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BUSINESS | Page 1

Qatar Insurance named 'Best General Insurance Company in Qatar' for 3rd consecutive year



PM receives Iranian FM's phone call

HE Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani received yesterday a phone call from Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi. They discussed relations between the two countries and ways to support and develop them. They also discussed developments in the Gaza Strip, the occupied Palestinian territories, and Lebanon, in addition to topics of mutual interest. The PM stressed the need for concerted regional and international efforts to ensure the full implementation of the ceasefire agreement in the Gaza Strip and Lebanon, paving the way for achieving sustainable peace and stability in the region. (QNA)

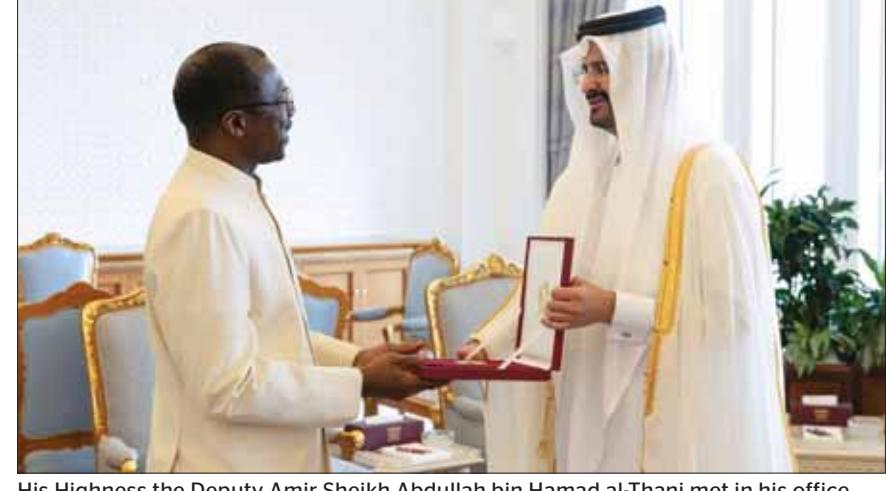
Shura Council urges stronger social role for sports clubs

The Shura Council convened yesterday to deliberate on strengthening the social, cultural and value-based role of sports clubs, underscoring their importance as key community institutions aligned with Qatar National Vision 2030. Chaired by HE the Speaker Hassan bin Abdullah al-Ghanem, the session brought together government representatives, media professionals and social commentators, and reaffirmed the state's priority of investing in children and youth as the foundation of national development. Addressing the Council, the Speaker highlighted Qatar's significant progress in the sports sector, supported by world-class infrastructure and growing participation at both professional and community levels. He stressed that sports clubs play a central role not only in physical development but also in nurturing ethical, cultural and social values, complementing the roles of family, schools, religious institutions and the media in shaping well-rounded, responsible citizens. Following consensus on the need to enhance these roles and address related challenges, the Council referred the matter to the Education, Culture, Sport and Media Affairs Committee, while also approving draft amendments to the selective tax law for referral to the government. **Page 2**

Deputy Amir receives GECF official, bestows Al Wajbah on Gambia envoy



His Highness the Deputy Amir Sheikh Abdullah bin Hamad al-Thani yesterday received Secretary-General of Gas Exporting Countries Forum (GECF), Engineer Mohamed Hamel, who called to greet His Highness the Deputy Amir at the end of his tenure. His Highness the Deputy Amir extended his best wishes to the secretary-general for success in his future endeavours. The GECF secretary-general expressed his gratitude to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani and His Highness the Deputy Amir for the support provided by Qatar to the GECF. (QNA)



His Highness the Deputy Amir Sheikh Abdullah bin Hamad al-Thani met in his office at the Amiri Diwan yesterday with the ambassador of the Republic of the Gambia, Foday Malang, who called to greet His Highness at the end of his tenure in the country. His Highness the Deputy Amir accorded the Gambian ambassador the Al Wajbah Decoration in recognition of his role in supporting and strengthening bilateral relations, wishing him success in his future missions and relations between the two countries further progress. The ambassador expressed his thanks and appreciation to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani, His Highness the Deputy Amir, and officials in the country for the co-operation he received, which contributed to the success of his tenure in the country. (QNA)

Surge in reconciliation as judges prioritise unity over divorce

By Ayman Adly
Staff Reporter

Reconciliation, rather than litigation, is increasingly shaping the outcome of family disputes in Qatar, with new indicators pointing to a sustained rise in amicable settlements across Family Court circuits during the final quarter of 2025. The trend reflects a judicial approach that places family stability, dialogue and social cohesion at the heart of the justice process. The Family Court recorded improved reconciliation indicators across several judicial circuits handling family disputes, underscoring the success of a model that seeks to resolve differences through settlement and mutual understanding before disputes escalate into formal court cases. This reconciliatory approach is based on making concerted amicable efforts between the disputing parties prior to initiating judicial procedures and formally registering cases before the court.

A number of judicial circuits achieved notably positive results, reflecting the active role played by judges in enhancing family cohesion and promoting



solutions that preserve marital and familial ties wherever possible.

In recognition of these efforts, Judge Dr Ghanim al-Humaidi,

President of the Court of First Instance, honoured judges who achieved the highest reconciliation rates within their respective circuits. **To Page 11**

Qatar's stellar mediation caps a glorious year

● Neutrality, trust define Doha's distinct doctrine

From Gaza and Ukraine to Africa and South Asia, Qatar is closing out the year with an expanded mediation footprint, underscoring a constitutionally grounded foreign-policy approach that has reinforced its standing as a key international broker in conflict resolution.

In 2025, Qatar continued its mediation efforts in one of the most severe political and humanitarian crises of recent times: the ongoing genocide in the Gaza Strip.

Over two years of relentless bombardment, Qatar bore a significant diplomatic burden in attempting to reach agreements



that could alleviate the suffering of thousands of Palestinians, despite Israeli intransigence and limited international action.

