a ceasefire" during their Friday phone call.

The two leaders "didn't discuss" the issue, Anutin told journalists yesterday.

"I want to make it clear. Our actions this morning already spoke," Anutin posted on Facebook.

The White House did not respond to a request for comment on the continued fighting.

Trump had hailed his "very good conversation" with Anutin and

Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Manet on Friday.

"They have agreed to CEASE all shooting effective this evening, and go back to the original Peace Accord" agreed in July, Trump wrote on his Truth Social platform.

The United States, China and

Malaysia, as chair of the regional bloc ASEAN, brokered a ceasefire in July after an initial five-day spate of violence.

In October, Trump backed a follow-on joint declaration between Thailand and Cambodia, touting new trade deals after they agreed to prolong their truce.

However, Thailand suspended the agreement the following month after Thai soldiers were wounded by landmines at the border.

Bangkok and Phnom Penh have traded accusations of attacks

against civilians, with the Thai army reporting six wounded yesterday by Cambodian rockets.

Cambodia's information minister, Neth Peaktra, meanwhile said Thai forces had "expanded their attacks to include civilian infrastructure and Cambodian civilians".

A Thai navy spokesman said the air force "successfully destroyed" two Cambodian bridges used to transport weapons to the conflict zone.

Yesterday Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim urged both sides to "cease all forms of hostilities and refrain from any further military actions".

He said an ASEAN observer team led by the Malaysian chief of defence forces would be deployed to the border and the US government would provide satellite monitoring capabilities.

Ousted Nepal premier's party organises biggest rally since Gen Z protests

Reuters
Kathmandu

Tens of thousands rallied yesterday for the party of Nepal's ousted prime minister, KP Sharma Oli, in the largest gathering in the Himalayan country since youth-led anti-graft protests forced him out three months ago.

Police estimated 70,000 attended the rally in Bhaktapur near the capital Kathmandu to launch a three-day convention of the Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist-Leninist).

Organisers had said before the rally they would bring out 300,000 people.

The event "is the biggest mobilisation of supporters" by any party in the capital since the anti-graft protests, said political analyst Puranjan Acharya.

The "Gen Z" protests and subsequent unrest killed 77 people and injured more than 2,000 in September.

Oli and some other politicians had to be rescued and kept safe by the army for several days as the

Prime Minister's Office, the Supreme Court and parliament were set on fire.

The interim government headed by former chief justice Sushil Karki dissolved parliament. It says the unrest caused more than \$586mn in losses to Nepal's \$42bn economy.

Oli, seeking re-election as UML president, told yesterday's rally the dissolution of parliament was unconstitutional. The UML has filed a petition with the Supreme Court seeking the restoration of parliament.

"We are being projected as anti-Gen Z youths. But this is not true," Oli said.

UML official Shankar Pokhrel told the gathering that although they were forced out, "we still live in the hearts of the people", adding: "The presence of so many people in the rally is a proof of this."

More than 2,000 UML delegates are eligible to vote for a party president tomorrow.

Oli is being challenged by his deputy, Ishwar Pokhrel.

The winner will lead Nepal's biggest communist group to new parliamentary elections scheduled for March 5.

Reuters

US Veterans Affairs agency 'planning' healthcare job cuts

The US Department of Veterans Affairs plans to eliminate as many as 35,000 healthcare positions this month, the Washington Post reported yesterday, citing an internal memo, Veterans Affairs staffers and congressional aides.

The cuts involve mostly unfilled jobs including doctors, nurses and support staff, the report said.

The agency hopes that the cuts will reduce the healthcare workforce to as little as 372,000 employees, a 10% reduction from last year, the report added, citing a memo shared with regional leaders last month.

The Department of Veterans Affairs did not immediately respond to a Reuters request for comment.

The Washington Post report said a Veterans Affairs Department spokesperson confirmed the job cuts for unfilled positions. - Reuters

Google to lay undersea three cables in Papua New Guinea

Internet giant Google will lay three undersea cables in Papua New Guinea (PNG) as part of a landmark defence deal the Pacific nation signed with Australia this year.

