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Today's
Gulf Times
Includes a
2-page
special
supplement
on

CELEBRATIONS



The meeting of the Standing Committee on Budget and Planning of the Asian Parliamentary Assembly in Doha discussed a number of topics yesterday. **PICTURES:** Shaji Kayamkulam



Asian Parliamentary Assembly panel meets

The meeting of the Standing Committee on Budget and Planning of the Asian Parliamentary Assembly was held yesterday in Doha, tackling a number of topics, including the proposed amendments to the articles of the assembly's charter.

The event was held under the chairmanship of Engineer Ahmed bin Hitmi al-Hitmi, member of the Shura Council, chairman of the committee, and vice-president of the Asian Parliamentary Assembly.

In his address during the plenary session, al-Hitmi said that convening the committee's meeting reinforces the assembly's commitment to developing its institutional performance, improving its working mechanisms, and ensuring its financial and administrative sustainability, enabling it to carry out its duties in the best possible manner.

He noted that the Asian Parliamentary Assembly made significant progress in recent years. He stressed that the current phase



calls for a serious pause to evaluate and review the assembly's path, accompanied by a clear future vision that reflects the maturity of the Asian parliamentary experience and its ability to achieve institutional development and

respond to regional and international changes.

Al-Hitmi called for opening an in-depth and responsible discussion on the possibility of reviewing and amending the articles related to the submission

and acceptance of draft resolutions presented to the assembly's committees. This, he said, aims to enhance the quality of draft resolutions, ensure their feasibility for implementation, avoid duplication, and strengthen the focus on priority issues, in a manner that positively reflects on the assembly's reputation and the effectiveness of its outcomes.

The session also reviewed the report of the secretary-general of the Asian Parliamentary Assembly, which addressed the latest developments and the most important achievements related to the committee's work. Discussions further included the draft resolution on planning the assembly's budget and determining the budget for 2026.

Following extensive deliberations, the participants decided

to approve the assembly's 2026 budget and the proposal submitted by the Shura Council regarding the amendment of the articles related to the submission and acceptance of draft resolutions. This, they added, enhances the development of parliamentary work within the assembly.

The meeting was attended by members of the Shura Council Yousuf bin Ahmed al-Sada, Issa bin Ahmed al-Nasr, and Nasser bin Mutar al-Humaidi.

On the sidelines of the committee meeting, the Bureau of the Asian Parliamentary Assembly held a meeting to consider the committee's draft resolutions in preparation for submitting them to the General Assembly of the Asian Parliamentary Assembly, scheduled to be held in Manama, Bahrain, next year.

Online registration opens for Dimdex 2026

The Doha International Maritime Defence Exhibition and Conference (Dimdex) 2026 has announced the opening of online registration for all exhibitors, participants, and visitors to its ninth edition, scheduled to take place from Jan 19-22 at the Qatar National Convention Centre.

In a significant initiative to enhance the visitor experience, Dimdex, in collaboration with the Qatar Ministry of Interior (MoI), has introduced an all-new registration and accreditation system designed to offer greater efficiency and convenience for all participants. Dimdex will now offer a streamlined registration process through a dedicated online link available on www.dimdex.com. International participants who require visas will benefit from the fully integrated system as it will process their Hayya visa application on their behalf thus eliminating the need to apply separately via the Hayya platform (hayya.qa), ensuring a smoother, faster entry procedure.

Chairman of the Dimdex Organising Committee, Staff

“With the participation of more than 200 international and national companies, Dimdex 2026 will be our largest edition to date. We are also looking forward to welcoming a record number of official delegations and dignitaries to the Middle East Naval Commanders Conference”

Brigadier (Sea) Abdulbaqi Saleh al-Ansari, stated: “The launch of this innovative registration system, in partnership with the Ministry of Interior, reflects our commitment to continuously improve and elevate the Dimdex experience. With the participation of more than 200 international and national companies, Dimdex 2026 will be our largest edition to date. We are also looking forward to welcoming a record number of official delegations and dignitaries to the Middle East Naval Commanders Conference. The new registration process will ensure a smooth and seamless experience for both national and international participants, from start to finish.”

Dimdex reaffirms Qatar's commitment to providing

a world-class platform to showcase advanced defence innovations, strengthen long-term partnerships, and create new business opportunities. The exhibition also serves as a gateway to high-value investments that further contribute to local economic growth by drawing thousands of participants and visitors, aligning fully with the long-term goals of Qatar National Vision 2030.

The four-day ninth edition of Dimdex will bring together an elite gathering of naval commanders, representatives from military and government entities, a wide spectrum of leading national and international defence companies, and key decision-makers from across the global defence industry. **(QNA)**

Arab Book Award to announce third iteration winners on Jan 27

The Arab Book Award has set Jan 27, 2026 to announce the winners and their crowning in its third iteration.

The ceremony will be attended by dignitaries, academics and intellectuals from Qatar and across the Arab world.

Prof Dr Hanan al-Fayyad, media adviser for the award, said that the award's scientific committee observed broad participation in this iteration, with researchers from 41 countries around the globe.

She clarified that the nominations spanned the various knowledge fields of the award, including literary and critical studies of Arab heritage up to the end of the 10th Hijri century, as well as social and philosophical studies.

She further noted that this iteration was specifically dedicated to thoughtful and economic studies.

In historical studies, the current iteration is devoted to Arab and Islamic history from the end of the 6th Hijri century until the end of the 12th Hijri century, with

the domain of Sharia sciences and Islamic studies devoted to the Prophetic biography and Hadith studies.

Meanwhile, the award will focus in the field of lexicons, encyclopaedias, and textual verification on the verification of linguistic texts, serving as a clear indicator of the widening scope of participation and the diversification of its fields, Dr al-Fayyad highlighted.

She further indicated that the award's scientific committee observed a remarkable and competitive scientific level in certain fields, notably in literary criticism and historical studies.

The judging process was conducted according to the approved timetable and followed meticulous procedures to ensure the highest standards of integrity, transparency, and scientific accuracy.

Concurrently with the winners' coronation ceremony, the award will hold a specialised scientific symposium featuring a select panel of writers and researchers to

explore issues related to the Arab book and its relationship with cultural identity, as part of a broader effort to reinforce thoughtful dialogue and deepen the award's role as an active institution supporting Arab intellectual production.

Dr al-Fayyad also emphasised the award's role in promoting cultural diplomacy through tours across several Arab capitals, aiming to bolster Qatar's presence in a variety of Arab cultural fora.


These efforts, she said, aim to connect with innovators and writers and to reach the widest target audiences, Dr al-Fayyad noted, affirming that during this iteration, the award engaged with numerous cultural and academic institutions, as well as linguistic academies, in several countries, most notably Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Kuwait.

Established in 2023 under the patronage of His Highness the Father Amir Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani, the award carries a total value of \$1mn. **(QNA)**

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DR Congo FM receives credentials of Qatar's envoy

Minister of Foreign Affairs, International Co-operation and Francophonie of the Democratic Republic of the Congo Therese Kayikwamba Wagner received a copy of the credentials of Hamad bin Dhaen al-Kuwari as Qatar's ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary to the Democratic Republic of Congo. **(QNA)**



Justice ministry to launch programme to enhance legal training system in Qatar

The Ministry of Justice will launch a legal trainer preparation programme for the first time in November 2026, in a qualitative step aimed at enhancing the quality of legal training and improving the efficiency of trainers.

The programme comes as part of the implementation of the ministry's 2025-2030 strategic plan, which includes initiatives and projects specialising in training, qualification, and development of legal and practical skills for various legal categories in the country.

The Centre for Legal and Judicial Studies organised the Training of Trainers (TOT) programme with the aim of preparing a qualified legal training cadre capable of carrying out training tasks in accordance with the best and latest global practices, and using modern and ap-

proved training methods and means.

Director of the Centre for Legal and Judicial Studies Dr Abdulla al-Khaldi said that the launch of the programme comes in response to the growing need for professional legal trainers. He pointed out that the legal trainer preparation programme represents a strategic step to enhance the legal training system in the country and to build training capacities capable of transferring legal knowledge in modern and applied ways, which contributes to raising the efficiency of lawyers and improving the quality of institutional performance in the justice sector.

Dr al-Khaldi explained that the programme aims to provide participants with the knowledge and skills necessary to design and implement distinguished

legal training courses with a focus on the practical and professional aspects required by the legal profession. This contributes to preparing professional legal trainers, developing skills in preparing and delivering legal courses, preparing training packages, presentation slides and various training tools, in addition to enhancing self-confidence and communication skills with trainees, establishing the foundations of legal training, and identifying the most prominent challenges facing trainers and ways to deal with them.

The programme, implemented over two weeks, with 40 training hours, targets legal professionals with scientific experience who wish to obtain a legal trainer certificate accredited by the Centre for Legal and Judicial Studies. **(QNA)**

DOC Medical Center opens its third branch in Izghawa, featuring latest medical equipment



Nabina Group has announced the opening of the third branch of DOC Medical Center in Izghawa, in collaboration with advanced German MBST Technology.

The new facility is positioned as a leading destination for the treatment of joint diseases, chronic fractures, and age-related conditions, and is set to become a key pillar in the future of regenerative medicine in Qatar, the Gulf region, and beyond.

The inauguration marks a significant step toward expanding access to non-surgical regenerative treatments that help patients regain a pain-free quality of life. MBST Technology represents a major advancement in bone and joint care, contributing to improved patient outcomes while reducing reliance on medication and surgical intervention.



This new center follows the successful launch of Al Ahmadani Medical Center, making it the third such facility under the Nabina Group umbrella in Qatar.

MBST Technology

MBST Technology uses low-intensity magnetic resonance waves to stimulate intracellular ion exchange and enhance cellular energy production (ATP). This process activates the body's natural self-repair mechanisms, including osteoblasts and chondrocytes, which are essential for bone and cartilage regeneration.

Key Benefits of MBST Technology

- Improved bone density in patients with osteoporosis
- Pain reduction and restored mobility for patients with osteoarthritis
- Accelerated healing and recovery in cases of chronic fractures

Global Reach

MBST Technology is currently deployed in more than 460 specialized medical centers worldwide and is licensed and registered

with relevant global health regulatory authorities. The technology is experiencing rapid expansion in Qatar and across the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries, supported by the establishment of specialized centers and strategic medical partnerships aimed at delivering world-class treatment solutions.

Leadership Statements

Mansoor Nabina, CEO of MBST Qatar and Head of the Healthcare Division at Nabina Group, said:

"DOC Medical Center is witnessing remarkable growth. This is the third branch in Qatar operating with the MBST system, a German technology that uses magnetic resonance waves to support recovery from chronic fractures by accelerating bone healing and reducing pain for patients with osteoarthritis."

Dr. Emmanuel Tolessa, Chairman of DOC Medical Center, said: "We are proud to celebrate the opening of the third branch of DOC Medical Center. At this facility, we have integrated MBST Technology with a comprehensive

orthopedics and rehabilitation program. This distinctive German technology, developed over 25 years ago, is now being utilized at our new center to enhance patient care."

Dr. Ahmed Al-Rumaih, Chairman of the Research Council at MBST, described the new facility as a state-of-the-art center equipped with the latest technology. He noted that this is the third branch of DOC Medical Center in Qatar, adding that MBST treatment works by stimulating cells with low-frequency magnetic resonance waves, promoting healing and regeneration.

Mahmoud Qaddih, General Manager of the new DOC Medical Center branch in Izghawa, stated that the third branch places a strong emphasis on regenerative medicine, leveraging MBST Technology to stimulate the body's natural self-repair processes and deliver advanced, non-invasive treatment options to patients.

MBST Technology uses low-intensity magnetic resonance waves to stimulate intracellular ion exchange and enhance cellular energy production (ATP). This process activates the body's natural self-repair mechanisms, including osteoblasts and chondrocytes, which are essential for bone and cartilage regeneration.



DOC Medical Center is witnessing remarkable growth. This is the third branch in Qatar operating with the MBST system, a German technology that uses magnetic resonance waves to support recovery from chronic fractures by accelerating bone healing and reducing pain for patients with osteoarthritis

Mansoor Nabina
CEO - MBST Qatar and Head of the Healthcare Division at Nabina Group



Es’hailSat expands its channel offerings with Al Taghier TV

The Qatar Satellite Company, Es’hailSat, announced that it has expanded its channel offerings by incorporating Al Taghier TV channel into its video distribution lineup at the 26 degrees East orbital position, facilitated by the Es’hail-2 satellite.

The company pointed out that the Es’hailSat satellite footprint strategically encompasses the Middle East and North Africa (Mena) region, optimising signal coverage and enabling significant viewer-ship potential for the news broadcaster’s channel.

Es’hailSat added that this channel growth underscores the company’s commitment to delivering a diverse range of content to satisfy regional demand.