Since the outbreak of the war

on October 7, 2023, Qatar played a pivotal mediation role in coordination with Egypt and the United States, culminating in a ceasefire agreement announced

on January 19, 2025. The agreement included provisions for prisoner exchanges and the facilitation of urgent humanitarian aid into Gaza. However, the Israeli occupation later violated the agreement and resumed military operations in March 2025.

Despite the collapse of the ceasefire and the worsening humanitarian catastrophe, Qatar continued its diplomatic engagement, working with partners to restore calm and pursue a comprehensive and sustainable truce amid deteriorating conditions on the ground.

During this period, Qatar itself became the target of an unprecedented attack. On September 9, 2025, Israeli strikes targeted residential buildings housing families of Hamas political leaders and negotiating delegates in Doha. **To Page 11**

Mada Center in 'Universal Access for All' 2026-28 plan

By Joseph Varghese
Staff Reporter

Mada Center has launched its 2026-2028 strategy under the slogan "Universal Access for All", which highlights high-impact programmes aimed at enhancing quality of life and empowerment for persons with disabilities and the elderly.

The strategy is guided by a clear vision and mission focused on empowering people with disabilities and the elderly to live with a higher quality of life within an inclusive and sustainable accessibility ecosystem, fostering more inclusive and accessible environments, services, and experiences both physically and digitally.

Mada Center was established in 2010 to promote the principles of inclusion and to build an accessible society for persons with disabilities and the elderly. Mada has become the world's centre of excellence in Arabic universal accessibility and has contributed to Qatar achieving first place worldwide on the Digital Accessibility Rights Evaluation Index 2020 issued by the United Nations' Global Initiative for Inclusive Information and Communication Technologies.

The strategy focuses on enabling people with disabilities and elderly to enjoy a high quality of life through a comprehensive accessibility ecosystem that promotes independence and opens doors to active participation across all areas of life.

It outlines a set of strategic outcomes that Mada seeks to achieve during 2026-2028. These outcomes include several objectives such as to enable people with disability and the elderly to enjoy a better quality of life through the empowerment of assistive technology; a distinguished position for Qatar in scientific research and innovation in the field of access in Arabic; pioneering in empowerment and specialised capabil-

ity development and advocacy for universal access policies and practices.

Meanwhile, the strategy has a clear set of values that reflect Mada's institutional approach. The values include people centric programmes; empathy and advocacy; encouraging innovation; community partnership and quality and sustainability.

These values indicate that the implementation of the strategy will not rely solely on launching initiatives, but also on measuring impact, enhancing user experience, building effective partnerships, and developing solutions that are scalable and sustainable.



Furthermore, the strategy presents an integrated framework with four strategic programmes that represent practical implementation pathways to deliver the desired impact for beneficiaries and the wider community.

The first one is an inclusive education programme. It is focused on supporting inclusion within educational settings by enhancing equitable learning opportunities and removing barriers that may limit students with disabilities from accessing educational content and services.

The second programme is to provide access to employment. It is aimed at strengthening access to the labour market by supporting accessibility across recruitment pathways and workplace environments and by enhancing the readiness and effectiveness of work and entrepreneurship ecosystems to become more inclusive and responsive to diversity.

To Page 11



Shura Council discusses reinforcing sport clubs' cultural and social role

Speaker HE Hassan bin Abdullah al-Ghanem says youth key to Qatar National Vision 2030 success

The Shura Council convened yesterday at its headquarters, chaired by HE the Speaker Hassan bin Abdullah al-Ghanem.

The session was attended by representatives from various ministries and authorities, alongside sports media practitioners, opinion writers, and individuals interested in social and cultural affairs.

At the opening of the session, Director of Sessions and Committees Affairs Department Ahmed Sultan al-Ghanim read out the agenda, with the Council endorsing the minutes of the previous session.

The Council weighed in on the public deliberation request submitted by a number of the members on promoting sport clubs' activities, as well as their social, cultural, and value-based role.

As such, HE the Speaker underlined Qatar's foremost priority, under the prudent leadership of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani, to dedicate comprehensive care for people, particularly children and young people, as they are the core pillar of building a prosperous and advanced community and achieving Qatar National Vision 2030 (QNV 2030).

HE al-Ghanem recalled Article 22 of the nation's constitution, stipulating that the country takes care of the younger generation

and shields it from causes of corruption and exploitation, as well as physical, mental, and spiritual negligence, offering them the appropriate conditions to grow their abilities across various fields, guided by proper upbringing.

The nation's attention to people is manifested in the remarkable progress it has witnessed throughout the past decades in multiple sectors, foremost of which is the sport sector, with the nation harnessing all human and material potential, culminating in a world-class sport infrastructure, al-Ghanem noted.

He further indicated that the Qatari younger generation has achieved sport milestones both on the regional and global stages, notably the increase in the number of professional and societal sports practitioners in the country.

The Speaker stressed that sport clubs are one of the most important institutions that help achieve QNV 2030, clarifying that they play a pivotal role in achieving the four pillars underpinning this vision, chiefly human development, social development, economic development, and environmental development.

These pillars, he said, undertake roles that go beyond sports to encompass the development of the individual physically, mentally, culturally, socially and ethically, in addition to their role in build-



HE the Shura Council Speaker Hassan bin Abdullah al-Ghanem.

ing the community. Al-Ghanem called on the custodians of these youth clubs and centres, when conducting their athletic activities, to sharply focus on the social, cultural, and ethical dimensions, among others, to achieve the objectives for which they were established.

The members emphasised that the role of these clubs cannot be ignored in social upbringing, which vividly complements the roles of family, school, mosque, media, and other community institutions. The members addressed the multiple contributions of those clubs in all societies, noting that these kinds of sport institutions help explore and care for sport talents and efficiently qualify them to represent their national teams, while socially reinforcing relationships and engagement between their members and residents, as well as the productive use of leisure time, contributing to the enhancement of physical and mental well-being.