The \$120mn project, to be funded by Australia, will create "a more resilient, multi-route digital backbone for the nation", the island nation said in a statement.

China has committed billions of dollars to Pacific nations over the past decade, funding hospitals, sports stadiums, roads and other public works in an attempt to win their favour. - AFP

18 nations commit to Haiti anti-gang force: OAS chief

Eighteen nations have committed to sending personnel to Haiti as part of a beefed up anti-gang security force, according to Organisation of American States (OAS) secretary-general Albert Ramdin.

With large parts of Haiti still controlled by powerful armed groups, the UN Security Council in September gave the greenlight for the transition of a Kenyan-led security support mission into a more robust gang-fighting force.

Speaking at a press briefing on Friday, Ramdin said: "18 countries... have committed to provide forces" to the effort, which will deploy in phases next year.

"I think the first thousand will be going in soon, hopefully in January," he said. - AFP

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GULF TIMES

How Chinese are already using Nvidia's powerful H200 AI chips

US President Donald Trump's move to allow exports to China of Nvidia's second-best artificial intelligence (AI) chip, the H200, will spur strong demand from the country's tech giants, research institutes, and its defence-industrial complex.

Beijing has not yet confirmed whether it will allow the chip to be sold in China, but a Reuters review of more than 100 tenders and academic papers shows it is already being supplied to domestic buyers via the grey market.

The analysis shows the nature of customers in China who will jump at the chance for legal bulk buys of the H200 chip, which is many times more powerful than any chip Nvidia is allowed to sell there.

China's leading universities all have research teams focused on AI development, and the number of high-end chips they have at their disposal directly affects talent recruitment and research.

One professor at Beijing Jiaotong University advertises that his laboratory owns eight H200 chips, allowing for AI model research.

Researchers at the state-backed Shanghai Artificial Intelligence Laboratory and the Sun Yat-Sen, Tsinghua, and Shanghai Jiao Tong universities used four Nvidia H200 processors to train an AI model designed to detect whether an image is AI-generated, they showed in a paper published last month.

In June, a state-run AI institute in the eastern city of Hefei issued a tender for a server equipped with eight Nvidia H200 chips to power a "quantum AI model" project.

Dozens of universities and research institutes nationwide have bought or sought to acquire H200 chips, the Reuters review showed.

China hawks in Washington have balked at Trump's moves to reverse the previous administration's export controls, saying the Chinese military would use Nvidia's most advanced AI chips to turbocharge its capabilities.

The Reuters review suggests H200 chips are already making their way into the hands of the People's Liberation Army and closely-linked universities.

In August, the PLA Air Force Medical University in Xian issued a tender for eight Nvidia H200 chips to train a large-language model training platform to support medical AI and biosurveillance research.

Last Monday, the School of Cyberspace Security at Beihang University, one of China's "Seven Sons", or universities under US sanctions with a history of defence-related research, issued a tender seeking a supplier that could rent out H200-level computing power.

Chinese entities increasingly rent usage time on a server fitted with banned Nvidia chips as a way to access restricted hardware without importing it.

Even before Trump's announcement, some Chinese AI cluster and data centre projects had set their eyes on large quantities of the H200 chip.

In the eastern province of Jiangsu, a firm owned by the Binhai county government issued a tender in July for 48 servers equipped with 384 H200 chips, with deliveries due by year-end.

Larger ambitions are visible in the far western region of Xinjiang, which has seen a massive AI infrastructure buildout in recent years as Chinese companies and authorities seek the cheapest land and electricity for huge data centre projects.

A June 6 tender by Urumqi Jiangsuan outlines a plan for a 20,000-petaflop hub combining more than 8,000 H200 GPUs, 12,000 RTX 4090 GPUs and 4,500 servers fitted with Huawei Ascend 910C processors, the most powerful domestic AI chip now available.