“Es’hailSat is delighted to welcome Al Taghier TV channel and bring on board one of the region’s leading news broadcasters to our satellite hotspot,” said President and CEO of Es’hailSat Ali Ahmed al-Kuwari, adding: “We believe that the reliability and expertise in providing satellite services by

Al Taghier TV is a leading Arabic language news channel that delivers coverage of political, economic and cultural developments

Es’hailSat aligns perfectly with Al Taghier’s vision to serve as a leading news channel, providing comprehensive and reliable information to its viewers.”

Al Taghier TV, headquartered in Amman, Jordan, is a leading Arabic language satellite news channel that delivers coverage of political, economic, and cultural developments across the Arab world and possesses a diverse portfolio of political talk shows, in-depth analysis programmes, and exclusive interviews.

Es’hailSat provides satellite, broadcast, teleport, and managed services from Doha, with more than 15 years of experience in providing services to broadcasters, telecommunication companies, enterprises, mobility applications, and governments across the Middle East and North Africa. (QNA)

Qatar Charity supports, operates Bab Al-Hawa Hospital in Syria

Qatar Charity has concluded a project to operate and support Bab Al-Hawa Hospital after six months of continuous work, from July-December 2025.

The project restored the operational capacity of this vital medical facility, enabling it to provide free and safe medical services to tens of thousands of residents in northwestern Syria.

Qatar Charity said in a statement yesterday that, since its establishment on January 1, 2013, Bab Al-Hawa Hospital has formed a fundamental medical lifeline in the region, providing its services to more than 2.5mn beneficiaries over 13 years. Today, it stands as one of the largest and most important referral hospitals relied upon by the Idlib Health Directorate for the treatment of advanced and critical cases, particularly among displaced populations in camps, the statement added.

With population growth and increasing pressure on the health sector, the hospital has gradually expanded to include high-quality specialised departments such as advanced surgery, intensive care, paediatric surgery, kidney dialysis, endoscopy, specialised outpatient clinics, as well as laboratories, a blood bank, and other vital medical units.

Qatar Charity pointed out, that over the past two years, the hospital experienced a suspension of financial and medical support, which directly threatened the continuity of its operations and essential services, including the functioning of sensitive departments, securing medicines, supporting medical staff, and maintaining equipment.

Local officials said that, since the beginning of 2025, the hospital has resumed operating at full capacity, with the number of services reaching up to 20,000 medical services per month during the project period. This response came considering the significant increase in patient numbers following the closure of several other service centres in northern Idlib.

The support included covering the salaries of medical, nursing, and technical staff to ensure operational stability, providing medicines and consumables for emergency cases and specialised surgeries, in addition to reactivating vital departments such as internal medicine clinics, surgery, operating rooms, and kidney dialysis.



In this context, Director of Bab Al-Hawa Hospital, Dr Yassin Alloush, said: “We extend our sincere thanks to Qatar Charity for this generous support, which was not merely financial assistance, but rather a genuine humanitarian partnership that enabled the hospital to continue fulfilling its mission. Over six months of support, we were able to double our capacity to receive patients and provide surgical and specialised services that were at risk of being suspended.” (QNA)

Ooredoo showcases 5G SA network slicing use cases at MWC Doha

Ooredoo showcased two 5G Standalone (SA) use cases at MWC Doha 2025, reaffirming its leadership in next-generation connectivity and its continuous evolution of network capabilities.

The demonstrations, delivered in collaboration with the GSMA, attracted strong interest from visitors and received highly positive feedback from industry experts and technology partners.

Building on Ooredoo’s successful deployment of Qatar’s first 5G SA


core network, the showcased use cases highlight the transformative potential of network slicing in enabling ultra-reliable, low-latency applications for consumers and enterprises.

Ooredoo demonstrated a driverless vehicle operating in Sealine, which was remotely controlled in real-time by an operator. Using a dedicated network

slice on Ooredoo’s 5G SA network, the setup ensured ultra-low latency, high bandwidth, and uninterrupted connectivity between the vehicle, sensors, and control systems.

Attendees experienced an F1 online SIM racing setup powered by 5G SA slicing, demonstrating the power of low-latency and lag-free connectivity.

The experience replicated real-world racing dynamics, showcasing how enhanced network performance can unlock more immersive and responsive gaming experiences for users.



QatarEnergy LNG Tender Invitation

No.	TENDER NUMBER / DESCRIPTION	TENDER ISSUE PERIOD	TENDER FEE (USD)	TENDER BOND (USD)	TENDER CLOSING DATE
1	LTC/C/SPE/7479/25 PROVISION OF 3D SEISMIC DATA ACQUISITION SERVICES – PROJECT QUEST	24/12/2025 to 11/01/2026	0	2,000,000	18/02/2026

Scope of Work:
Contractor shall acquire marine 3D seismic data in offshore Qatar, utilizing Ocean Bottom Node (OBN) seismic acquisition technology. QatarEnergy LNG requires survey to be commenced in Q1-2027.

Term of the Contract shall be continued for the time necessary to complete the work and all other obligations of the parties under the Contract have been performed until issuance of the Service Acceptance Certificate. Further extension of the Contract shall be at Company’s sole discretion for any additional work.

Bid Validity: Bid Offer should be valid for 180 calendar days from the Tender Closing Date.

Place for Tender Collection and Bid Submission:
ITT document for this tender will be available on QatarEnergy LNG website under Suppliers tab >Current Open Tenders. Part III of the ITT document shall only be released to the interested companies upon submitting the form of Secrecy Declaration duly signed and sealed/stamped. The bids shall be submitted through the QatarEnergy LNG online platform (SMART by GEP).

Note: Local Companies (established under the Laws of State of Qatar with local Commercial Registration) are advised to refer to the tender documentation and In-Country Value (ICV) Digital Portal: - <https://icv.qa/en-US/> for details of ICV compliance that may be applicable.

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QatarEnergy LNG Tender Invitation


No.	TENDER NUMBER / DESCRIPTION	TENDER ISSUE PERIOD	TENDER FEE (QAR)	TENDER BOND (USD)	TENDER CLOSING DATE
1	LTC/C/OFS/7387/25 Charter of Offshore Support Vessel Services	24/12/2025 to 08/01/2026	0	250,000	19/01/2026

Scope of Work:
OWNER/CONTRACTOR to provide well designed, fully equipped and properly maintained Offshore drilling supply & support Vessels to support COMPANY/CHARTERER’s offshore operations and installations.
The Contract duration will be for an initial period of five (5) years, with a tentative Vessel requirement by Q2, 2027 and the Contract will have a provision for further optional extensions on yearly basis up to five (5) years, at Company’s sole discretion.

Bid Validity: Bid Offer should be valid for 180 calendar days from the Tender Closing Date.

Place for Tender Collection and Bid Submission:
ITT document for this tender will be available in QatarEnergy LNG website under Suppliers tab >Current Open Tenders. The bids shall be submitted through the QatarEnergy LNG online platform (SMART by GEP).

Note: Local Companies (established under the Laws of State of Qatar with local Commercial Registration) are advised to refer to the tender documentation and In-Country Value (ICV) Digital Portal: - <https://icv.qa/en-US/> for details of ICV compliance that may be applicable.



Invitation to participate in Barwa Tender

Barwa Real Estate Company wishes to invite capable and competent companies to participate in the tender described below:

Tender Reference	Tender Description	Tender Bond	Non-refundable Tender Fees	Closing Date
BRE-RFP-GAM-024-10032-2025	Design, Supply, Installation, Testing, and Commissioning of Facade Lighting Systems at ASAS Towers	QAR 100,000	QAR 200	11 January 2026 12.00 p.m.

To receive the tender documents, a copy of the tender fee deposit slip and valid commercial registration of the bidder must be forwarded to the following email address: Tender@barwa.com.qa . Bidders are required to clearly state the tender reference number in the subject line of the email.




To pay the tender fee, it should be deposited into the following account:

Beneficiary : Barwa Real Estate Company
Bank Name : Dukhan Bank, Main Branch, Doha -
Qatar Account No. : 200000008022
IBAN Number : QA04BRWA0000000002000000008022

Bid documents submitted to Barwa Company should include a Tender Bond in accordance with the tender document, issued in a form of a Bank Guarantee from a local bank registered in Qatar, and valid 120 days from the closing date. No offers submitted beyond the closing date will be considered.

Tender bids to be submitted to:

LTC Secretary
Barwa Real Estate Company
Barwa Al-Sadd Towers – Tower 1 – 16th Floor
P.O Box: 27777 Doha-Qatar



GULF TIMES SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT
CELEBRATIONS

CELEBRATING LIFE'S MILESTONES: WHY MOMENTS MATTER

Life unfolds not only through the passage of time, but through the moments that define us. While days, weeks, and years may pass quietly, it is the milestones we celebrate that give shape and meaning to our personal journeys.

These moments—birthdays, graduations, weddings, career achievements, anniversaries, and personal triumphs—serve as emotional signposts, reminding us of growth, resilience, love, and belonging.

In a world increasingly driven by speed and productivity, celebrations invite us to pause. They encourage reflection, gratitude, and connection, transforming ordinary time into meaningful memory. More than social gatherings or ceremonial traditions, life's milestones are affirmations of progress and purpose.



Marking milestones

At their core, celebrations fulfil a deeply human need: to feel seen, valued, and acknowledged. Recognising milestones validates effort and perseverance. A promotion acknowledges years of dedication. A graduation symbolises discipline, sacrifice, and ambition. A wedding or anniversary celebrates commitment and shared resilience.

Emotionally, these moments help individuals process transitions. Life is a continuous series of beginnings



and endings—childhood to adulthood, education to career, singlehood to partnership, work to retirement. Celebrating milestones provides emotional closure to one chapter and optimism for the next. It allows people to honour what has been achieved before stepping forward.

Psychological studies consistently show that marking meaningful moments strengthens emotional wellbeing. Celebrations boost morale, reinforce identity, and foster a sense of accomplishment. They also help people cope with uncertainty and change by grounding them in positive experiences and shared support.

Cultural traditions

Across civilizations, milestones have always been marked with rituals, customs, and communal gatherings. From birth ceremonies and coming-of-age traditions to marriage rites and golden anniversaries, cultures around the world have long understood the importance of recognising life's transitions.

These traditions are more than symbolic gestures; they are vessels of collective memory. They transmit values, beliefs, and heritage from one generation to the next. A wedding ceremony reflects cultural ideals of family and partnership. Graduation celebrations emphasise the value placed on education. Anniversary rituals honour endurance, patience, and mutual respect.

In Qatar, a nation defined by both deep-rooted traditions and global diversity, celebrations take on a uniquely inclusive character. Residents from different cultures bring their customs together, enriching the social landscape. While the rituals may differ, the emotions remain universal—joy, pride, hope, and gratitude.

Celebrations as social connectors

Beyond personal significance, milestones play a vital social role. They bring people together, strengthening relationships and reinforcing community bonds. In an era dominated by digital communication, celebrations create opportunities for genuine human connection—face-to-face conversations, shared laughter, and collective memory-making.

Family gatherings reconnect generations. Friends reunite across distances. Communities rally around achievements and shared happiness. These interactions foster empathy and belonging, reminding individuals that they are supported and valued within a wider social circle.

Celebrations also create space for storytelling. Elders recount past journeys, parents reflect on sacrifices made, and younger generations gain perspective. Through these shared narratives, identity is strengthened and continuity preserved.

The lasting power of memory

Long after decorations are taken down and guests have departed, the memories of celebrations endure. People may forget daily routines, but they vividly recall the day they graduated, the moment they said "I do," or the pride felt at a long-awaited achievement.

These memories become emotional landmarks. During challenging times, they serve as reminders of strength and success. During moments of reflection, they inspire gratitude. They shape how individuals remember their lives—not as a series of obligations, but as a collection of meaningful moments.

BEYOND PERSONAL SIGNIFICANCE, MILESTONES PLAY A VITAL SOCIAL ROLE. THEY BRING PEOPLE TOGETHER STRENGTHENING RELATIONSHIPS AND REINFORCING COMMUNITY BONDS.

Photographs, videos, handwritten notes, and keepsakes become tangible anchors to these experiences. Yet it is the emotion attached to the moment that gives them lasting power.

A celebration of life itself

Ultimately, celebrating milestones is a celebration of life itself. It is an acknowledgment that growth is worth honouring, relationships are worth nurturing, and time is worth marking meaningfully.

As individuals and communities continue to navigate an ever-changing world, these moments of celebration offer grounding and continuity. They encourage reflection in times of transition, joy in times of achievement, and unity in times of togetherness.

By celebrating life's milestones, we do more than mark dates—we affirm purpose, deepen connections, and create memories that define who we are and how we live.

GULF TIMES SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT

CELEBRATIONS

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BELIEVE IN YOUR VISION,
STEP CONFIDENTLY INTO
ANY INDUSTRY, AND GROW
ONE STEP AT A TIME 

Reena Kooliyadath – CEO
OUTSTANDING TRADING & CONTRACTING (OTC)

consistent quality. A disciplined approach and strong family support played a vital role in overcoming early challenges.