They further noted the educational and ethical roles of those clubs through instilling values of patriotism in young people, in addition to fostering the spirit of collective work, punctuality, and discipline, which ultimately help build their positive character to be effective community members.

The members further applauded the outstanding roles of clubs nationwide, along with their comprehensive facilities that go beyond stadiums and sport halls, such as green spaces, walking, running, and biking trails, outdoor fitness equipment, fitness centres, and sports academies across various disciplines.

This is alongside service, commercial, and recreational facilities, which help encourage community members, particularly residents living near these clubs, to engage in community-based physical activity and take full advantage of the available services, they noted.

Accordingly, the members implored the administrations of

sport clubs to optimally capitalise on the available potential, alongside the colossal support provided by the nation, through engaging in diversifying their voluntary initiatives and societal services, increasing their social and cultural events, in terms of both quality and quantity.

They likewise called for broadening the engagement of all community segments in the activities of these institutions by dedicating quality activities and special programmes for the elderly and persons with disabilities.

In addition, the members called for expanding non-sporting activities year-round and effectuating cultural committees in these clubs beyond the summer break.

They also emphasised collaboration with youth centres nationwide under the Ministry of Sports and Youth to organise joint community programmes, indicating that club custodians should balance their focus on football and other sports with broader community and cultural activities.

It is essential to integrate clubs with educational and cultural institutions and civil society organisations to unify efforts, leverage available resources, and serve young people while achieving the shared objectives of these enterprises, the members stressed.

The members indicated that it is quite possible to achieve this collaboration through connecting the academic aspect with physical and sport activities, holding a variety of cultural events, as well as voluntary programs for community mem-

bers, thereby strengthening the clubs' role as cultural and social enterprises. Partnership with the private sector is imperative to support social clubs' activities to avoid complete dependence on state budgets, in pursuit of providing additional income resources, achieving financial independence, and advancing various societal activities, the members said.

They called on the curators of these clubs to project their roles in serving the community and promoting their cultural and social activities, as well as voluntary programmes through a variety of media outlets, including digital platforms to reach all community segments.

The foremost of these segments, the members noted, are children and young people, who account for the largest percentage of the nation's population and mostly use social media platforms.

Following thorough deliberations on this matter, which earned the members' full consensus on strengthening the roles of these clubs and exploring essential solutions for potential challenges that could encounter these institutions when undertaking this role, the Council decided to refer the public deliberation request to the Education, Culture, Sport and Media Affairs Committee for further perusal and submission of its report to the Council.

During the session, the Council approved the draft legislation amending certain provisions of Law No 25 of 2018 on selective tax and referred it to the government. (QNA)

NHRC forum to address global challenges, patterns of drug crimes



The National Human Rights Committee (NHRC) announced the convention of its fourth national forum titled "Human Rights at the Core of Combating Drugs: Challenges and Prospects for Sustainable Solutions", to be held on January 20 and 21, 2026, in partnership with the Ministry of Interior.

The forum will convene in collaboration with the Ministry of Social Development and Family, the Ministry of Education and Higher Education, and the Ministry of Public Health (MoPH), with the participation of the Public Prosecution, the National Planning Council, the National Cyber Security Agency (NCSA), alongside relevant UN offices, civil society institutions, and the media, NHRC highlighted in a statement yesterday.

The forum intends to address growing global challenges and tackle emerging patterns of narcotics-related crimes.

As such, HE Chairperson of NHRC, Maryam bint Abdullah al-Attiyah, said drug abuse violations and illicit narcotics trafficking are among the most menacing challenges affecting human rights globally, given their direct exponential impact on the right to life, as well as mental and physical well-being, alongside the right to a decent standard of living.

She stressed that narcotics engender a detrimental impact on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), pointing out that the UN has given foremost priority to the issue of drug abuse violations and illicit narcotics trafficking, as they explicitly produce deleterious effects on developmental, socio-economic, political, and security dimensions.

The UN has worked to strengthen global standards to address the emerging risks posed by narcotics through the adoption of four major treaties, chiefly the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs, 1961, as amended by the Protocol Amending the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs, 1972; the Convention on Psychotropic Substances, 1971; and the UN Convention Against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances, 1988, in addition to numerous other international instruments that constitute the cornerstone of the international drug control

regime, al-Attiyah underlined. HE al-Attiyah further noted that human rights bodies and treaties, mandate holders within the Special Procedures system, and the Universal Periodic Review mechanism contribute to developing responsive measures and reinforce a human rights-based approach within narcotics policies, legislation, and drug enforcement practices, aiming to mitigate the harms arising from drug use, promote policies centred on investment in alternative development, and ensure the rights to health, equality, and non-discrimination.

On the regional stage, al-Attiyah highlighted that the GCC states place drug enforcement at the top of their priorities, with the GCC General Secretariat launching on June 26 the Gulf Anti-Drug Strategy 2025-2028, establishing a unified framework for co-ordinated counter-drug efforts across all GCC member states.

The Doha-based GCC Criminal Information Center for Drug Control is tasked with enhancing security co-operation among member states in the field of drug enforcement, advancing areas of co-ordination and integration to maximise the utilisation of information, and strengthening co-operation with relevant regional and international organisations engaged in drug enforcement, al-Attiyah noted.

Al-Attiyah further emphasised that Qatar has crafted a holistic strategy to combat narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances, involving prevention, awareness, therapy, and rehabilitation, in addition to enforcing the law and advancing enforcement mechanisms, as well as maximising surveillance at entry points, in alignment with the requirements of the nation's Permanent Constitution and Qatar National Vision 2030.

The chairperson recalled a whole-of-government approach pursued by the nation's numerous ministries and competent authorities to strengthen awareness, prevention, therapy, rehabilitation, and inclusion.

She asserted that Qatar is a vibrant model of safety, broadly enforcing measures in drug enforcement and prevention, a move that contributed to the absence of any indicators of risk related to the use or trafficking of controlled substances in the country.