A separate 1.86bn yuan project in Burqin county in northern Xinjiang, unveiled in October 2024, details a green-energy compute centre dominated by 1,000 domestic chip servers but supplemented by a smaller H100 or H200 chip cluster of 100 servers.

The H200's less powerful predecessor, the H100 has been banned from export to China since late 2022.

In the central province of Hubei, Xiaogan Yunqi Data Technology submitted a regulatory filing in October for a computing power project worth 307mn yuan, to deploy 128 H200 servers for telecoms giant China Unicom by next March. — Reuters

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Sudan rally in support of army



Sudanese take to the streets during a rally in support of the Sudanese Army, in the Merowe, 350km north of the capital Khartoum, yesterday. The war between the Sudanese Army and Sudan's Rapid Support Forces which controls areas of western Sudan, erupted in April 2023, and has caused what the UN has described as the world's worst humanitarian crisis. (AFP)

From rules to raw power: The unravelling of global governance

By Javier Solana and Angel Saz-Carranza
Madrid

The world is on the cusp of a profound geopolitical restructuring, as escalating great-power rivalries erode the multilateral structures that have supported the global order since the mid-20th century.

To prevent the international system from sliding into chaos and conflict, those unwilling to accept a world governed solely by raw power must find ways to reinforce today's debilitated multilateral institutions through informal arrangements and bilateral agreements.

From the end of World War II to the early 2010s, multilateralism provided the framework for international co-operation. Though imperfect and often inconsistent, it was the most effective model of global governance ever created. But after more than a decade of continuous erosion, it is clear that the multilateral system as we know it can no longer facilitate collective action.

Without a framework capable of coordinating relations among countries, the alternatives are stark: a world government – an unfeasible prospect – or a steady drift toward anarchy. Multilateralism emerged as the pragmatic middle ground: collective decision-making and binding rules, rather than a single global authority or none at all.

Born of unique historical circumstances, this model took shape as the United States – the dominant postwar global power – promoted a treaty-based system guided by enlightened self-interest. That vision was realised at the Bretton Woods and San Francisco conferences, which led to the establishment of the United Nations, the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, and the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, as well as its successor, the World Trade Organisation.

In principle, if not always in practice, these multilateral institutions were open to all countries, with bodies like the WTO and the International Civil Aviation Organisation providing a shared framework of rules, standards, and responsibilities. But in recent years, they have been severely undermined by the rise of sovereigntism in developed economies like the US and in emerging powers like China.

The US, for its part, played a significant role in weakening the very institutions it helped create. The 2003 invasion of Iraq and its intervention in Libya's civil war in 2011 showed that the world's major powers did not see themselves as bound by the so-called rules-based international order. This trend was reinforced by US President Donald Trump's election in 2016, while his return to office in 2025 represented an explicit repudiation of the multilateral approach.

Meanwhile, Russia and China have been eager to undermine a system they view as detrimental to their interests. Russia's 2008 invasion of Georgia and invasions of Ukraine in 2014 and 2022 openly defied international law, bringing large-scale war back to Europe. Likewise, China's "Made in China 2025" industrial strategy violates WTO rules, and its aggressive actions in the South China Sea show complete disregard for the 2016 arbitral ruling that rejected its expansive maritime claims.

The consequences are now widely evident: on the issues that matter most, multilateral institutions no longer drive global decision-making. Paralysed by cross-vetoes among its permanent members, the UN Security Council has been largely inactive, with the notable exception of its recent endorsement of Trump's Gaza peace plan. At the same time, the WTO – whose establishment in 1995 was

KEY POINTS

1. Multilateral institutions are eroding, unable to manage great-power rivalry or enforce rules.
2. Global governance is shifting toward informal, flexible arrangements as formal bodies stagnate.
3. To prevent systemic chaos, countries must rely on adaptable coalitions and public-private partnerships rather than universal treaties.

multilateralism's last meaningful achievement – can no longer enforce its own rules since the US rendered its appellate inquorate in 2019.