Today, OTC is proud of its strong client relationships, high HSE standards, ethical business conduct, and steady expansion into engineering and support services. The company is recognized for quick mobilization, professionalism, and dependable performance—even under urgent project demands.

For Reena, leadership is rooted in integrity, accountability, empathy, and people-first values.

"My team is the backbone of the business," she says. She treats employees like family, empowers her workforce, and fosters a transparent, respectful, and positive work culture—believing that strong teams build strong companies.

Hailing from the Kannur district of Kerala and belonging to the Kandomkovil family, Reena is currently a resident of Malaysia. She draws constant inspiration from her family—her husband, Arun, and daughters, Abiraamii, Vreentha, and Reshmetta—whose encouragement continues to fuel her entrepreneurial journey.

Key Achievements

- Successful market entry in Qatar as a reliable trading and contracting partner
- Strong client relationships with repeat business across oil & gas, construction, and engineering sectors
- Supply of skilled, certified manpower meeting timelines and compliance standards

- High safety and quality standards across all operations
- Expansion from manpower supply to engineering and support solutions
- Trust earned through performance, professionalism, and rapid mobilization

"These milestones motivate us to continue growing and improving," Reena emphasizes.

Looking ahead, her vision is to build a trusted and sustainable trading and contracting company, driven by innovation, digital efficiency, strong partnerships, and strict compliance. She firmly believes Qatar's business-friendly ecosystem—supported by major infrastructure projects, digital growth, and 100% foreign ownership—offers exceptional opportunities for emerging entrepreneurs.

Her message to aspiring women entrepreneurs is clear and empowering:

"Believe in your vision, step confidently into any industry, and grow one step at a time. Do not hesitate to enter male-dominated sectors—professionalism, consistency, and commitment to quality create success."

She adds, "Break every barrier. Chase your dream without fear. Never stop working until you rise as the strongest. I live this commitment every day."

Reena hopes her journey will be remembered not just for business success, but for building trust, creating opportunities, and inspiring women to lead with courage, integrity, and purpose.

With years of hands-on experience in manpower supply and industrial services, Reena Kooliyadath, CEO, Outstanding Trading & Contracting (OTC), transformed industry insight into entrepreneurship. After serving as a General Manager, she identified a clear market need for reliable service delivery, skilled manpower, and transparent business practices—and set out to build a company that delivers exactly that.

Outstanding Trading & Contracting (OTC), with Malaysian roots, proudly operates in Qatar. Founded in Doha, the company provides contracting services, HVAC & MEP solutions, manpower support, and industrial trading, serving Qatar's oil & gas, construction, and commercial sectors with a strong focus on quality, trust, safety, and compliance.

"The first few months were the toughest—establishing credibility, securing projects, managing operations, and facing financial challenges," says Reena. She worked late nights, stabilized cash flow, and leveraged her industry experience to ensure timely delivery and

JEBI K. JOHN

Entrepreneur, Philanthropist, and Beacon of Generosity

Jebi K. John, managing director of Qatar Tec, is widely recognized not only for his remarkable achievements in business but also for his unwavering commitment to philanthropy and community service.

A man whose life embodies resilience, vision, and generosity, Jebi K. John has left an indelible mark on both the professional and social landscapes of Qatar and his native Kerala. Born in Mannathur, Koothattukulam, in Ernakulam district, his humble beginnings shaped a deep understanding of the struggles faced by ordinary people and instilled in him a lifelong dedication to giving back to society.

Arriving in Doha in 1999 in search of opportunities, Jebi K. John began his career as an employee in a foreign land. Through sheer determination, hard work, and strategic vision, he rose to become an employer and an industry leader, ultimately founding Qatar Tec in 2008.

Under his stewardship, the company has earned a reputation for excellence, reliability, and professionalism, contributing significantly to several high-profile projects in Qatar, particularly in the oil and gas sector. Beyond business success, John has demonstrated that leadership is not only about growth and profits but also about uplifting others and fostering human connections.

His entrepreneurial journey is paralleled by an extraordinary dedication to humanitarian work. Through the Kolkunnel John and Chinnamma Foundation, Jebi K. John has spearheaded numerous initiatives aimed at improving the lives of the underprivileged. He has built homes for those in need, provided critical assistance during natural disasters such as floods and landslides, and supported students through scholarships and educational aid, ensuring that young minds have the opportunity to thrive.

His efforts extend to Qatar, where he actively engages with communities, organizes charity drives, and supports workers, reflecting his belief that success carries a responsibility to give back.

Jebi K. John also actively embraces cultural and religious diversity, participating in local celebrations and fostering mutual respect and understanding. During Ramadan, he has

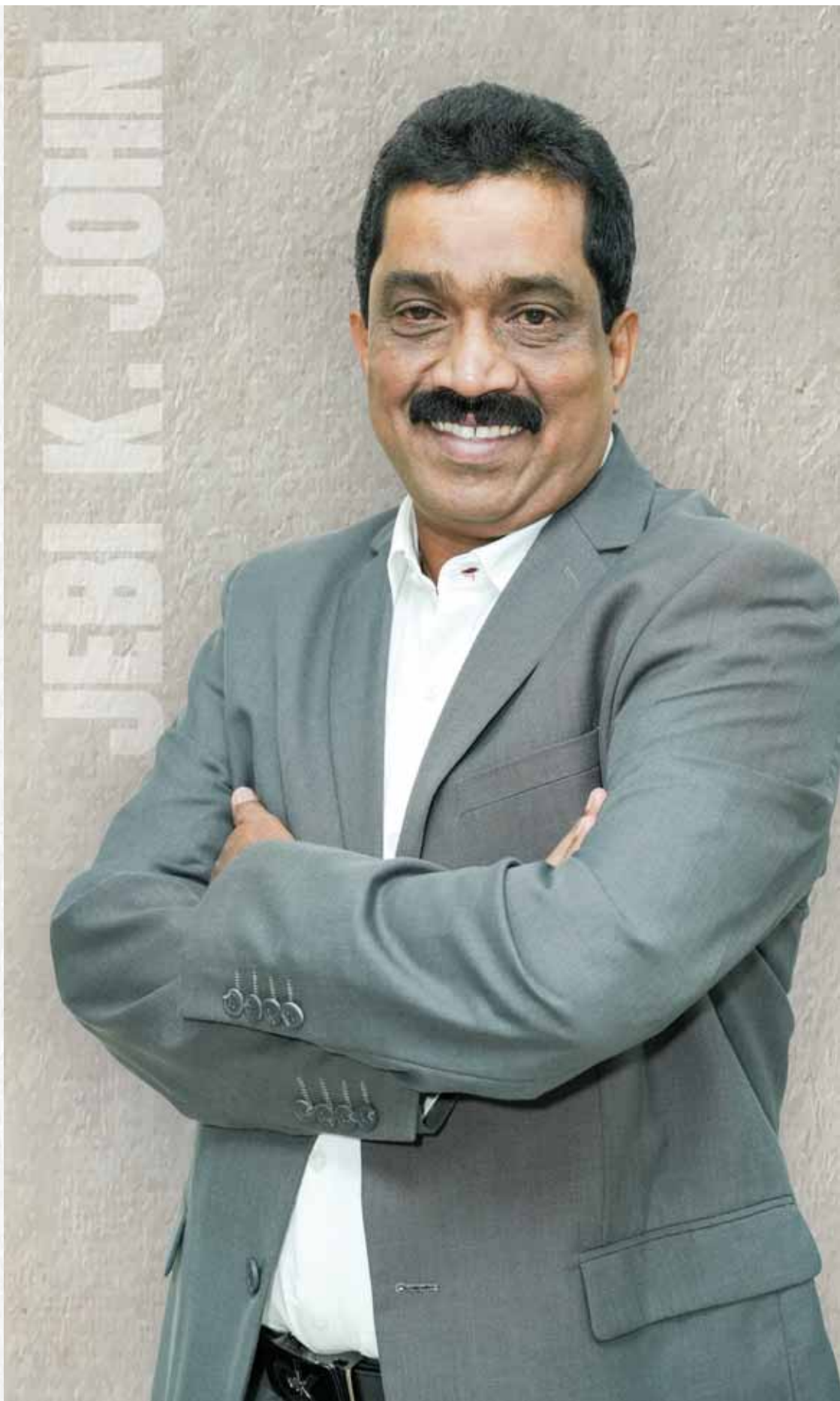
spent years organizing and distributing one-day Iftar kits, sharing in the traditions and culinary experiences of his Muslim friends and community in Qatar. This spirit of inclusion, generosity, and compassion has become a defining characteristic of his life and work, illustrating that philanthropy is as much about human connection as it is about material aid.

His exceptional contributions have been recognized on numerous occasions. Most recently, Jebi K. John was honoured by Kairali TV during the channel's 25th anniversary celebrations at the Etihad Arena, Yas Island, Abu Dhabi. The prestigious award was presented by Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan, in the presence of South Indian megastar and Kairali TV Chairman Mammooty and Kairali TV Managing Director John Brittas. This recognition highlighted John's exemplary leadership, his dedication to social welfare, and his far-reaching philanthropic efforts, both in India and abroad.

Over the years, he has also been the recipient of several other notable awards, including the Universal Record Forum 2023 Award, the NRI Council of India Manava Seva Award 2024, the Dr. B. R. Ambedkar International Foundation Award, the Bikshiknam Award, and the Mangalam Puraskar, further affirming his standing as a respected entrepreneur and humanitarian.

Jebi K. John's life philosophy is deeply rooted in the belief that every individual carries a responsibility toward others. He lives by the principle that wealth is not only for personal gain but also a means to uplift those who are less fortunate. Through his monthly charity initiatives, disaster relief efforts, educational support, and cultural engagement, he exemplifies how leadership and generosity can coexist, creating a lasting impact on society.

Supported by his wife, Asha Jebi, and their two sons, Eldhose Jebi and Jeas Jebi, Jebi K. John continues to lead Qatar Tec while simultaneously advancing his philanthropic mission. His story is a testament to the power of perseverance, compassion, and the enduring impact of giving back, making him an inspiring figure for aspiring entrepreneurs and philanthropists around the world.



28 Years in Qatar

Mahendra Chamlagai's Rise from Sweat to Success

Mahendra, who entered Qatar as a general worker 28 years ago, has been running Woodland Contracting and General Services for the past 14 years. The company currently has a capital of QAR 500,000 and employs around 2,000 people.

Mahendra Prasad Chamlagai's journey reflects the resilience, ambition, and identity of Nepali migrants who have helped shape global societies while remaining deeply connected to their homeland. Arriving in Qatar 28 years ago as a general worker, he today runs Woodland Contracting and General Services, a company he has led for the past 14 years, employing between 1,500 and 2,000 people with a capital of QAR 500,000.

The Paurkhi Pravasi series documents such inspiring journeys—stories that go beyond individual success to represent Nepal's growing global footprint through labour, enterprise, culture, and courage. These early migrants are not only economic contributors but also cultural ambassadors, carrying Nepali identity across borders.

From Jhapa to Doha

Born into a modest family in Bahradashi Rural Municipality-7 of Jhapa district (formerly Dangbari-3), Mahendra moved to Qatar in 1996 due to financial hardship.

"We were three brothers, and the family situation was very difficult. My elder brother was already in Qatar, so I came to support him and help run the family," he recalls.

At the time, Nepalis were few in Qatar. "Meeting another Nepali felt like reaching home," he says, noting how the community gradually grew over the years.

Mahendra spent nearly seven years working as a labourer. After starting as an office boy and later becoming a salesman, he felt the need to build something of his own.

Building a Business from the Ground Up

In 2003, he opened Doha's First Nepali bookstore, Everest Book Shop. Selling newspapers, novels, and literary works imported from Nepal, the shop quickly became a cultural hub and meeting point for the Nepali community.

While running the bookstore, Mahendra identified broader business opportunities. In 2006, he established Woodland Import-Export Company, entering the clothing trade by importing garments from Nepal, China, and Dubai.

His major breakthrough came in 2010, when he transitioned into the construction sector and renamed the firm Woodland Contracting and General Services. Starting with just 28 workers, the company expanded steadily. Today, over 70 percent of its workforce is Nepali.

A Rare Milestone in Ownership

Gaining full ownership of an established company in Qatar is rare for expatriates. Yet, earlier this year, Mahendra achieved 100 percent ownership of Woodland Contracting and General Services.

"I believe I am among the first Nepali businessmen to fully acquire ownership of an existing company here," he says.

Currently, 90 percent of the company is owned by Mahendra and 10 percent by his wife, Kanchan Chamlagai. He attributes this achievement to years of honesty, discipline, and compliance within Qatar's strict legal framework.



"Qatar trusted me because of my work ethic and integrity," he says.

Struggle, Faith, and Discipline

Mahendra believes his success is rooted in perseverance rather than luck.

"It's hard work. Someone who once started with 600 rupees now pays QAR 200,000 in rent," he reflects.

Remembering his own struggles, he treats his employees with empathy. "I see my workers as family. I've walked the same path they are walking."