Global challenges trigger all countries to place drug enforcement among their foremost priorities, given the mushrooming activities of illicit narcotics and psychotropic substance trafficking networks, which are interlocked with the expansion of unethical uses of modern technology and exacerbate the fragility of the rule of law arising from conflicts and upheavals in certain regions of the world, al-Attiyah explained.

HE al-Attiyah further elucidated that, according to the 2025 World Drug Report issued by the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the number of narcotics users reached 316mn in 2023, representing approximately 6% of the global population.

Overall, this forum intends to bolster the human rights-based approach in general legislation and policies, as well as various national measures relevant to drug enforcement and the illicit use of psychotropic substances.

It also seeks to establish a platform for national dialogue among ministries, institutions, public bodies, civil society, and all relevant stakeholders, to review the challenges, efforts, and measures related to the risks of narcotics and psychotropic substance abuse, in addition to exploring best practices and experiences in drug enforcement, at the national, regional, and global levels. (QNA)

Labour ministry participates in QCDC's programme focused on students' career pathways

The Ministry of Labour (MoL), represented by the Qualifying and Skills Development Department, has participated in the Winter Edition of the "My Career - My Future" job-shadowing programme.

The event is organised by Qatar Career Development Center (QCDC), founded by Qatar Foundation, in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Higher Education.

The programme aims to train high school students, guide them, and raise their awareness of suitable career pathways, while empowering the next generation of professionals by providing opportunities to experience real work environments across a number of national sectors.

Acting Director of the Qualifying and Skills Development Department at MoL, Mohammed Salem al-Khulaifi, emphasised that raising high school students' awareness of the importance of identifying appropriate career paths is a fundamental step in building a sound professional future.

He noted that early exposure helps students discover their interests and abilities, understand their personal inclinations, and become familiar with the diversity of academic specialisations and career opportunities available in the labour market.

ence within real workplace environments through direct job shadowing and close engagement with professionals at host organisations.

This Winter Edition places a particular emphasis on the financial services sector, alongside selected placements in healthcare, logistics, manufacturing, information technology, digital services, and construction, within a specialised approach aimed at deepening participants' exposure to priority sectors, with students selecting placements in line with their career interests.

The programme introduces participants to workplace expectations and the foundations of professional conduct through on-site job shadowing,

where students observe daily operations, engage directly with specialists, and gain first-hand understanding of professional roles, required skills, and workplace culture.

Participants who complete the programme receive a certificate of participation detailing their completed training and job-shadowing hours.

This programme falls within national efforts to support human capital development priorities, enhance students' readiness for higher education and a smooth transition into the labour market, strengthen early career awareness, and contribute to building a future workforce capable of supporting a diversified, knowledge-based economy. (QNA)

وزارة العمل
Ministry of Labour
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Acting Director of the Qualifying and Skills Development Department at MoL, Mohammed Salem al-Khulaifi, noted that early exposure helps students discover their interests and abilities, understand their personal inclinations, and to become familiar with the diversity of academic specialisations and career opportunities available in the labour market

Sports in Qatar spotlight cultural identity, global dialogue in 2025

QNA

Doha

Sports in Qatar is no longer just a competitive activity measured by the number of championships or the names of winners, but have transformed, in recent years, into an open cultural arena that reflects the features of national identity and plays an important role in cultural exchange.

The year 2025, with its exceptional momentum of major tournaments, came to embody this transformation practically. From the FIFA U-17 World Cup, to the 2025 FIFA Arab Cup, passing through the World Tennis Championship, the World Table Tennis Championship, the QTerminals Qatar Classic Squash Championship 2025 for men and women, up to Formula 1 Qatar Grand Prix, and the Qatar T100 World Triathlon Championship, the scene was not just tournaments packed with competitions, but an integrated series of cultural platforms, formulated within a sporting space.

During the 2025 tournaments, the presence of the Qatari identity did not stop at the limits of organisation, but rather extended into the details of the visual and human scene, through the stadiums and the surrounding areas, from the fan facilities, turning them into spaces that display features of the Qatari heritage, and highlight aspects of culture and heritage in Qatar.

PART OF BROADER VISION

In this context, officials in the cultural and sports sector confirmed in special statements to Qatar News Agency (QNA) that Qatar's hosting of a large number of diverse championships in one year was not just a sporting goal, but part of a broader vision that employs sports as a global language for cultural communication, and a bridge to introduce peoples to the Qatari identity in a contemporary and open context.

These elements were not placed as a passing celebratory event, but rather came within a vision that makes each championship an integrated cultural experience, so that the visitor leaves with a deeper picture of Qatari society, not limited to the memory of a match or sports competition.

The accumulation of these experiences over the course of a year, and what preceded it in organising major sports championships, gave Qatar its current position as a sports and cultural capital at the same time, officials said.

Regarding the role of sports championships in highlighting national heritage within stadiums and accompanying facilities, Director of the 3-2-1 Qatar Olympic and Sports Museum, Abdullah al-Mulla, confirmed in remarks to Qatar News Agency (QNA) that this is done through the design of these facilities that reflect the cultural identity of Qatar, where traditional architectural elements are combined with modern innovations. The stadi-



ums themselves also showcase Qatari sporting achievements through interactive exhibitions that evoke the history of championships and highlight local athletes as symbols of pride and honour.

Moreover, the accompanying sports and cultural events enhance the national spirit and combine sports enthusiasm with the rich heritage. Education and awareness are also considered an essential part of these facilities, as programmes are organised with the aim to promote awareness of sports and cultural heritage, which in turn contributes to creating an environment that fosters pride and belonging among the new generations, he added.

Regarding the role that tournaments play in bringing together fans from different cultures and providing an integrated knowledge and heritage experience, which makes this experience contribute to consolidating Qatar's position as a global sports and cultural capital, al-Mulla affirmed that sports tournaments do indeed play a vital role in bringing together fans from different cultures, highlighting values that increase the bonds of friendship between peoples and instilling the spirit of sportsmanship among different fans.