This institutional paralysis is part of a broader trend. No major multilateral institution has been created in decades, while informal arrangements – lacking binding rules and often involving non-state actors – have proliferated, offering more agile and adaptable forms of coordination better suited to an increasingly fragmented world. Today, multilateral institutions account for only one-quarter of the global governance ecosystem.

In this environment, preventing the disintegration of the international order is a daunting task. What is needed are intermediate mechanisms that do not depend on universal participation or the adoption of comprehensive, binding rules. While achieving global consensus is virtually impossible, informal alliances, public-private platforms, and flexible coordination mechanisms can help mitigate geopolitical risks.

Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance – which has immunised over one billion children since 2000 – offers a useful model, as do the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers, with its globally accepted technical standards (including Wi-Fi), and the International Organisation for Standardisation (ISO). Although lacking legal authority, these bodies have achieved technical legitimacy and broad voluntary compliance. Once secondary to multilateral institutions, they may now emerge as pillars of global co-ordination.

As private actors, subnational governments, academic institutions, and professional networks continue to gain influence, diplomacy is no longer the exclusive domain of foreign ministries. Global governance, in turn, is becoming increasingly decentralised, especially in critical areas like cybersecurity.

To avert a global catastrophe, today's institutional vacuum must be filled by flexible, workable arrangements: less formal, less universal, and less binding, yet still capable of facilitating co-operation among countries and key actors. These include public-private partnerships, interregional agreements such as the EU-Mercosur trade deal, and "coalitions of the willing" like the Just Energy Transition Partnerships.

Admittedly, this approach involves higher transaction costs and cannot guarantee certainty or uniformity. But the task facing international policymakers is not to design the perfect model – it is to identify the one that is most viable in a rapidly changing world teetering on the edge of systemic collapse. — Project Syndicate

• Javier Solana, a former EU high representative for foreign affairs and security policy, secretary-general of Nato, and foreign minister of Spain, is President of EsadeGeo – Center for Global Economy and Geopolitics.

• Angel Saz-Carranza is Director of EsadeGeo – Center for Global Economy and Geopolitics and Professor of Strategy and Policy at Esade.



ACE Award honouring transparency, integrity, bolstering global efforts

The "HH Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani International Anti-Corruption Excellence Award" (ACE Award) earns global significance as a first-of-its-kind initiative in this field.

It aims to honour individuals and institutions that dedicate their efforts to combating corruption and promoting transparency and integrity on the global stage.

The award is backed by His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani for the UN's message in fighting corruption and organised crime, in addition to enhancing the realisation of Goal 16 of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), in terms of promoting peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, providing access to justice for all, and building effective, accountable, and inclusive institutions at all levels.

The global initiative also strives to shore up good governance and transparency and aid in the fight

to uproot the scourge of corruption, which poses a profound threat to nations' future, progress, and their peoples' welfare.

The award broadly stems from Qatar's belief in the values of transparency, integrity, and accountability: it reflects an annual appreciation from His Highness the Amir for the pioneers in combating corruption and crime at the international level.

The award is not restricted to those who combat corruption but also honours individuals globally and motivates governments, academic institutions, media, and civil society to pursue the tenets of the United Nations Convention against Corruption, in addition to understanding these tenets and collaborating to implement them.

The award highlights the best global practices in combating corruption and recognises leading models from around the world while working to strengthen, collect, and disseminate them.

It also aims to raise public



awareness, enhance support and solidarity, and encourage global initiatives aimed at building corruption-free societies.

Thanks to this global role, the award has witnessed a significant upturn in participation from one edition to another by states, governmental and civil bodies, and relevant institutions worldwide.

The award is presented in collaboration with the UN and encompasses five categories: the Lifetime Achievement or Outstanding Contribution in Com-

bating Corruption, the Academic Research and Educational Materials in Combating Corruption, the Youth Creativity and Engagement in Combating Corruption, the Innovation or Investigative Journalism in Combating Corruption, and the Protection of Sports from Corruption.