Commitment to Social Service

Alongside business, Mahendra has played an active role in social service. He founded the Nepali Businessmen Association, Qatar, serving as its first president. Under his leadership, the association provided significant humanitarian aid to Nepal during earthquakes, floods, and the COVID-19 pandemic, including oxygen cylinders worth over Rs 12 million.

He currently serves as president of the International Jhapani Society and has previously been an advisor to NRNA Qatar and an honorary member of NRNA ICC.

"My goal is to unite Jhapanis worldwide and contribute to the development of our district," he says.

Qatar as a Second Home

Qatar has been central to Mahendra's personal and professional life. His children grew up in the country and are completing their education here.

"I never imagined I would reach this point," he says. "Time and hard work guided me. Whatever I've achieved is due to my parents' blessings."

Passion for Nepal and Call for Reform

Mahendra believes the skills, capital, and experience gained abroad must now support Nepal's development. Under his leadership, the Nepal Business Association, Qatar, has collaborated with the Nepal Exporters Association to promote bilateral trade.

"A large number of Nepali people are working in various professional sectors, and that through the Nepal Business Association Qatar, my aim is to encourage and support the growth of more Nepali businessmen in Qatar", Mahendra said.

A Second Life

A serious health crisis a few years ago became a turning point in his life. After spending a long period unconscious in hospital, Mahendra describes his recovery as a "second birth."

"I survived because of God's grace and my family's love," he says. The experience strengthened his resolve to dedicate more time to social service and nation-building.

Looking Ahead

With his wife as co-shareholder and his children nearing the completion of their studies, Mahendra has already invested in a hotel, school, and rice mill in Nepal, with plans for further expansion.

"Those who dream big turn difficulties into opportunities," he says. "I am proof that leadership can be built even while working abroad."

For Mahendra Chamlagai, the mantra remains simple: faith, discipline, and relentless hard work.

QRCS launches ‘Warm Winter’ campaign in Afghanistan

Qatar Red Crescent Society (QRCS) office in Afghanistan, in partnership with Afghan Red Crescent Society and in co-ordination with local authorities and target communities, has commenced the implementation of the Warm Winter Campaign 2025-26 projects.

The initiative aims to provide essential winter aid to more than 3,276 individuals from poor and disaster-affected families, with a total cost estimated at QR225,000.

The project seeks to alleviate the suffering of vulnerable households impacted by natural disasters amid the harsh and freezing winter conditions in the region.

As part of the campaign, winter relief packages were distributed to 468 families from the most disadvantaged groups in Batu District, Daikundi Province, one

of the areas most affected by severe winter weather.

Representatives of the local authorities in Batu District, the head of the Afghan Red Crescent branch in Daikundi Province, as well as several staff and volunteers from the Afghan Red Crescent and the QRCS team in Afghanistan office joined the distribution effort.

Participants and beneficiaries expressed their deep gratitude and appreciation to QRCS and the generous people of Qatar for their support in easing the hardships of hundreds of vulnerable and disaster-affected families in Afghanistan.

The QRCS noted that it launched its annual seasonal relief campaign “Warm Winter 2025-26” under the slogan #InSafeHands, aiming to provide heating and food supplies to more than 317,000 beneficiaries across 11 countries worldwide.

Qatar steps up protection of wild meadows

From Page 1

MoECC has stressed that public access to key ecological sites has not been denied, but rather regulated to prevent harmful or careless practices.

The ministry has repeatedly urged the public to enjoy Qatar's natural landscapes responsibly and to comply with environmental regulations, noting that respect for nature is an integral part of the country's cultural heritage.

Several Qatari meadows are known by distinctive local names, reflecting their environmental and historical significance. These include Umm Al Sahnat Meadow, located in the north-east and covering 232,148sq m, which hosts native trees such as Sidr, Samr and Awsaj alongside diverse plant species.

Other notable sites include Al Qaiya Meadow in the north-west (approximately 854,461sq m); Al Sulaimi Al Gharbi Meadow in the north-east (120,739sq m); Rawdat Muaither and Al Darb near the Muaither and Abu Nakhla areas; Rawdat Al Ajouz in the northern region west of Umm Al Amad; and Rawdat Rashid, along with Rawdat Saeed, Rawdat Al Arnab and Rawdat Al Faras.

Among the most prominent wild trees and shrubs found in Qatari meadows are Sidra (*Ziziphus spina-christi*), Samr (*Vachellia tortilis*),



MoECC monitors the meadows especially after rain to spot violations.



Regular cleaning campaigns of the meadows.

Awsaj (*Lycium shawii*), Qurm (man-grove) (*Avicennia marina*) and Gafnah (*Dipterygium glaucum*).

Native grasses and herbs include Dahah (*Lasiurus scindicus*), Ain Al Qot (*Gymnarrhena micrantha*), commonly known as cat's eye, Aqool (*Alhagi maurorum*) or camel thorn, as well as Stipagrostis species and Cyperus conglomeratus.

Environmental protection is en-

forced under Law No 32 of 1995 on the Prevention of Damage to Plant Ecology and Ecosystems, which stipulates penalties including imprisonment of up to three months and fines ranging from QR1,000-20,000, or both. The law also allows for the confiscation of vehicles or tools used in violations and obliges offenders to compensate for environmental damage.

QTERMINALS

TENDER ANNOUNCEMENT

Tender Title	Provision of Transportation Services and Rental of 43 Vehicles (Cars, Pickup, Bus)
Contract Term	3 Years
Tender Reference Number	HPP1-SC002105
Bid Closing Date & Time	28 January 2026
Tender Document Fee	QAR 5,000
Last Date of Purchasing the Tender	31 December 2025
Tender Bond	5 % of the total bid value

QTerminals hereby announces the above tender with the following terms and conditions:

- Must Have Criteria for Collection of Tender Documents and Bidding:**
 - The Supplier can provide the services and rental vehicles before 01-Mar-2026.
 - The proposed staff must be under the direct sponsorship of the Supplier.
 - The Supplier must have the relevant Business Activity in their Trade License.
 - The Supplier should have at least 5 Years experience in similar projects in Qatar.
- The offer should be accompanied by a Tender Bond issued by one of the Banks operating in Qatar for the amount shown in the above table and valid for 120 days from the bid closing date. The offer which is not accompanied by the Tender Bond will not be considered.
- The deadline for submitting offers will be 11:00 am on the date shown above. Any offer received thereafter will not be considered and will be rejected.
- The tender documents will only be released upon payment of the tender document fee.
- The interested suppliers must also register their company via the QTerminals website under the Procurement section <https://qterminals.com/procurement>

Tender Document Fee Payment:

The Tender Document Fee of QAR 5,000 is non-refundable and should be deposited to QTerminals bank account as specified below. The copy of the deposit receipt shall be sent to suppliersupport@qterminals.com

Beneficiary Name	QTERMINALS WLL
Bank Name	Qatar National Bank (QNB)
IBAN	QA75QNBA00000000013192809052
BIC / SWIFT Code	QNBAQAQA

Clarifications:

For any clarifications / queries please contact at: suppliersupport@qterminals.com or +974-40445369

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QTERMINALS

TENDER ANNOUNCEMENT

Tender Title	Provision of Catering Services for approximately 900 meals per day
Contract Term	2 Years
Tender Reference Number	HPP1-SC002106
Bid Closing Date & Time	28 January 2026
Tender Document Fee	QAR 5,000
Last Date of Purchasing the Tender	31 December 2025
Tender Bond	5 % of the total bid value

QTerminals hereby announces the above tender with the following terms and conditions:

- Must Have Criteria for Collection of Tender Documents and Bidding:**
 - The Supplier should be ISO 22000 Food Safety Management System certified.
 - The Supplier should have Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) food safety plans.
 - The Supplier should have proper means for food transportation.
 - The Supplier should be capable of catering 900 meals per day.
 - Proposed staff must be under the direct sponsorship of the Supplier.
 - Supplier must have the relevant Business Activity in their Trade License.
 - The Supplier should have at least 5 Years experience in similar projects in Qatar.
- The offer should be accompanied by a Tender Bond issued by one of the Banks operating in Qatar for the amount shown in the above table and valid for 120 days from the bid closing date. The offer which is not accompanied by the Tender Bond will not be considered.
- The deadline for submitting offers will be 11:00 am on the date shown above. Any offer received thereafter will not be considered and will be rejected.
- The tender documents will only be released upon payment of the tender document fee.
- The interested suppliers must also register their company via the QTerminals website under the Procurement section <https://qterminals.com/procurement>

Tender Document Fee Payment:

The Tender Document Fee of QAR 5,000 is non-refundable and should be deposited to QTerminals bank account as specified below. The copy of the deposit receipt shall be sent to suppliersupport@qterminals.com

Beneficiary Name	QTERMINALS WLL
Bank Name	Qatar National Bank (QNB)
IBAN	QA75QNBA000000000013192809052
BIC / SWIFT Code	QNBAQAQA

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QTERMINALS

TENDER ANNOUNCEMENT

Tender Title	Provision of Approximately 110 Manned Security Manpower Services
Contract Term	3 Years, from May 2026
Tender Reference Number	HPP1-SC002107
Bid Closing Date & Time	28 January 2026
Tender Document Fee	QAR 5,000
Last Date of Purchasing the Tender	31 December 2025
Tender Bond	5 % of the total bid value

QTerminals hereby announces the above tender with the following terms and conditions:

- Must Have Criteria for Collection of Tender Documents and Bidding:**
 - The Supplier should have a Class A to E classification certificate from Ministry of Finance.
 - The Supplier should confirm that all Security Personnel who will be deployed have a valid Ministry of Interior license for security services profession.
 - The Supplier must conduct International Ship and Port Security (ISPS) training for all their security personnel prior deployment.
 - The Supplier should be capable of deploying required security personnel (+/- 100) on or before May 2026.
 - The Supplier should have at least 5 Years experience in similar projects in Qatar.
 - The Supplier must have the relevant Business Activity in their Trade License.
 - The Supplier have a minimum of 500 employees deployed including support and managerial staff.
 - The Supplier should hold valid ISO: 45001 & ISO: 9001 OHSM and QMS Certifications respectively.
- The offer should be accompanied by a Tender Bond issued by one of the Banks operating in Qatar for the amount shown in the above table and valid for 120 days from the bid closing date. The offer which is not accompanied by the Tender Bond will not be considered.
- The deadline for submitting offers will be 11:00 am on the date shown above. Any offer received thereafter will not be considered and will be rejected.
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‘Doha Dictionary is Qatar’s gift to the present and future of Arabic’

The Doha Historical Dictionary of the Arabic Language is Qatar’s gift to the present and future of the Arabic language, HE the Minister of State and president of the Qatar National Library (QNL) Dr Hamad bin Abdulaziz al-Kawari has said, lauding the pioneering role played by the nation and its continued support for this pioneering project.

“The Doha Historical Dictionary of the Arabic Language Qatar’s gift to the present and future of the Arabic language,” he wrote on X. “It was a luminous day in the his-

tory of the Arabic language, a day that brings solace to the memory and peace to the soul, with the presence of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani, on the occasion of the announcement of the completion of the Doha Historical Dictionary of the Arabic Language.”

“This great cultural project, long awaited, has arrived today as a testament to the fact that Arabic remains at the heart of attention and care,” HE Dr al-Kawari added. “I was honoured to attend this distinguished occasion and to listen

to the speeches that highlighted the greatness of this scholarly achievement and the tireless efforts exerted by the scholars and researchers over many years of rigorous and systematic work.”

“They deserve all the honour and appreciation for their invaluable service to the Arabic language, both today and in the future,” he stressed.

HE Dr al-Kawari said that the Doha Dictionary is far more than a volume destined for library shelves; it represents the collective memory of Arabic across the ages,

tracing the origins of words, the evolution of their meanings, and their journeys through thought, science, and literature.

The minister added that by placing Arabic in its rightful position among the world’s major languages, equipped with comprehensive historical and reference dictionaries, the project provides the language with solid scientific foundations, enabling it to engage confidently and effectively with the era of artificial intelligence (AI) and digital knowledge.

He highlighted Qatar’s pioneer-

ing role and sustained support for this landmark initiative, praising the Doha Institute for Graduate Studies for the significant institutional and scholarly effort behind it.

The institute, HE Dr al-Kawari noted, has set a distinguished example by successfully uniting cultural vision, rigorous academic work, and long-term strategic planning.

“A salute to Qatar and its wise leadership for this great achievement, which has transformed the Arabic language into a project for



HE Dr Hamad bin Abdulaziz al-Kawari

the future, not merely a legacy of the past,” he said. “A salute to every scholar and researcher who contributed to this enduring work, which will remain a shining beacon in the history of Arabic and a cornerstone in strengthening its global standing and future.”

International conference held on AI and Arabic language characteristics

A conference on artificial intelligence (AI) and the characteristics of the Arabic language, organised by the Doha Historical Dictionary of the Arabic Language (Doha Dictionary) in co-operation with the Arab Centre for Research and Policy Studies, opened on Monday, following the conclusion of the ceremony marking the completion of the Doha Historical Dictionary of the Arabic Language.