Hosting tournaments also supports the economy of the host country, in addition to stimulating trade in all fields, including hotels and shops, which reflects the centrality of these tournaments, their many roles, and they going beyond the traditional goal to other cultural or economic goals.

For his part, Director of Cultural Affairs and Events at the Katara Cultural Village Foundation, Khalid Abdulrahim al-Sayed, confirmed that Katara continues to consolidate its position as one of the most prominent integrated cultural projects in the Arab world, noting that it has succeeded in turning its strategic vision into a tangible reality by hosting and organising a continuous series of major events throughout the year, which skilfully blend culture, arts, heritage and sports.

SHOWCASING QATARI NATIONAL IDENTITY

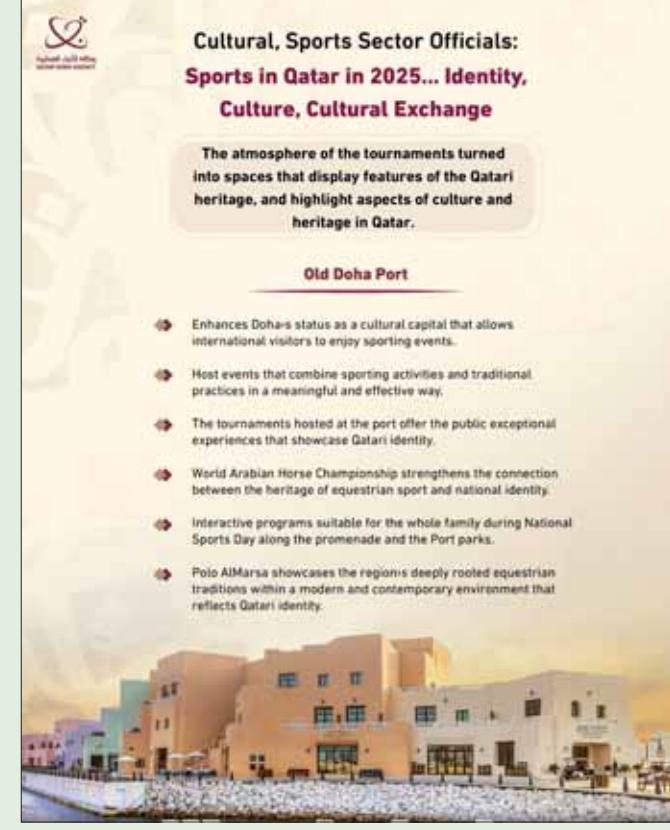
Katara, through its diverse activities, seeks to highlight the authentic Qatari national identity while opening wide avenues for cultural exchange with the entire world. Indeed, Katara is no longer merely a tourist destination, but has become a guardian of Qatari heritage and traditions, in line with the pillars of Qatar National Vision 2030. It works to raise awareness of the importance of cultural diversity by hosting international, regional, and local festivals, workshops, and exhibitions, he added.

In the context of intellectual and literary leadership, al-Sayed noted that Katara has become the largest incubator for Arab creators through its launch of a number of the largest awards of their kind in the region, which aim to encourage knowledge and preserve identity.

At the forefront of these initiatives is the Katara Prize for Arabic Novel, which has become the most prominent global destination for novelists and critics, making Katara the city of Arabic novel, in addition to the Katara prize for Prophet's Poet, which restores Arabic poetry to its glory.

He added that Katara's interest extends to covering the aesthetics of the Quranic voice through the Katara Prize for Qur'an Recitation, which aims to encourage and discover exceptional talents in Qur'an recitation and to identify the most beautiful and melodious voices.

In addition to Katara's specialised prizes in Arabic poetry, and its pioneering role in serving heritage through prizes and



centres concerned with verifying and publishing manuscripts, which makes the Cultural Village a fortress for the Arabic language and its intellectual treasures, and a platform that elevates the status of the word and fine art.

Speaking about the events, Khalid Abdulrahim al-Sayed highlighted the heritage championships, for which Katara is the main host, noting that these events revive the lives of our ancestors on land and sea. "Among the most prominent annual events we are proud of is the Al-Galayel Championship, during which the public follows, for a whole month, the competition of Qataris and their brothers from the GCC countries in a desert environment, relying on traditional hunting with falcons, Saluki dogs and camels, in a vivid embodiment of the resilience and strength of our ancestors' lives", he said.

Al-Sayed also noted the Qatar International Falcons and Hunting Festival (Marmi), which is preparing for its 17th edition early next year in Sabka Marmi in Sealine, describing the festival as a landmark event that brings together falconers from the Gulf and the Arab world, and through which Katara has contributed to regulating this traditional sport with world-class standards.

Regarding maritime heritage, al-Sayed highlighted the Senyar Festival which recreates traditional diving and fishing trips. Participants compete in the "Haddaq" and "Laffah" championships from dawn till dusk, according to precise rules that take into account environmental sustainability and fish species, using traditional tools that revive the spirit of the sea and authentic Qatari heritage.

In an effort to enhance the status of Arabian horses, al-Sayed highlighted the organisation of the Katara International Arabian Horse Festival, one of

the world's most important events in the field of equine beauty. He explained that the festival aims to showcase cultural heritage in a modern and sophisticated manner, establishing Katara as a city dedicated to the cultural heritage of Arabian horses. He emphasised Qatar's leading role in possessing some of the most prestigious Arabian horse breeds.

He also pointed to the unique blend of art and sports within the Cultural Village, where Katara organises art exhibitions and murals celebrating sports, as was the case during the 2022 FIFA World Cup, featuring the "World Cup Legacy Exhibition", in addition to football and beach volleyball tournaments and events for National Sports Day.

Al-Sayed affirmed that Katara, thus, maintains a forward-looking vision for a global future where geographical barriers fade away, allowing spirits to soar in a realm of shared values that elevate the structure of culture and solidify the unity of human consciousness.