The Lifetime Achievement or Outstanding Contribution category focuses on honouring individuals who have devoted their professional lives to combating corruption or have made signifi-

cant contributions domestically and internationally in this field.

The Academic Research and Educational Materials category targets individuals and entities with research, studies, publications, and works related to understanding the causes of corruption, prevention methods, and promoting knowledge and academic awareness regarding transparency and integrity practices.

In the Youth Creativity and Engagement category, the award emphasises the importance of involving younger generations, including university students and new employees, in global efforts to combat corruption.

In the Innovation or Investigative Journalism category, the award honours innovators who have developed effective tools contributing to the fight against corruption, with a focus on celebrating those who highlight forms of corruption and their negative impact on communities worldwide.

In the Protection of Sports from Corruption category, the award aims to honour individuals and entities that have made effective contributions in safeguarding the sports sector from corrupt practices at both local and regional levels, and who have had a tangible impact in reducing corruption risks in sports.

The award was launched in 2016, with its first ceremony held in Vienna.

The second iteration took place at the UN headquarters in Geneva in 2017, the third in Malaysia in 2018, the fourth in Rwanda in 2019, the fifth in Tunisia in 2020, the sixth in Qatar in 2022, the seventh in Uzbekistan in 2023, and the eighth in Costa Rica in 2024.

The total number of awardees so far is 58.

In 2016, seven winners received the award; in 2017, it was six; in 2018, eight; in 2019, 2020, 2022, and 2024, the award went to seven winners each year; and in 2023, nine were honoured. - QNA

National Day 'reinforces loyalty, sense of belonging'

Communications Regulatory Authority (CRA) president, Engineer Ahmad Abdulla al-Muslemani, affirmed that the Qatar National Day (QND) is a cherished occasion that reinforces the values of loyalty and belonging, deepens feelings of pride in the homeland and of its wise leadership, reminding everyone of the journey of giving and renaissance whose foundations were laid by Sheikh Jassim bin Mohammed bin Thani, and which continued under the leadership of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani.

Speaking to the Qatar News Agency (QNA), al-Muslemani noted that the National Day embodies the unity of the leadership and the people in the comprehensive development process, and affirms the State's commitment to the authentic principles and values upon which the national renaissance was founded.

It reinforces the spirit of responsibility and joint action among the members of society, and renews our commitment to

supporting progress and construction to achieve prosperity, he added.

The CRA president said that the authority will continue its commitment to building a sophisticated and secure communications and information technology sector, fostering a fair regulatory environment that encourages innovation and investment in digital infrastructure, and developing postal services to meet the needs of society.

He spoke about the CRA's achievements in the communications and information technology sector.

Al-Muslemani noted that thanks to the CRA's efforts and co-operation with communications service providers and national institutions, Qatar ranked third in the Middle East and North Africa region, with an adoption rate of Internet Protocol version 6 (IPv6) of 40.36%, among the top 45 countries globally, according to APNIC Labs statistics for November 2025.

Qatar also recorded a distinguished

global performance in the Telecommunications Development Index (IDI) by obtaining 98.4 points out of 100.

On the international level, al-Muslemani said that Qatar has announced its candidacy for membership in the International Telecommunication Union for the year 2027-2030, while preparations continue in the country to host the Plenipotentiary Conference of the International Telecommunication Union for the year 2026.

The CRA president said that the authority will focus during the next year on developing its regulatory system in the communications, information technology, postal services, and digital media access sectors. - QNA

Ambassador lauds 'occasion to celebrate nation's identity'

France's ambassador to Qatar Arnaud Pescheux has stressed that Qatar National Day (QND) is a meaningful occasion to celebrate the nation's identity and the spirit of unity that brings its people together.

In his statement to the Qatar News Agency (QNA), the envoy pointed out that Qatar has become a key player for dialogue and mediation, noting that Doha is now a world capital of international diplomacy due to its active foreign policy and peace initiatives.