The two-day conference was attended by a select group of researchers, linguists, and specialists in AI and the automatic processing of the Arabic language from Arab and international universities and research centres.

The first day began with an opening session dedicated to framing the major issues addressed by the conference, and highlighting the importance of linking Arabic linguistic research with the development of AI technologies, especially in light of the increasing need for reliable linguistic resources that contribute to the development of Arabic linguistic models.

The opening session was followed by a special session on the Doha Dictionary, focusing on the linguistic and cognitive foundations on which the dictionary is based, and on its contributions to reconstructing the historical understanding of meaning and word in Arabic.

Professor of linguistics at Egypt’s Tanta University in Egypt, Dr Abdul Karim Jabal, discussed the jurisprudence of semantics and the transformations of meaning, highlighting the role of historical evidence in refuting a number of common misconceptions in linguistic understanding.

Professor of linguistics at Al-Azhar University and a linguistic expert involved in the Doha Dictionary, Dr Mohamed al-Khatib, also discussed the structure of the witness and the documentation methodology, highlighting the standards adopted in maintaining texts within the dictionary, the most important of which are textual accreditation and scientific neutrality.

Head of the Scientific Council of the Doha Dictionary, Dr Rachid Belhabib, ad-



ressed the issues of revival and standardisation in light of the dictionary’s data, while Scientific Council vice-president Dr Hassan Hamza presented a comparative reading between the Doha Dictionary and the French Historical Dictionary in terms of the methodology of language history.

The first day witnessed the convening of the first session on “Data from the Doha Historical Dictionary of the Arabic Language in the service of artificial intelligence”, which discussed the potential for employing historical lexical data in the development of smart applications and Arabic linguistic models.

Doha Dictionary executive director Dr

Ezz El Din al-Bouchikhi, Doha Dictionary computing unit head Mohamed Babah, and Doha Dictionary computer expert Mohamed Rikas, discussed the role of dictionary data as a resource for developing Arabic AI applications.

The research emphasised the importance of Doha Dictionary data in developing Arabic AI, as it provides 300,000 dictionary entries and a text corpus of nearly 1bn words.

Head of the bibliography and corpus unit at the Doha Dictionary, Dr Mohammed al-Obaidi, gave a presentation on enhancing Arabic digital content with lexical resources in the age of AI, using

the Doha Dictionary as a model.

Researchers Dr Samer al-Rashwani and Dr Sumaya al-Tanbouli from the Research Centre for Islamic Legislation and Ethics at Hamad Bin Khalifa University, discussed the development of an AI server enhanced with lexicon data for a more accurate understanding of Qur’anic texts and prophetic Hadiths.

The conference also witnessed three scientific sessions in the evening, including a session on the linguistic characteristics of Arabic and its relationship to machine modelling.

Another session reviewed Arabic applications in the performance of AI models, where papers focused on evaluating the performance of linguistic models in processing Arabic at its various levels.

The conference continued yesterday with a discussion of Arab attempts to build linguistic models, the use of AI in education and translation, and the cultural and cognitive contexts of intelligent models.

– QNA

QIIB organises ‘Health Day’ for staff

QIIB organised a “Health Day” for its employees at the bank’s headquarters, in co-operation with the Qatar Red Crescent Society (QRCS), as part of the ongoing collaboration between the two sides.

The event was aimed at raising awareness about common illnesses, particularly daily health concerns, and to encourage the adoption of a healthy and sustainable lifestyle.

Employees from across the bank’s departments and divisions took part in the Health Day, which featured a range of interactive medical screenings, including blood pressure checks, blood sugar testing, body mass index (BMI) measurement, and vision tests.

“We organised this Health Day because we believe that good health is essential to building a stable and sustainable institution,” said QIIB human resources and administration



QIIB chief executive Dr Abdulbasit Ahmad al-Shaibei and human resources and administration chief Ali Hamad al-Mesaifri at the ‘Health Day’ for QIIB employees, which was organised at the bank’s headquarters in co-operation with the QRCS.

chief Ali Hamad al-Mesaifri.

“A healthy employee is better equipped to contribute, innovate, and perform, which in turn enhances overall work quality and the work environment,” he said. “Our focus on the health

and wellbeing of all employees also supports Qatar National Vision 2030, which highlights the importance of health as a key pillar of human development.”

“At QIIB, we are keen to adopt impactful initiatives that raise health awareness and encourage our employees to take care of their daily well-being, not only through medical check-ups, but also by promoting a culture of prevention and supporting a healthy, balanced lifestyle,” al-Mesaifri added.

“Our collaboration with the QRCS reflects the bank’s commitment to partnering with leading national institutions known for their extensive expertise,” the official said. “Initiatives like this demonstrate QIIB’s dedication to its social responsibility toward its employees and its ongoing efforts to provide a work environment that supports both physical and mental well-being.”



A senior QIIB executive at the ‘Health Day’ for QIIB employees.

ANNOUNCEMENT

I, MD MAMUN MIAH MD ABDULMALEK

holder of

Bangladesh Passport No. A19064784
QID No. 28605003087

hereby change my name

from

MD MAMUN MIAH MD ABDULMALEK

to

MD MAMUN MIAH ABDUL MALEK

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

Over 44,000 visitors enjoy UDC’s Arab Cup festivities

The United Development Company (UDC) has concluded its sports, cultural, and entertainment activities held in celebration of the 2025 Arab Cup, attracting more than 44,000 visitors to The Pearl Island and Gewan Island.

The “exceptional season” transformed both islands into vibrant destinations alive with colour, music, and enthusiastic crowds over 18 days.

The visitors enjoyed an atmosphere that redefined the concept of open-air public events in Qatar.

Throughout the festivities, the islands witnessed continuous activity from families exploring various entertainment zones to passionate fans gathering to support their favourite Arab teams.

Visitors immersed themselves in cultural and heritage performances that blended authenticity with modern creativity.

These elements came together to create a dynamic scene that showcased the islands’ readiness to host large-scale events that meet the expectations of diverse audiences.

The celebration featured daily live shows, musical performances, traditional cultural performances, and an array of Arabic cuisine offerings, in addition to designated fan areas broadcasting the tournament’s matches in energetic and competitive settings.



Gewan Island also offered a dedicated lineup of interactive children’s activities, including live theatre, creative workshops, and mini sports competitions.

The UDC ensured a seamless and enjoyable experience for all guests by providing high standards of comfort, safety, and organisation, allowing visitors to spend memorable days filled with sports,

culture, art, and community engagement.

Many attendees expressed their appreciation for the event’s organisation and the impressive capabilities of the islands.

The company emphasised that the success of this year’s festivities reflects its continuous commitment to supporting Qatar’s cultural and sports landscape, while strengthening the positioning of The Pearl Island and Gewan Island as leading destinations for diverse urban and community experiences.

The company also highlighted that these efforts align with Qatar National Vision 2030 in fostering a vibrant society enriched with cultural and recreational opportunities.

The UDC concluded its festivities by reaffirming its dedication to introducing fresh, innovative experiences in the coming years, further enhancing the visitor journey through new programmes that elevate the appeal of The Pearl Island and Gewan Island as premier hubs for entertainment, celebration, and memorable shared moments.

The UDC is one of Qatar’s leading real estate development companies and the master developer of The Pearl and Gewan Islands, creating integrated communities that combine modern living, quality, and sustainability in line with Qatar’s future aspirations.

Trade Union chief says war led to 77% Gaza unemployment

QNA
Gaza

Head of the General Federation of Palestinian Trade Unions in the Gaza Strip Sami al-Amssi affirmed that the genocidal war waged by the Israeli occupation on the Gaza Strip has resulted in the suspension of around 400,000 workers from their jobs and raised the unemployment rate in the Strip to 77% during 2025.

In an exclusive interview with the Qatar News Agency (QNA), al-Amssi said that the war of extermination has pushed workers into catastrophic levels of extreme poverty and food insecurity, and that the labour market is facing the repercussions of the war, whose effects are expected to extend for many years.

He said that the Israeli war on the Gaza Strip represented the final nail in the coffin of vital sectors and economic projects that had provided sources of income for thousands of Palestinian workers, who found themselves added to unemployment rolls and prey to widespread joblessness, transforming them from productive labourers into people

in need of aid and assistance.

With the Israeli aggression destroying all industrial, commercial, and agricultural sectors, eliminating the foundations for the revival of these vital fields, and with the continuation of the tight Israeli siege and closure of the Gaza Strip, along with the prevention of the entry of any materials capable of restarting the wheel of life, thousands of Palestinian workers are facing the prospect of continued life below the poverty line and descending into catastrophic levels of extreme poverty, lack of income sources, and consequently food insecurity.

Al-Amssi added that with the start of the aggression in Oct 2023, all labour sectors came to a complete halt, including the construction sector, which employed around 40,000 workers; metal workshops, which employed nearly 10,000 workers, agriculture, which employed about 35,000 workers; and public transport, which employed around 20,000 drivers.

He further said that the destruction and shutdown of the fishing sector, which employed nearly 4,000 fishermen and workers; the tailoring sector,

which employed about 8,000 workers, the restaurant and tourism sector, which employed 5,000 workers, as well as the industrial sector, which employed around 8,000 workers pushed all of them into unemployment.

He revealed that total losses amounted to approximately \$4bn in the economic sector, \$4.5bn in the commercial sector, \$2.8bn in transport and communications, and \$2.8bn in the agricultural sector. He pointed out that the occupation destroyed agricultural lands and water wells, caused a decline in annual vegetable production, and that fish stocks were damaged by 100% due to the destruction of hundreds of fishing boats, depriving the population of the Strip of this resource.

This, he said, threatens food security in Gaza for years to come and leads to dangerously high levels of food insecurity, as witnessed during periods of famine throughout the war.

Al-Amssi concluded his interview with QNA by saying that the start of the second phase of the ceasefire and compensating labour sectors for their losses is the only way to alleviate workers' suffering.



A general view shows tents sheltering displaced Palestinians amid harsh winter conditions, in Khan Younis, southern Gaza Strip.

Gazans fear renewed displacement after Israeli strikes

AFP
Khan Yunis

When her children, trembling with fear, ask where the family can go to escape Israel's continued bombardment in southern Gaza's Khan Yunis area, Umm Ahmed has no answer.

In her small, devastated village near Khan Yunis city, recent Israeli drone and artillery strikes shattered the tenuous sense of peace delivered by a ceasefire that has largely held since October 10.

Residents say the strikes have targeted neighbourhoods east of the so-called Yellow Line — a demarcation established under the truce between Israel and Hamas. The Israeli military says its troops are deployed in the area in accordance with the ceasefire framework.

More than two years after Hamas's October 2023 storming of Israel sparked a devastating war, tens of thousands of Gazans still live in tents or damaged homes in these areas, where the Israeli army maintains control and operates checkpoints.

Now, many fear being forced from their homes, compelled to move west of the Yellow Line.

"We don't sleep at night because of fear. The bombardments in the east are relentless," said Umm Ahmed, 40.

"My children tremble at every

explosion and ask me, 'Where can we go?' And I have no answer."

Her home in Bani Suheila has been completely destroyed, yet the family has stayed, pitching a tent beside the ruins. "Staying close to our destroyed home is easier than facing the unknown," Umm Ahmed said.

Crossing the Yellow Line to Al-Mawasi, west of Khan Yunis, is not an option for them.

There, makeshift camps stretch as far as the eye can see, housing tens of thousands of Palestinians who fled the fighting.

"There is no place left for anyone there, and not enough food or water," Umm Ahmed said, as Gaza remains trapped in a catastrophic humanitarian crisis.

The Israeli military blames continued threats from Hamas fighters for its actions in the area.

The war in Gaza began with Hamas's storming of Israel in October 2023. Since the war began, more than 70,000 people have been killed in Gaza, according to the Hamas-run territory's health ministry. The vast majority of Gaza's more than 2mn residents were displaced during the war, many multiple times.

A fragile ceasefire has been in place since October 10, though both sides regularly accuse each other of violations.

Under the truce, Israeli forces withdrew to positions east of the Yellow Line. Earlier this month,

Israeli army chief Lieutenant General Eyal Zamir described the Yellow Line as the "new border line" with Israel.

"The Yellow Line is a new border line — serving as a forward defensive line for our communities and a line of operational activity," he said to reserve soldiers in Gaza. For Palestinian officials, the line is seen as a tool for permanent displacement.

"The objective is to frighten residents, expel them from their areas, and force them west," said Alaa al-Batta, mayor of Khan Yunis, denouncing the bombardments as "violations of the ceasefire agreement".

Mahmud Baraka, 45, from Khuzaa, east of Khan Yunis, described constant artillery fire and home demolitions in the area.

"It feels like we are still living in a war zone," he said. "Explosions happen as if they are right next to us. The objective of the occupation is clear: to intimidate us and drive us out, so the region is emptied."