MSHEIREB MUSEUMS A HUB FOR COMMUNITIES

Regarding the importance of the diverse cultural and artistic events accompanying major sporting events, General Manager of Msheireb Museums Abdulla al-Naama said in an exclusive interview that sporting events represent effective platforms and bridges for genuine cultural exchange.

"From this perspective, Msheireb Museums serves as a vital hub for launching community programmes and activities aimed at introducing visitors to Qatar's identity and cultural heritage", he added.

Al-Naama said that the museums offer a variety of programmes, including tours of the four heritage houses, temporary exhibitions, awareness campaigns, as well as art lectures and interactive workshops, through which stories of na-

tional heritage are told in an immersive way that resonates with both local and international audiences.

Holding these cultural activities in Msheireb Downtown Doha, the smart and sustainable city, highlights Qatari hospitality and social traditions, expanding the horizons of cultural offerings beyond the confines of sports stadiums to urban life, through carefully co-ordinated programmes and partnerships with event organisers. These artistic and cultural activities connect the public to Qatar's rich traditions, develop cultural awareness, and present culture and arts as effective tools to promote dialogue and deepen understanding, he added.

On the role that tournaments play in bringing together fans from different cultures and providing an integrated educational and heritage experience, which makes this experience contribute to consolidating Qatar's position as a global sports and cultural capital, the general manager of Msheireb Museums affirmed that the sporting events hosted by Qatar represent exceptional meeting platforms and bridges connecting different cultures, as they bring together fans and visitors from all over the world to attend world-class sporting tournaments and embark on a comprehensive educational journey during which they learn about Qatari culture, through carefully selected programmes, educational tours, and immersive experiences. This integrated mix ensures a rich experience for visitors that blends the passion for sports, arts, and heritage, thus ensuring that Qatar has a prestigious position as a distinguished destination for sporting events and a rich global cultural platform.

Regarding how the tournaments highlight Qatari symbols and national heritage within the stadiums and accompanying facilities, al-Naama said in the sports facilities and is part of the visitor experience during the sporting events. The design of the stadium is inspired by well-known authentic heritage symbols such as the sails of traditional wooden boats (dhow), the Bedouin tent, and the traditional head cap (gahfiya). Inside the sports facilities, carefully selected artworks and digital exhibitions are displayed that tell Qatar's history, as shown in the opening ceremony of the FIFA Arab Cup Qatar 2025. The inspiring message highlighted the shared ancient Arab heritage for the whole world.

The four restored heritage houses in Msheireb Museums: Bin Jelmoor House, Company House, Mohammed Bin Jassim House, and Radwani House, provide an opportunity for visitors to get to know Qatar's rich history up close, as all these efforts come together to make each site and destination a platform for exploring history and identity, and also a living platform that interacts with current events to be part of the history of today and the future.

MoCI initiative provides food price cuts for Sealine winter campers

The Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MoCI) launched an initiative to reduce prices at restaurants and cafes operating during the winter camping season at the Sealine area, in co-operation with the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change (MoECC).

This initiative forms part of MoCI's efforts to enhance the availability of restaurant and cafe services at reasonable prices and to support commercial activities associated with the camping season, which extends until April 15, 2026.

As part of the initiative, participating restaurants and cafes are offering discounts of up to 30%, contributing to the provision of affordable services for visitors to the camping area throughout the season.

According to MoCI, the discounts apply exclusively to restaurants and cafes participating in the initiative. Consumers are encouraged to verify the presence of the official initiative sticker bearing the phrase: "Participant in the Reduced Service Prices Initiative for the 2025-2026 Camping Season."

In this regard, the Quality License and Market Control Department at MoCI, in co-operation with the Natural Reserves Department at MoECC, is overseeing the regulation of restaurant and cafe activities in the area. This includes issuing temporary price lists for establishments that meet the required conditions. Additional measures also include circulating regu-



latory controls and instructions to licensed establishments, monitoring consumer feedback and complaints, and taking the necessary actions to enhance compliance levels and the quality of services provided to visitors and campers.

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1	TT-00409091400056	30/08/2015	JOSEPH NJUGUNA MWaura	97470976552	KES	72,440.00
2	TT-00405101400075	31/08/2015	ARJUN K C	97455102458	AED	190.00
3	TT-00407091400043	30/12/2015	SALEH IDRIS MOHAMED	97470751402	SDP	1,256.00
4	TT-985221	31/12/2015	RAJU SIRRA SIRRA VENKATA RAO		INR	10,125.00
5	TT-00329041400162	31/12/2015	ANAND NARAYAN KUNKOLKAR	97455297524	INR	16,391.00
6	TT-00204051400242	31/12/2015	STERIN SUNNY THETTAYIL	97470244214	INR	1,646.00
7	TT-00307061400164	31/12/2015	SHIV PRAKASH GUPT KAWAL GUPT		INR	16,010.00
8	TT-00119081400164	31/12/2015	NAJIR ANSARI	97477066297	INR	3,000.00
9	TT-00127091400027	31/12/2015	DHARMRAJ RAM NAYAN	97470908748	INR	3,000.00
10	TT-00207121400525	31/12/2015	DEBANANDA KHANAL	9747747712	INR	8,000.00
11	TT-00113121400134	31/12/2015	PONNAMMA JOSE	97430339437	INR	8,525.00
12	TT-00229031500363	30/12/2015	BENEDICT BONDOD	97466010194	AED	1,000.00
13	TT-00321041500206	30/12/2015	PENINA WAMAIWAH KIARIE	97455803776	KES	7,510.00





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Zulal Wellness Resort by Chiva-Som marks a landmark year of global recognition in 2025



Zulal Wellness Resort by Chiva-Som, Qatar's first full-immersion wellness destination and the largest of its kind in the Middle East, is celebrating a landmark year in 2025, having received 28 prestigious regional and international awards and recognitions. These accolades affirm the resort's leadership across wellness and spa excellence, culinary innovation, sustainability, and exceptional service standards.