Pescheux also noted that Qatar has spared no effort in different crises such as Ukraine, Afghanistan or Sudan and foremost Gaza.

France and Qatar are both strongly committed to peace, he added, describing both countries as balancing powers that are committed to respecting international law and upholding the international order in every crisis.

He also noted that Qatar is witnessing a wide-ranging renaissance across various sectors.

"I am impressed by its ability to trans-

late ambition into concrete progress, guided by the long-term strategy of the Qatar National Vision 2030," the envoy stated.

On the trajectory of the bilateral relations, he said that ties between France and Qatar are historically-rooted in all areas, including diplomacy, economy, defence and security, culture, and sport.

The strategic partnership between the two countries has grown considerably in recent years, Pescheux added, especially after His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani's visit in February 2024.

"Qatar is home for more than 6,000 French citizens and I know they share a deep sense of belonging," he said, emphasising that relations between the two peoples are based on mutual respect and joint co-operation.

"Three words could encapsulate the French-Qatari ties: strategic partnership, trust, and friendship," the envoy said. "You can count on me to strengthen our ties even further in the near future." - QNA

QND 'reflects unity, pride, heritage'

Malta's ambassador to Qatar Simon Pullicino has said that the Qatar National Day (QND) is a momentous occasion that embodies the unity, pride, and shared heritage of the Qatari people.

For both citizens and residents, he said, it is a day to celebrate Qatar's progress, prosperity, and culture.

In a statement to the Qatar News Agency (QNA), Pullicino said the embassy of Malta joins the people of Qatar in honouring this special day, recognising Qatar's achievements and its role as a model of national cohesion and visionary development in the region.

The envoy commended Qatar's diplomatic and political endeavours under the leadership of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani.

"Qatar has earned international respect for promoting consensus and fostering partnerships built on trust and mutual understanding," the envoy added. "From Malta's perspective, Qatar's diplomacy resonates strongly with our shared values of neutrality, multilateralism, and peacebuilding."

"We commend Qatar for its balanced approach, which contributes significantly to global stability and the advancement of peaceful resolutions through dialogue and diplomacy," he said. - QNA

QND 'embodies commitment to founder's values'

Central Municipal Council (CMC) chairman Mohammed bin Ali al-Athba has affirmed that Qatar National Day (QND) represents one of the enduring milestones in the history of Qatar, as it embodies the values of loyalty, belonging, and adherence to the principles established by Founder Sheikh Jassim bin Mohammed bin Thani, which continues its steady journey under the leadership of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani, His Highness the Deputy Amir Sheikh Abdullah bin Hamad al-Thani, and His Highness the Father Amir Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani.

Speaking to the Qatar News Agency (QNA), al-Athba said that the National Day celebration carries profound connotations and renews feelings of pride and honour in the nation and its leadership.

He pointed out that the role of society in the development process is not less important than the role of official institutions, highlighting the importance of continuing collective work to achieve Qatar National Vision 2030 and build a strong and sustainable economy.

The CMC chairman added that National Day contributes to consolidating the values of loyalty, belonging, and love of the homeland, embodies the people's support for their wise leadership, and strengthens the spirit of national unity.

He cited the CMC's key achievements in several areas this year, including strengthening co-operation with government agencies to develop infrastructure projects and municipal services, adopting initiatives to improve institutional performance and apply quality and excellence standards, hosting officials of service agencies to dis-

cuss municipal and agricultural issues and make appropriate recommendations, and launching programmes that facilitate communication with citizens.

He noted that digitisation and artificial intelligence (AI) technologies have become essential in the development of municipal services, with the CMC's efforts including recommendations to develop electronic systems and databases and activate smart systems to improve the quality of services and facilitate citizens' access to them.

Regarding future projects, al-Athba said that the CMC is working on expanding digital services.