For now, residents feel trapped between bombardment and displacement, uncertain how long they can endure. Despite the danger, Abdel Hamid, 70, refuses to leave his home located north of Khan Yunis, where he lives with his five children. "We will not leave... this is our land," he said. "Moving would not be a solution, but yet another tragedy."

Egypt's grand museum begins live restoration of ancient boat

AFP
Cairo

Egypt began a public live restoration of King Khufu's ancient solar boat at the newly-opened Grand Egyptian Museum yesterday, more than 4,000 years after the vessel was first built.

Egyptian conservators used a small crane to carefully lift a fragile, decayed plank into the Solar Boats Museum hall — the first of 1,650 wooden pieces that make up the ceremonial boat of the Old Kingdom pharaoh.

The 4,600-year-old boat was built during the reign of King Khufu, the pharaoh who also commissioned the Great Pyramid of Giza.

The vessel was discovered in 1954 in a sealed pit near the pyramids, but its excavation did not begin until 2011 due to the fragile condition of the wood.

"You are witnessing today one of the most important restoration projects in the 21st century," Egyptian Tourism Minister Sherif Fathy told reporters.

"It is important for the museum, and it is important for humanity and the history and the heritage."

The restoration will take place in full view of visitors to the Grand Egyptian Museum over the coming four years.

The project is funded by a \$3.5mn grant from the Japan International Co-operation Agency (JICA), with Japanese archaeologists working alongside Egyptian specialists.



A man looks at King Khufu's boat gem, also known as the Solar Boat, while archaeologists and workers gather around King Khufu's second solar boat, as restored wooden planks part of the 1,650-piece structure are installed on a metal frame through Egyptian-Japanese co-operation, marking the start of preparations for public display of the second boat at the Grand Egyptian Museum, near the Giza Pyramid Complex, in Egypt, yesterday.

Eissa Zidan, head of conservation projects at the museum, said the wooden planks were "thermally degraded and in a very weak condition".

"For this reason, archaeological missions had long avoided working on this project," he told AFP.

Egyptian and Japanese archaeologists have been treating the boat's planks and oars using organic materials, including nano-cellulose and Klucel E, that Zidan said met international restoration standards.

The museum also houses a second solar boat from the same era, discovered in significantly better archaeological condition and previously exhibited next to the pyramids of Giza.

Visitors have been flocking to the Grand Egyptian Museum since it opened in early November.

Fathy said the museum receives an average of 15,000 daily visitors, and on some days even draws as many as 27,000 people.

The government hopes the museum will help revive the tourism sector, which accounts for around 9% of Egypt's gross domestic product and employs nearly 2mn people.

After years of struggle due to political instability and the Covid-19 pandemic, Egypt hopes to increase tourist numbers by about 7% in 2026, from 19mn visitors this year, according to Fathy.

Houthis, Yemen govt set to exchange nearly 3,000 prisoners

AFP
Muscat

Yemen's Houthi fighters and its internationally recognised government agreed yesterday to a prisoner swap involving nearly 3,000 people, making it the largest such exchange in 11 years of war should it succeed.

The breakthrough deal came after nearly a fortnight of discussions between officials from both sides in Muscat, the capital of neighbouring Oman, a key mediator in Yemen's long-running conflict.

Officials gave few details about the next steps, but observers pressed both sides to follow through to bolster peace efforts.

Abdulqader al-Mortada, a negotiator with the Houthi delegation, said in a statement on X that "we signed an agreement today with the other party to implement a large-scale prisoner exchange deal involving 1,700 of our prisoners in exchange for 1,200 of theirs,

including seven Saudis and 23 Sudanese". Saudi Arabia's ambassador to Yemen, Mohamed al-Jabir, said his country worked with the UN on the agreement, signed under the auspices of the world body and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC).

"The Yemeni parties have agreed on a mechanism to expedite the detainee exchange process," he told state broadcaster Al-Ekhabariya.

Mohammed al-Basha of the US-based risk advisory Basha Report told AFP that "while today's developments represent a constructive step towards confidence-building between the Houthis and the anti-Houthi government coalition, significant challenges remain".

"Nevertheless, this exchange is still likely to be the largest prisoner of war swap to date," he added.

Challenges include verifying detainee lists and agreeing on a realistic timeline for the exchange, as well as bitter rivalries and divisions within the government itself, he said.

Peace march in DR Congo



Congolese protesters march in a demonstration calling for peace, security and inclusive dialogue from Monsignor Munzihirwa Square to the governor's office in Bukavu, South Kivu province, in the Democratic Republic of Congo, yesterday.

UN extends African Union mission in Somalia through 2026

AFP
United Nations

The UN Security Council yesterday adopted a measure extending authorisation for the African Union-led force in Somalia through 2026.

The African Union Support and Stabilisation Mission (AUSOM) is deployed in the troubled

Horn of Africa country to back Somali security forces and combat the Al Shebaab group.

It replaced a previous "transition" mission in January, which itself was a transformation of an African Union force initially launched in 2007.

Despite gains by the Somali and AUSSOM forces against Al Shebaab in 2022 and 2023, the Al Qaeda-linked group has gone on

the offensive since last year.

It claimed responsibility for an attack in March that narrowly missed the convoy of Somalia's President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud, and fired shells at Mogadishu's airport in April.

In August, Somalia's armed forces and AUSSOM recaptured the strategic town of Bariire, home to a military base and located around 100 kilometres (60

miles) west of the capital Mogadishu. The resolution adopted yesterday maintains the AUSSOM's maximum number of uniformed personnel at 11,826, including 680 police officers.

It also expresses the Council's "concern at the ongoing chronic underfunding of AUSSOM". The United States abstained from the vote, which all 14 other council members supported.

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GULF TIMES

US tariffs, stock outflows cloud Indian rupee outlook

The Indian rupee has tested successive record lows in recent weeks. The currency is down some 4.5% against the dollar this year, weighed down by almost \$18bn of outflows from stocks and delays in finalising a trade deal with the US.

The withdrawals have worsened the strain on the rupee while the 50% US tariffs threaten exporters' dollar inflows. At the same time, firm imports are keeping demand for the greenback elevated.

The rupee is currently Asia's worst-performing currency of 2025. It is also on track for its largest annual decline since 2022 – the year Russia's invasion of Ukraine sent oil prices soaring past \$100 per barrel, dealing a major blow to India, which imports about 90% of its crude. At its strongest in early May, the rupee traded at 83.7538 per dollar. This was around the same time investors were betting India would be among the first to clinch a trade deal with the US.

But the tide turned in July, when US President Donald Trump announced plans to impose higher-than-anticipated tariffs and threatened to penalise India for purchasing Russian energy and weapons.

The levies dashed New Delhi's hopes of preferential treatment over its Asian peers and the rupee suffered its worst monthly loss since 2022. In August, the US set tariffs on most Indian exports at 50% – the highest across Asia – which included a “secondary” 25% penalty tariff for India's trade with Russia.

Currently Asia's worst-performing currency of 2025, the Indian rupee is down some 4.5% against the dollar this year, weighed down by almost \$18bn of outflows from stocks and delays in finalising a trade deal with the US

intended to preserve firepower for what could be a long and volatile stretch while the US and India negotiate a trade deal.

The rupee's overall depreciation this year hasn't come as a huge surprise; the currency has lost value every year since 2018. What has made its weakness stand out is that the US dollar itself has been slipping, while many emerging-market currencies – such as the Taiwan dollar, Malaysian ringgit, and Thai baht – have strengthened.

A weaker rupee makes Indian goods and services cheaper abroad, boosting export competitiveness. This helps to offset the tariff pressures facing exporters, as India seeks to expand its markets by signing trade deals with countries such as the UK. It's also a boon for families of Indian workers abroad who send money home. India is the world's largest recipient of remittances, with a record \$137bn flowing into the country in 2024, according to the World Bank.

On the flip side, a weaker rupee makes imports more expensive, pushing up the cost of essential items such as oil, fertilisers and electronics, most of which India buys from overseas.

Analysts ramped up long bets on most Asian currencies on stronger growth prospects and weakness in the greenback, according to a Reuters poll in early December. At the same time, short positions on the Indian rupee surged to a 10-month high.

The rupee closed at 89.65 against the dollar yesterday, unchanged from its closing level in the previous session. India's currency is now at a crucial juncture. Possible improvements in US-India trade ties and a lower tariff rate could ease pressure on the currency. But if that doesn't eventuate, the RBI may be forced to support the rupee further.

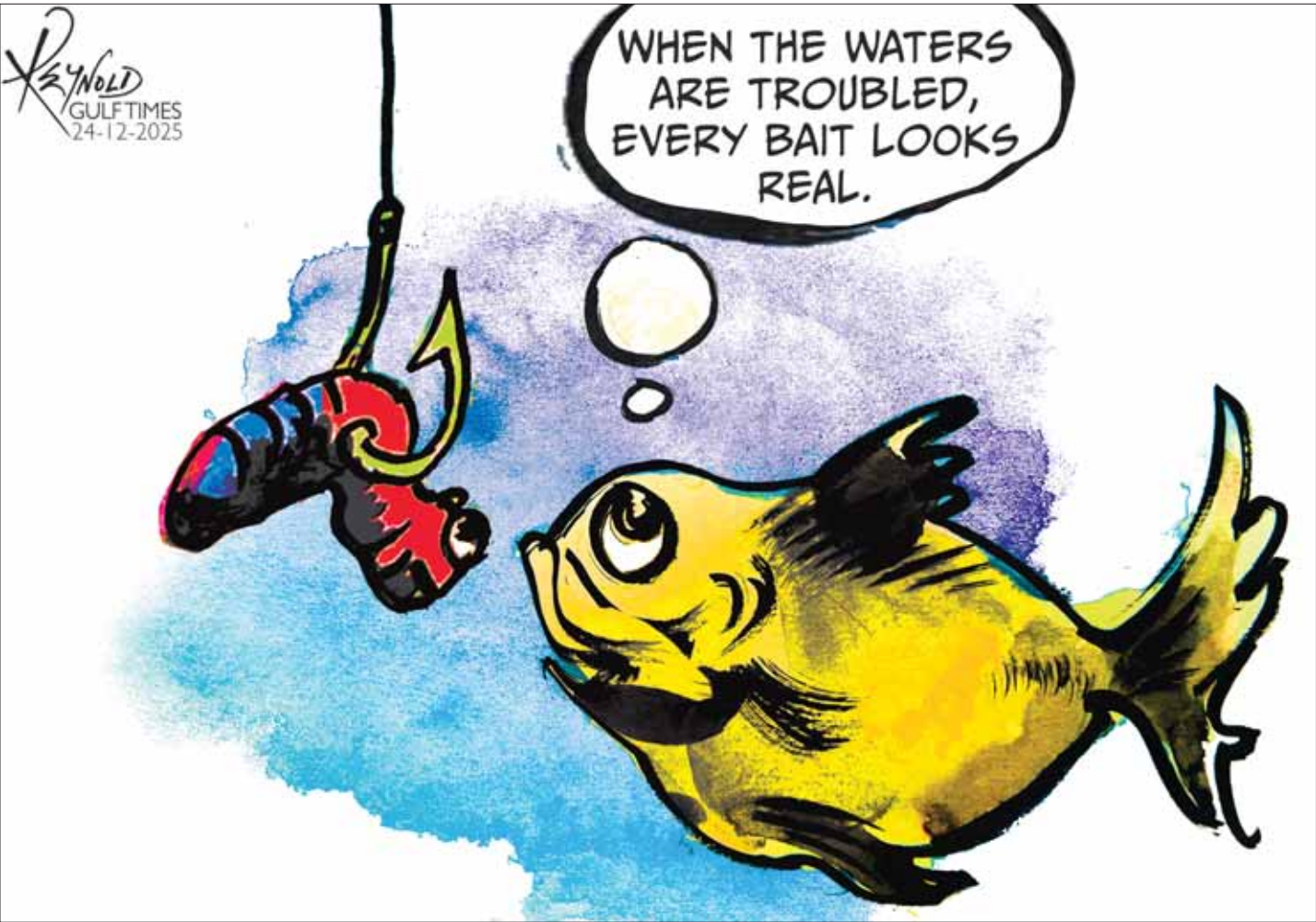
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Faced with new challenges, Europe's carbon market must look ahead

By Günther Thallinger and Ludovic Subran
Munich

The European Union's carbon-pricing policy has long been the subject of fierce debate. To some, it is a bold experiment in aligning markets with planetary limits; to others, it is an added burden on households and businesses already strained by rising energy costs.

One fact, however, remains difficult to dismiss: the EU's Emissions Trading System (ETS) has reduced carbon dioxide emissions faster and more cheaply than almost any other climate policy. The question now is not whether carbon should be priced, but how to make the system fairer, more efficient, and resilient to political headwinds. Europe's climate credibility depends on striking the right balance between ambition and economic pragmatism.