Throughout the year, Zulal continued to strengthen its position as a global wellness leader, earning recognition from some of the world's most respected travel, spa, and lifestyle authorities. Its integrative wellness philosophy was honoured on the international stage, with titles including World's Leading Retreat 2025, Middle East's Leading Retreat, and Qatar's Best Wellness Retreat.

The resort was also named among the World's Best Spas in Condé Nast Traveller's 2025 Readers' Choice Awards and received Best-in-Class recognition as the Best Wellness Retreat in the Middle East by Tatler, reinforcing its reputation for holistic and results-driven wellbeing.

Culinary excellence remained a cornerstone of Zulal's success in 2025. Its signature restaurant, Al-Sidr, was named World's Best Wellness Hotel Restaurant and recognised for sustainable, green dining, while Acacia earned accolades for Middle Eastern global cuisine. The resort's broader culinary programme and talented team also achieved international acclaim, including a Silver Medal at the Bocuse d'Or and multiple Gold and Silver awards at Salon Culinaire Qatar, underscoring



Zulal's commitment to nutrition-focused innovation and purpose-driven gastronomy.

Leadership and people excellence were equally central to Zulal's achievements. General Manager Mr. Ammar Samad received multiple leadership honours, including Hotelier of the Year, Leadership Excellence Awards, recognition among the Top 100 General Managers of the World, and the Qatar Tourism Awards 2025 - Community Leadership, Hôtelier of the Year. These accolades recognise his contributions to advancing wellness, community engagement, and sustainable hospitality in Qatar.

Zulal's senior leadership team was also honoured across spa leadership, human resources, and housekeeping, while the resort's strong workplace culture was further validated by its inclusion in Great Place to Work® Qatar's Best Workplaces™ 2025, underscoring a deep commitment to nurturing talent and wellbeing from within.

Commenting on the milestone year, Mr. Ammar Samad said: "These recognitions reflect the passion and dedication of our entire team. At

Zulal, we are committed to redefining wellness through Traditional Arabic and Islamic Medicine, family wellness, sustainability, and authentic hospitality. This recognition inspires us to continue setting new benchmarks for global wellbeing."

As Zulal looks ahead, the

achievements of 2025 mark not only

a year of celebration, but a strong

foundation for continued innovation

and leadership in the global wellness

landscape.

For more information or

reservations, please email Zulal

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Healthy Beginnings

A New Year Promise to Ourselves



Dr. Noushad Ck
Global CEO
Micro Health Laboratories

As we step into a New Year, we are gifted something truly precious; another opportunity to begin again. A new year is more than a change in the calendar; it is a moment for reflection, renewal, and recommitment. Resolutions often focus on success, growth, career milestones, and financial prosperity.

While these goals are important, they all rest on one fundamental and non-negotiable truth: good health is the real beginning of everything. Without health, ambition loses direction, productivity declines, and even the most meaningful achievements can feel incomplete.

A healthy beginning is not about dramatic transformations made overnight or rigid resolutions that fade within weeks. Instead, it is about conscious, consistent choices we make every day, choices that protect our bodies, sharpen our minds, and strengthen our resilience over time.

Small, sustained actions such as balanced nutrition, regular physical activity, adequate sleep, and routine health monitoring create a powerful cumulative impact. In today's fast-paced world, health is often addressed by most of us only when illness interrupts daily life.

The New Year reminds us that true healthcare begins much earlier, rooted in prevention, awareness, and personal responsibility.

Lifestyle-related diseases such as diabetes, hypertension, heart disease, and obesity are no longer conditions associated only with old age. Alarmingly, they are now increasingly affecting younger populations. Sedentary work environments, long screen hours, chronic stress, irregular sleep patterns, unhealthy dietary habits, and limited physical activity have become part of modern living. Many individuals continue with demanding routines while postponing health check-ups, assuming that absence of symptoms means good health. The encouraging reality, however, is that most lifestyle-related conditions are preventable or controllable when identified early and managed appropriately.

This is where diagnostics play a silent yet powerful role in safeguarding health. Regular health check-ups are not a sign of fear or weakness; they are a sign of wisdom, foresight, and self-care. Diagnostic testing offers a window into the body's internal functioning, often revealing early imbalances long before clinical symptoms appear. Armed with this knowledge, individuals can take timely corrective measures, whether through lifestyle changes, medical intervention, or closer monitoring.

Early diagnosis not only saves lives but also preserves quality of life, reduces long-term healthcare costs, and prevents avoidable complications that can impact families and communities.

A healthy beginning also extends beyond physical parameters. Mental and emotional well-being are equally vital pillars of overall health. Restful sleep, effective stress management, emotional resilience, meaningful relationships, and a healthy balance between work and personal life play a crucial role in long-term wellness. In an era defined by constant connectivity, performance pressure, and information overload, mental health challenges are becoming increasingly common. Recognizing emotional well-being as an essential part of health is no longer optional, it is a necessity. True health thrives when the body, mind, and environment exist in harmony.

As this New Year unfolds, let us make a sincere promise to ourselves and our families: to listen to our bodies, respect medical advice, and prioritize health without delay or compromise. Let us view regular health check-ups as an investment rather than an expense, and preventive care as a lifelong commitment rather than a one-time resolution. Every dream we nurture, every ambition we pursue, and every success story we aspire to build deserves a strong and healthy foundation.

Let this New Year mark not just a passage of time, but a meaningful shift in mindset, a renewed commitment to awareness, prevention, and balanced living. May it be remembered as the year we chose a healthy beginning for life, laying the groundwork for a future defined not only by achievement, but by sustained well-being and vitality.