The CMC, he continued, is also working to support sustainable urban transport plans, develop internal roads and main entrances and exits, enhance communication channels with citizens through modern interactive platforms, implement awareness campaigns to preserve the environment and public facilities, expand environmental initiatives such as the creation of smart gardens and sustainable irrigation systems, and enhance co-operation with the private sector in infrastructure projects and digital services. - QNA

Nation's development highlighted

The Qatar National Day (QND) is an important occasion that highlights the country's history and development since its founding, and a time for both citizens and residents to reflect on Qatar's progress and achievements, as well as its ongoing efforts to meet the goals of the Qatar National Vision 2030 (QNV2030), Australia's ambassador to Qatar Shane Flanagan told the Qatar News Agency (QNA).

The day brings people together in recognition of the country's growth, stability, and contributions to the wider region, the envoy underlined, noting that Australia continues to stand with Qatar and supports its efforts to maintain security and stability in the region.

Flanagan further added that Qatar plays an influential role on the international stage, and that its commitment to dialogue and mediation has contributed to progress in a number of regional and global challenges.

He noted the efforts Qatar is undertaking to help mediate the Israel-Hamas conflict,

which demonstrates its continued commitment to promoting peace and achieving humanitarian outcomes.

The development of Qatar, guided by QNV2030, reflects careful planning and investment aimed at building a diversified and sustainable economy.

Regarding the Qatar-Australia relationship, Flanagan elaborated that the two countries continue to build a strong and forward-looking partnership, with co-operation spanning areas such as food security, industry, renewable energy, and education.

He cited the recently concluded partnership between Swinburne University of Technology and Barzan University College will allow Qatari students to obtain Australian qualifications in fields such as cybersecurity, software development, artificial intelligence (AI), and engineering.

These programmes, the envoy said, support Qatar's focus on developing skills needed for the future and align closely with QNV2030 objectives. - QNA

QND 'symbolises unity of Qatari people under one flag'

Qatar Financial Markets Authority (QFMA) chief executive Dr Tamim bin Ahmed al-Binali has affirmed that Qatar's celebration of National Day is a dear occasion to the hearts of all who live in the country.

He emphasised that the Qatar National Day (QND) means a lot to every citizen and resident as it marks the glory and pride by Founder Sheikh Jassim bin Mohammed bin Thani when he laid the first building blocks for a modern state based on the principles of unity, dignity and independence.

In a statement to the Qatar News Agency (QNA), the QFMA chief said that QND

celebrations are part of our upbringing and is deeply rooted in the life of every citizen and resident through daily interactions and attitudes.

It contributes, Dr al-Binali said, to instilling values of loyalty, love of country, and connection to the foundations of the past and the heritage of our forefathers, and recalling their great achievements.

He added that National Day symbolises the unity of the Qatari people under one flag and embodies the journey of struggle and development undertaken by the founder, who established the foundations of sovereignty and independence on pil-

lars of unwavering faith, firm resolve, and unyielding will.

The official also spoke about the most prominent QFMA achievements this year.

Among the most prominent achievements, Dr al-Binali said, have been the promotion of the comprehensive digital transformation of the QFMA's services, and the development of legislative and regulatory frameworks in line with the best international standards, such as the system of governance of listed companies, controls on market conduct, amendments to some provisions of the financial services system, rules for licensing

and regulating the depository entity, the guide on preparing sustainability reports for companies listed on the main market, and strengthening the control and supervision system using modern technological tools.

He highlighted that the QFMA recently adopted a new regulatory system for trading in co-operation with Nasdaq, with the aim of enhancing the efficiency of regulation and the protection of market participants.

It also implemented a single window to allow customers to process their transactions with ease and safety.

Regarding the future strategies that

Qatar is working on for the financial markets, Dr al-Binali said the QFMA is working on increasing the attractiveness of the Qatar market for foreign investments and expanding the scope of digital transformation to include all institutional services and procedures, among other things. - QNA

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TNG Al Daayen joins Pakistan embassy's 'Green Drive' initiative



The event concluded with a tree planting activity within the school premises.