Since its launch in 2005, the ETS has delivered large, market-driven emissions reductions. Power-sector emissions have plunged, coal has been largely priced out of the market, emissions across participating sectors have fallen by roughly 50%, and billions of dollars in ETS revenues have been channelled into clean-energy technologies.

As a result, what began as an experimental cap-and-trade scheme has grown into the world's largest carbon market by revenue and become a model for similar systems from California to China. Today, nearly 30% of global CO2 emissions are covered by some form of pricing scheme – compared to less

than 6% two decades ago – generating over \$100bn in public revenue each year.

Such growth inevitably introduces new challenges. As the ETS expands to sectors like transportation and construction, and as free allowances are phased out between 2026 and 2034, rising carbon prices will hit businesses and households more directly. These realities should not be ignored, but they are no reason to abandon a policy that has demonstrated its effectiveness. Instead, they call for careful recalibration to keep the system fair and politically sustainable.

While the temptation to soften or suspend carbon pricing during periods of economic stress is strong, abrupt policy reversals would erode investor confidence, heighten uncertainty, and undermine Europe's credibility as a climate leader. Stability is the foundation of long-term innovation, and Europe's clean-tech investment boom depends on it.

That said, the goal of carbon pricing is not to punish industry. By signalling that pollution comes at a high cost and that cleaner production pays, companies are able to pursue the most efficient path to reduce emissions, rather than conforming to one-size-fits-all mandates. The revenues can – and should – be reinvested in the economy to support vulnerable businesses and households through the transition.

A “climate dividend” for households, funded by ETS proceeds, could offset higher energy and transportation costs while strengthening public trust. Targeted support, when conditional on

measurable decarbonisation gains, could ease affected industries' transition until low-carbon alternatives become commercially viable, so long as policymakers avoid subsidies that shield inefficiency under the guise of promoting competitiveness.

The EU's Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM), entering into force in 2026, is a crucial – albeit misunderstood – companion to the ETS. It extends the carbon price to imports of steel, aluminium, cement, fertilisers, electricity, and hydrogen, ensuring that European firms are not undercut by more carbon-intensive foreign competitors. Contrary to what some critics claim, this is not protectionism; it is climate realism.

The CBAM could also catalyse a quiet revolution in global climate policy. By tying access to the world's largest single market to carbon transparency, the EU is sending a clear message: if you want to sell here, you must play by the same environmental rules. Other major economies, including the United States, are already exploring similar ideas, reflecting a growing recognition that fair competition and climate action can go hand in hand.

Yet the very possibility of carbon-pricing systems converging across borders is precisely why some governments and industry groups seek to block or fragment emissions trading. After all, a transparent, comparable carbon price erodes the competitive advantage of carbon-intensive manufacturing.

The EU should not allow political pressures to dictate the pace or direction of its energy transition. But the CBAM must be refined to ensure that ambition does not harden into rigidity. To this end, four measures stand out.

First, benchmarking imports could offer partial relief to foreign producers that match best-in-class EU standards. This approach would reward climate-efficient production, reduce trade tensions, and allow the EU to maintain free allowances for clean European producers.

Second, the EU should introduce export rebates for European firms operating in markets that lack effective carbon pricing. To advance meaningful climate progress, clean European products must be able to compete globally.

The third priority is to simplify and harmonise reporting requirements for the CBAM and beyond. A streamlined CBAM could replace a patchwork of overlapping rules with a single, transparent carbon price for domestic production and imported goods alike, cutting red tape and providing businesses with greater clarity.

Lastly, the CBAM should be introduced gradually to avoid unintended harm to the world's poorest and most vulnerable economies. The EU could even direct a share of the CBAM's revenues to help these countries invest in cleaner production. Rather than weakening the system, this would serve its objective of fairness and reciprocity in carbon costs.

Recognising that climate resilience and competitiveness are not mutually exclusive is essential. Far from bureaucratic constraints, the ETS and the CBAM are the scaffolding of Europe's future economy. By spurring innovation in clean technologies, carbon pricing can fuel the growth of strategic sectors, from green hydrogen to advanced materials and circular manufacturing, while reducing energy dependence.

To make that model work, policymakers must focus on three principles: fairness, to keep citizens engaged; predictability, to maintain investor confidence; and consistency, to sustain Europe's leadership on the global stage. If Europe avoids abrupt policy changes during the energy transition, it will not only meet its climate targets but also shape the rules of the emerging low-carbon economy. — Project Syndicate



While the temptation to soften or suspend carbon pricing during periods of economic stress is strong, abrupt policy reversals would erode investor confidence, heighten uncertainty, and undermine Europe's credibility as a climate leader. —AFP

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TRADE

US postpones tariffs on Chinese chips until 2027

The administration of US President Donald Trump announced yesterday that it is postponing tariffs on Chinese semiconductor imports until June 2027. The administration stated that it will announce the tariff rate at least 30 days before it is to be implemented. This measure comes after a year-long investigation into Chinese chip imports to the US, which was initiated by the administration of former President Joe Biden. US Trade Representative Jameson Greer said, "China's targeting of the semiconductor industry for dominance is unreasonable and burdens or restricts US commerce and thus is actionable." - **QNA**

CLAIM

US 'govt seeks to cancel thousands of asylum cases'

The Trump administration has launched a nationwide campaign to void asylum claims of thousands of people with active cases in immigration courts by arguing that they can be deported to countries that are not their own, CBS News reported yesterday. The White House and US immigration and customs enforcement did not respond to requests for comment. "We are working to get illegal aliens out of our country as quickly as possible while ensuring they receive all available legal process, including a hearing before an immigration judge," a department of homeland security spokesperson said in an statement. - **Reuters**

DECISION

UK govt to relax farmers inheritance tax after protests

The UK government yesterday said it will raise inheritance tax thresholds for farmers' estates from £1mn to £2.5mn, signalling a major climbdown of a policy that triggered months of protests. The change, which will take effect in April, will allow spouses or civil partners to pass on up to £5mn in qualifying agricultural or business assets between them before paying inheritance tax, on top of existing allowances, the government said. Assets above that threshold will receive 50% relief. The number of estates facing higher inheritance tax will fall from around 2,000 to up to 1,100. For agricultural estates, the figure drops from 375 to 185, the government said. - **AFP**

MILITANCY

Five Pakistani police personnel die in bombing, shooting attack

Five Pakistani police personnel were killed yesterday when their van was ambushed in a bombing and shooting attack in the country's northwest, provincial police said, as Pakistan struggles with a resurgence of militant violence. The Pakistani Taliban, known as Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), an Islamist militant group, later claimed responsibility for the attack. The group has waged war against the Pakistani state for nearly 20 years. Provincial police said the vehicle was first targeted with improvised explosives before the attackers opened fire, killing four officers and the driver. They later said security forces had killed eight militants. - **Reuters**

Russian air attack on Ukraine kills three and sparks sweeping outages

Reuters
Kyiv

Russian missile and drone attacks killed at least three Ukrainians including a child yesterday, triggering wide-spread emergency power cuts and prompting neighbouring Poland to scramble jets.

The attacks, days after another round of US-led talks to end the nearly four-year-old war, hit energy facilities in western regions the hardest, Prime Minister Yulia Svyrydenko said.

Poland, a Nato member bordering western Ukraine, said Polish and allied aircraft were deployed to protect Polish airspace after Russian strikes targeted areas near the border.

President Volodymyr Zelensky said Russia had targeted at least 13 regions as Ukrainians prepared to celebrate Christmas with their families in an attack that showed Russian President Vladimir Putin was not serious about peace talks.

"Putin still cannot accept that he must stop killing," Zelensky wrote on X. "And that means that the world is not putting enough pressure on Russia. Now is the time to respond."

A four-year-old child was killed

in the central Zhytomyr region, another person in Khmelnytskyi in western Ukraine and a third person outside the Ukrainian capital Kyiv, where local officials said at least five were also wounded.

Russia's defence ministry said it had attacked Ukrainian energy and military facilities and captured two villages along the front line in Ukraine. There was no immediate comment from Kyiv, which often disputes Russian reports of territorial gains.

Moscow has stepped up strikes on Ukrainian energy and logistics to boost pressure on Kyiv as it seeks to alter the terms of a US.-backed peace deal. Ukraine has targeted Russian energy exports.

A Ukrainian overnight drone attack sparked a fire at an industrial facility in Russia's southern Stavropol region, the region's governor, Vladimir Vladimirov, said. Authorities also reported a fire at the fuel oil supply pipeline at the port of Taman in Krasnodar region, saying it had been put out.

The Ukrainian air force said Russia had launched 635 drones and 38 missiles, most of which had been downed.

Ukraine's energy ministry said all regions were experiencing emergency power outages, adding that nearly all consumers in

the western Rivne, Ternopil and Khmelnytskyi regions were without power early yesterday.

Critical and energy infrastructure was damaged in the northern Chernihiv, western Lviv and southern Odesa regions, local authorities said. Private energy firm DTEK said one of its thermal power plants had suffered damage.

Weekend peace talks in Miami brought together US officials with Ukrainian and European delegations, alongside separate contacts with Russian representatives, as Washington tested the scope for a settlement.

Russia has demanded that Ukraine cede its eastern Donbas region and significantly restrict its military capabilities before it stops fighting, terms which Zelensky has rejected.

Ukrainian troops have withdrawn from the eastern town of Siversk, the general staff said yesterday.

The Ukrainian army said that "to preserve the lives of our soldiers and the combat capability of our units, Ukrainian defenders have withdrawn from the settlement".

The Russians were helped by "a significant advantage in manpower and equipment" and weather conditions, it added.

Trump announces new US warship class named after himself



US President Donald Trump announced a new class of heavily armed warships that will be named after himself. Two of the Trump-class ships will be built initially, but that number could grow substantially, according to the president, who said they will be "some of the most lethal surface warfare ships" and "the largest battleship in the history of our country." Trump made the announcement at his Mar-a-Lago residence in Florida alongside Pentagon chief Pete Hegseth, Secretary of State Marco Rubio and Navy Secretary John Phelan, with images of the planned high-tech vessels on stands nearby.

Trump says would be 'smart' for Venezuela's Maduro to step down

AFP
Washington, US

US President Donald Trump said it would be "smart" for Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro to step down, as US naval forces pressed a blockade on the South American country's oil wealth.

Venezuela's key ally Moscow, however, expressed its "full support" for Maduro's government, as Washington has dialled up military operations and threats against Caracas.

Asked by reporters at his Florida home if Washington's threats were designed to force

Maduro to leave office after 12 years, Trump said: "That's up to him, what he wants to do. I think it would be smart for him to do that."

But he added: "If he wants to do something - if he plays tough, it'll be the last time he's ever able to play tough."

Firing back just hours later, Maduro said that Trump would be "better off" if he focused on domestic problems rather than threatening Caracas.

"He would be better off in his own country on economic and social issues, and he would be better off in the world if he took care of his country's affairs," Maduro said in a speech broad-

cast on public television.

US forces have since September launched strikes on boats that Washington claims, without providing evidence, were trafficking drugs in the Caribbean and eastern Pacific Ocean.

More than 100 people have been killed - some of them fishermen, according to their families and governments.

Trump claims Caracas is using oil money to finance "drug terrorism, human trafficking, murder and kidnapping."

Caracas, in turn, fears Washington is seeking regime change, and has accused Washington of "international piracy".

India to provide \$450mn assistance to cyclone-hit Lanka

India has committed \$450mn in humanitarian assistance to help Sri Lanka recover from the devastating damage caused by Cyclone Ditwah, Foreign Minister S Jaishankar said yesterday on a visit to the country.

The cyclone killed more than 640 people when it swept across the South Asian island last month, causing floods and landslides that inflicted about \$4bn in damage, according to the World Bank, or 4% of the country's GDP.

Sri Lankan President Anura Kumara Dissanayake has described the storm, which affected more than 2mn people, as the most challenging natural disaster in the island's history. Jaishankar, who is on a two-day visit, told a media briefing in Colombo he had handed a letter from Prime Minister Narendra Modi to Dissanayake, committing to a "reconstruction package of \$450mn". - **AFP**

Greta Thunberg released from custody



Swedish activist Greta Thunberg walks out of City of London Police station after being arrested by police this morning at a pro-Palestinian protest for holding a sign supporting prisoners linked to Palestine Action, in London, Britain, yesterday.

Pakistan firm wins auction for state airline PIA

AFP
Islamabad

A Pakistani firm won an auction yesterday with a \$482mn bid for a majority stake in the embattled national carrier PIA, a deal seen as a litmus test of the government's pledge to sell off loss-making state companies.

Pakistan International Airlines (PIA), long accused by critics of being bloated and poorly run, has been burning through cash as the government struggles with a balance of payments crisis.

Three Pakistani firms competed in the auction carried live by state broadcasters, with representatives placing their offers in a clear box during several rounds of bidding.

The Arif Habib investment group emerged on top with a bid

of 135bn rupees for the 75% stake on offer. It has an option to buy the remaining 25% in the coming months.

"It was essential to make this process transparent because the biggest transaction of Pakistan's history is about to take place," Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif told his cabinet in a televised statement as the bidding began.

The rival bidders were a consortium led by Lucky Cement, which bid 134bn rupees, and the private Pakistani carrier Air Blue, with 26.5bn.

The sale offer comes after last year's failure to privatise PIA, with just one bid for \$36mn - far below the \$300mn to \$305mn wanted by the government.

Before being delisted from the Pakistan stock exchange, the airline reported a net loss of \$437mn for the 2022 full year on revenue of \$854mn.

Thailand-Cambodia border meeting in doubt over venue row

AFP
Bangkok

Thailand yesterday rejected a request by Cambodia to hold bilateral talks in a neutral country, leaving a planned meeting to negotiate an end to deadly border clashes in doubt.

The nations' long-standing border conflict reignited this month, shattering an earlier truce, killing more than 40 people and displacing over 900,000 on both sides, officials said.

The clashing neighbours on Monday agreed to negotiate truce terms this week, but Cambodia asked Thailand to hold the talks in

a neutral venue, Malaysia's capital.

Thailand's defence ministry, however, yesterday said that the bilateral border committee meeting would go ahead in Thailand's Chanthaburi province from today as planned.

"We guarantee Chanthaburi is safe. This province is the original plan for hosting the GBC (general border committee) even before the fighting started," Thai defence ministry spokesperson Surasant Kongsiri told reporters.

Surasant said officials from the border committee would meet from today to Saturday, adding that whether the meeting happened or not depended on Cambodia.

A Cambodian government spokesman said he had no updated information on the meeting venue.

The conflict stems from a territorial dispute over the colonial-era demarcation of their 800km border and a smattering of ancient temple ruins situated on the frontier.

Each side has blamed the other for instigating the fresh fighting since December 7 and traded accusations of attacks on civilians, after five days of clashes in July killed dozens.

The US, China and Malaysia brokered a truce to end that round of fighting, but the ceasefire was short-lived.

Thai Foreign Minister Sihasak Phuangketkeow on Monday announced the parley with Cambodia after a crisis meeting in Kuala Lumpur with his counterparts from the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean), of which Cambodia is also a member.

But in a letter to his Thai counterpart Nattaphon Narkphanit, Cambodian Defence Minister Tea Seiha requested the meeting be held in Kuala Lumpur for security reasons.

"Due to the ongoing fighting along the border, this meeting should be held in a safe and neutral venue," Tea Seiha wrote in the letter.

Thailand's defence minister

told journalists the last border committee meeting was held in Cambodia's Koh Kong province, so it was Thailand's turn to host, adding that there was nothing to fear as Thais could separate military and diplomatic matters.

But Nattaphon also said Thai forces would keep fighting as long as Cambodia did, as combat that has stretched along nearly the entirety of the border so far has only calmed in parts of two provinces.

The Cambodian defence ministry said Thai forces shelled the Cambodian border city of Poipet and bombed parts of the border province of Preah Vihear yesterday.

In October, US President Don-

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

But Thailand suspended the agreement the following month.

Trump on Monday referred again to the conflict between Cambodia and Thailand as one of the eight wars he had "solved" around the world.

"Thailand is starting to shape up. You know, they started with Cambodia, they started up again," he told journalists in Florida.

"But I think... we have that in pretty good shape, to have that stopped."

Qur’anic Botanic Garden, Herfah Programme revive traditional craft with Dye Plants Garden

The Qur’anic Botanic Garden (QBG), a member of Hamad Bin Khalifa University (HBKU), has collaborated with Qatar Foundation (QF)’s Herfah Programme to develop the first Dye Plants Garden at the historic Al Khater house in Education City.

Herfah is Arabic for craft.

This initiative bridges traditional expertise and modern scientific knowledge, reflecting joint efforts to preserve traditional practices and revive plants that have been historically used for producing natural dyes.

This collaboration marks a milestone in strengthening the QBG’s role in supporting national initiatives aimed at safeguarding Qatar’s botanical and local heritage products as well as traditional craft.

The QBG designed and curated the garden by selecting suitable plant species,

supervised by the Herfah Programme, which cultivated and documented the dye-related uses of each plant.

The selected plants included a range of dye-producing species, notably marigold (Mexican hibiscus), introduced to Qatar for the first time by the Garden and known for its unique purple dye properties.

Additionally, the project featured henna, boxthorn, castor as well as vegetables with natural pigments including beetroot, mustard, eggplant, indigo, and purslane.

“Our collaboration with the Herfah Programme at Al Khater house reflects the QBG’s commitment to supporting sustainability initiatives that bring together heritage and scientific knowledge,” said QBG director Fatima Saleh M al-Khulaifi.

“The Dye Plants Garden is more than a new green space; it is an educational and cultural platform that revives centuries-

old practices,” she said. “We hope that this garden will raise community awareness of the importance of plants and highlight their cultural and environmental value, aligning with the QF’s mission to promote sustainability and preserve heritage.”

QBG experts identified and documented dye plants based on their adaptability to the climatic conditions of Qatar and the region, as well as within the Bait Al Khater environment.

An integrated garden design was developed, encompassing planting, irrigation, and an interpretive display to introduce visitors to the natural pigments produced by these plants and their traditional uses.

This shows a new model for environmental education and fostering community connections with Qatar’s heritage.

The QBG aims to serve as a global cen-



tre for sharing knowledge, education, and research related to plant resources, fostering intercultural dialogues, promoting environmental responsibility, and integrating plant conservation with modern scientific methods. – QNA

QM unveils *Autorretrato* at Mathaf

The art installation by Argentinian artist Gabriel Chaile is part of the Qatar-Argentina and Chile 2025 Years of Culture and celebrates Mathaf’s 15th anniversary

Qatar Museums (QM) has unveiled *Autorretrato* (Self-Portrait, 2022) by Argentinian artist Gabriel Chaile, a major new installation in celebration of the 15th anniversary of Mathaf: Arab Museum of Modern Art.

Installed in Mathaf’s performance space, the work underscores the museum’s ongoing commitment to cultural exchange and its support for impactful contemporary artistic practices that resonate across the region and beyond.

Autorretrato is also part of the Qatar-Argentina and Chile 2025 Years of Culture, a national initiative that builds lasting partnerships and celebrates shared creativity, history, and innovation.

The partnership with Argentina this year highlights the depth of artistic traditions, contemporary practices, and collaborative projects, positioning this new installation as a milestone in promoting cross-cultural dialogue and strengthening international artistic connections.

The deputy chief executive of ALRIWAQ, Public Art, and Ru-

baiya, HE Sheikh Reem al-Thani, said: “As Mathaf celebrates its 15th anniversary, the unveiling of Gabriel Chaile’s *Autorretrato* highlights the transformative role of public art in connecting audiences with contemporary creative practice.”

“This artwork not only enriches the museum’s anniversary programme but also serves as a catalyst for dialogue, inviting reflection on ancestry, heritage, and the ways in which personal and collective identities are interwoven,” she said. “By situating Chaile’s sculpture within a public space, we aim to create meaningful encounters that resonate across cultures, histories, and generations.”

Born in 1985 in San Miguel de Tucuman, Argentina, Chaile is renowned for sculptural practice grounded in the material cultures, archaeological histories, and native traditions of Latin America.

Drawing from his Afro-Arab and Indigenous heritage, Chaile’s work examines how identity is shaped by inherited memory, community narratives, and centuries of cul-



tural interconnection.

Autorretrato departs from traditional portraiture and expresses identity through symbolic and material elements.

The sculpture’s surface is marked by raised clusters inspired in part by the prehistoric Venus of Willendorf, suggesting textured

hair and referencing Chaile’s hybrid Afro-Arab and Latin ancestry. Subtle eye-shaped impressions appear on both sides of the work, echoing the dual-headed forms characteristic of pre-Hispanic ceramics and introducing a sense of duality and introspection.

“*Autorretrato* brings together

material memory and lived experience in a way that feels both deeply personal and universally resonant,” said Mathaf director Zeina Arida.

“Gabriel Chaile’s work encourages us to consider how form can carry history and resilience,” she said. “Presenting this work at Mathaf during our 15th anniversary year is an ideal way to introduce the museum’s future focus on ceramic art, crafting a dialogue where tradition meets innovative form.”

Crafted in adobe, a clay that was often used for Indigenous architecture and pottery across the continent, the work grounds itself in the earth, and the sculpture’s conical form recalls traditional pipes once used in everyday life in northwestern Argentina.

By merging these references, Chaile creates a work that articulates what he describes as a “Genealogy of Form”, a framework through which ancestral memory, material history, and contemporary identity converge.

The sculpture is presented as part of Evolution Nation, an 18-month campaign honouring Qatar’s cultural journey over the past 50 years since the founding of the National Museum of Qatar (NMQ).

Curated by Qatar Creates, the national initiative positions Qatar as a global hub for art, culture, and creativity.

As part of this celebration, the unveiling of Chaile’s *Autorretrato* represents a significant milestone for the QM, highlighting the institution’s ongoing commitment to commissioning and presenting contemporary public art that connects local audiences with global artistic practice. – QNA

Katara opens ‘Bisht House’ to showcase traditional craftsmanship

Katara Cultural Village has opened “Bisht House” – a new heritage space dedicated to preserving and promoting the traditional craft of *bisht*-making.

Katara general manager Prof Dr Khalid bin Ibrahim al-Sulaiti attended the opening, along with officials and heritage enthusiasts.

The venue offers visitors an insight into the various stages of producing the *bisht*, from selecting fabrics to intricate embroidery using gold and silver *zari* threads.

The *bisht* is a traditional, luxurious men’s cloak worn over a *thobe* in the Arab world, symbolising high status, royalty, and prestige.

Bisht House aims to highlight one of the region’s most refined



traditional crafts, known for its precision and artistic detail, and to reinforce its cultural and historical significance.

Founder Sami al-Hawaj said that the *bisht* is not merely a garment but a work of art that reflects

Gulf identity, elegance and heritage.

He added that the centre also displays historic *bishts* dating back more than 50 years, alongside traditional Qatari garments.

– QNA

Kazakhstan military band performs *Lel Ulla Ya Watani* at The Pearl-Qatar

Kazakhstan’s Central Military Band of the Armed Forces delivered a special performance of *Lel Ulla Ya Watani* by Fahad al-Hajri across the streets and promenades of The Pearl-Qatar.

Accompanied by the use of traditional Kazakh musical instruments, the performance was presented as a gesture of appreciation to Qatar, following the band’s participation in the Doha International Music and Marching Festival 2025 (Doha Tattoo).

During the festival, the Honour Guard Band of Kazakhstan’s ministry of defence and the Kazakh Central

Military Band, widely recognised among Asia’s leading military music institutions, presented a series of impressive showcases.

These included diverse musical segments featuring brass and woodwind instruments, alongside precise military formations that reflected the discipline and high level of professionalism of the performers.

Bringing together traditional and contemporary elements, the performances highlighted the cultural and artistic role of military music in fostering dialogue, appreciation, and connection between nations.



QF students secure multiple awards at World Mathematics Team Championship

Students from Qatar Foundation (QF) schools have secured multiple medals and awards across the Advanced and Intermediate categories at the World Mathematics Team Championship held in Thailand.

This achievement marks the third consecutive participation of QF schools in the global competition.

A total of 26 students represented the Qatar Foundation schools, with six students earning medals – one silver and five bronze – while the remaining 20 students received Merit Awards, which recognise strong and distinguished performance in international academic competitions.

The results highlight the strong emphasis that the QF’s Pre-University Education (PUE) schools place on mathematics and sciences as core pillars of academic excellence.

Participation in the championship also provided students with a valuable opportunity to engage with peers from around the world, apply advanced problem-solving skills, and compete in a highly challenging learning environment.

Ismail al-Emadi, a Grade 10 student at Qatar Academy Doha, part of the QF’s PUE, and a bronze medal winner in the



Participating students from QF schools.

Intermediate category, said: “Participating in the championship strengthened my interest in learning mathematics and

continuing to explore the subject.”

“While it may not be my primary choice for future study, it remains an

area of strong personal interest,” he said.

“Earning a medal this year was a satisfying achievement and brought a sense

of relief after the pressure I experienced throughout the competition,” al-Emadi added.

“Although I was slightly disappointed not to secure a second silver medal, winning the bronze medal in Thailand was a true reflection of how much I have progressed and the effort I have invested over the past years,” he stated.

The Qatar Academy Doha student said that the greatest difficulty was not the questions themselves, but managing the psychological pressure associated with high expectations.

He noted that focusing on the value of the overall experience and taking pride in how far he had come helped him overcome those challenges.

Atiksh Shetty, a Grade 8 student at Qatar Academy Sidra, also part of QF’s PUE, and a Bronze Medal winner in the Intermediate category, said: “Winning the bronze medal for the second consecutive year was a moment of great pride, as it reflected the confidence placed in me by my school, the QF, my country, and my family.”

“The experience further strengthened my passion for mathematics and science and encouraged me to continue participating in international academic competitions,” he said.