The management and students of The Next Generation (TNG) School, Al Daayen Campus, have partnered with the embassy of Pakistan in Doha to promote environmental protection and awareness.

Deputy head of mission Atiya Iqbal and community welfare attaché Osama Idrees visited TNG as part of the embassy's "Green Drive" initiative, a tree-planting and environmental awareness campaign in Qatar, organised in recognition of Qatar National Day (QND).

During the visit, TNG Al Daayen's Student Council members and participants of the British Council's "Your World Competition" presented their research and projects on environmental sustainability.

Students highlighted the inspiration behind their work, the innovative solutions they proposed, and the impact they aim to create.

The session featured a detailed and interactive discussion with the embassy representatives, where students asked questions and explored solutions to sustainability challenges, such as digital responsibility, food waste management, and plastic reduction.

The Next Generation



Atiya Iqbal and Osama Idrees visited TNG as part of the Pakistan embassy's 'Green Drive' initiative.

Senior students, along with the wider Student Council body, attended the event to observe and take forward these discussions across the student community.

Their involvement aims to inspire peers and further strengthen a culture of environmental responsibility within the campus.

Iqbal lauded the students for their

passion and clarity of vision.

The event concluded with a tree planting activity led by the Pakistan embassy officials within the school premises.



Jassim Ahmed al-Buainain



A large turnout of Qataris during Darb Al Saai in Umm Salal yesterday.



Youssef Ahmed al-Kawari is one of the participants in the Ministry of Culture's initiative.



Jassim Salem al-Obaidli showing off his work.

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Children's Story Designer Programme 6 launched

By Tawfiq Lamari
Staff Reporter

the sixth edition of the Children's Book Designer Programme, in collaboration with the Children's Literature Centre."

"This programme engages 101 children who have written stories about Qatari culture and identity, focusing on the country's regions and their tree habitats," he said. "Each child has chosen a specific area of Qatar. The programme aims to encourage children to write stories, draw, colour, and design."

"They also received training courses on how to interact and communicate with the public, fostering self-confidence," al-Buainain continued. "It's a comprehensive programme designed to cultivate a generation of conscious, literate, and cultured individuals."

"Registration opened in August during the summer, and we received applications, interviewed the students, and administered a required test," the official said. "The programme then launched in September, and we are now reaping the rewards of this effort."

"These books will be published and showcased at the Doha International Book Fair," al-Buainain added.

The National Day 2025 celebrations continued yesterday at Darb Al Saai, under the theme of *With You It Rises and From You It Awaits*, organised by the Ministry of Culture from December 10-20.

Ministry of Culture's Music Affairs Centre sets up a music museum at Darb Al Saai

The Ministry of Culture's Music Affairs Centre is participating in Qatar National Day (QND) celebrations at Darb Al Saai in Umm Salal by holding a music museum that showcases all aspects of Qatari traditional music.

The exhibition offers an overview of the history of music in Qatar, introducing the most important music instruments known in the country since earlier times, their evolution, the features of Qatari music, and Qatar's musical tradition.

Music Affairs Centre director Khalid al-Salem told the Qatar News Agency (QNA) that the music museum at Darb Al Saai is exhibiting instruments used in traditional Qatari music in all its forms, including music played during sea voyages, orchestral music, as well as music from various world countries.

He said that this year the music museum is presenting five daily stage performances: the sea voyage musical arts segment, the Sidra children's choir segment (featuring 45 children performing national songs), the story and tale segment, a segment on Ziryab, his life, and his significant influence on Arabic music, and the oud trio segment.

The music museum aims to encapsulate traditional Qatari music and provide the most extensive body of information about it, featuring the instrumentalists, composers, lyricists, and singers who helped create Qatari music and songs, in addition to the instruments used back in the days.

It includes a special section featuring devices used to record songs from the beginning of the last century until today and their stages of development. - QNA