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Minister of state for foreign affairs bids farewell to Indonesian envoy



HE the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Sultan bin Saad al-Muraikhi met yesterday with Indonesia's ambassador to Qatar Ridwan Hassan, on the occasion of the end of his tenure. HE al-Muraikhi extended thanks to the ambassador for his efforts in supporting and strengthening bilateral relations, wishing him success in his new duties. (QNA)

Rush Rush, Qatari Delivery Platform launches a partnership-driven model supporting restaurants and merchants

In a move aimed at reshaping the digital delivery landscape in Qatar, the Qatari platform Rush Rush has officially launched its operations with an innovative vision built on the principle of fair partnership, introducing a unique business model that balances service efficiency with the protection of restaurants' and merchants' profit margins.

It goes beyond being a delivery application to become a fully integrated digital business ecosystem, carefully designed to act as a strategic ally for merchants. The platform is driven by a philosophy of economic empowerment, offering flexible financial and logistical solutions that give business owners full control over their growth and revenue stability.

What sets Rush Rush apart is its non-traditional contracting options, allowing merchants to choose what best suits their business size and goals — whether through a fixed subscription model that enables them to retain full revenues, or a transparent, incentive-based commission model that ensures clarity and sustainability for all parties involved.

In addition to delivery services, the platform offers a suite of advanced technological tools, including real-time data analytics, accurate payment and settlement systems, and smart logistics routing technologies. Rush Rush also introduces additional revenue channels for its partners, such as direct digital ordering and the innovative "Rush Out" feature, which enhances customer engagement with nearby stores, increases in-store visits, and strengthens loyalty to local brands.



Commenting on the launch, Founder Sheikh Jaber bin Abdulrahman Al Thani stated:

"Our goal is not to be just another delivery platform, but a strategic partner that empowers restaurants and merchants to grow with confidence, within a transparent ecosystem designed from within the Qatari market and built to serve it."

Through its launch, Rush Rush reaffirms its commitment to being a partner that truly understands the dynamics of the Qatari market. The platform aims to reduce operational burdens on merchants, allowing them to focus on creativity, product quality, and service excellence, ultimately contributing to a more resilient and robust national digital economy.

Iraq parliament elects new Speaker

AFP
Baghdad

Iraq's new parliament elected a senior figure from the Taqadom party as its Speaker yesterday, the first session since November elections that consolidated the main parties' grip on power.

Parliament's media office said 309 out of 329 lawmakers took part in the inaugural session, with Haibat al-Halbussi, 45, emerging as the winner from three candidates, with 208 votes.

Parliament's oldest member, 77-year-old Amer al-Fayez, chaired parliament's first session, as per convention.

The vote for two deputy Speakers was still under way.

Halbussi has now been elected to

three consecutive terms in Iraq's parliament since 2018 and headed the oil and energy parliamentary committee during his previous two.

His Taqadom (Progress) party is headed by influential former parliament Speaker Mohammed al-Halbussi.

It won the largest share of the Sunni vote with 27 seats, while the Sunni Al-Azm alliance (Determination), led by lawmaker and businessman Muthanna al-Samarrai, took 15.

Last month, Iraq's main Sunni political groups announced the formation of a so-called national political council with the aim of "unifying visions and decisions" after they contested the elections on separate lists.

At a press conference on Sunday, the national political council announced

it would support Halbussi as Speaker, while Samarrai told a separate press conference that his Al-Azm alliance had nominated him, but he withdrew his candidacy yesterday.

November's election was the sixth parliamentary vote since a US-led invasion toppled dictator Saddam Hussein in 2003.

Within 30 days of their first meeting, lawmakers should elect the president.

The president then has 15 days to appoint a premier.

Once the prime minister is chosen, he has one month to form a government and present it to parliament for a vote of confidence.

But these processes are often challenging, with deadlines frequently missed because of political bickering among rival factions.

Falcon Festival in Riyadh



A falcon owner sets his falcon free to fly in a falcon race during a Falcon Festival in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, yesterday.

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COMMENT

Trump hints at land strike in Venezuela

A throwaway remark last week by President Donald Trump has raised questions about whether US forces may have carried their first land strike against drug cartels in Venezuela. Trump said the US knocked out a "big facility" for producing trafficking boats, as he was discussing his pressure campaign against Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro in an interview broadcast on Friday. "They have a big plant or a big facility where they send, you know, where the ships come from," Trump said in an interview with billionaire supporter John Catsimatidis on the WABC radio station in New York. "Two nights ago we knocked that out. So we hit them very hard." - Reuters

DEFENCE

India clears \$8.8bn military procurement package

India's defence acquisition council has cleared proposals worth Rs790bn (\$8.78bn) to buy radars, radios, automatic take-off landing recording systems and other equipment for its army, navy and air force, the defence ministry said. Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said the decisions reflected the government's focus on defence preparedness. By equipping personnel with cutting-edge tools, the defence ministry aims to strengthen India's borders and streamline coordination between the forces. The announcement marks one of the year's most significant defence milestones, positioning the country to better navigate the regional security landscape. - Reuters

TRIAL

S Korea ex-first lady accused of taking over \$200,000 in bribes

South Korea's former first lady was alleged by prosecutors to have accepted bribes totalling over \$200,000, including fine art, jewellery and a handbag, as well as meddling in state affairs. Kim Keon-hee, the wife of disgraced ex-president Yoon Suk-yeol, was arrested in August and is under investigation for alleged stock manipulation and receiving gifts from the Unification Church. She has also been accused of meddling in parliamentary elections. In an announcement concluding their investigation, prosecutor Min Joong-ki said South Korea's institutions were "severely undermined by abuses of power" by Kim. - Reuters

PEOPLE

Brigitte Bardot's funeral to be held next week in Saint-Tropez

Cinema icon Brigitte Bardot's funeral will take place next week in her hometown of Saint-Tropez, her foundation said yesterday, as France wrestles with how to pay tribute to a cultural legend who in later years championed far-right views. The mayor's office earlier said the film-star-turned-animal-rights-activist, who died aged 91 on Sunday, would be laid to rest in the town's seaside cemetery. The Brigitte Bardot Foundation said the funeral in the Notre-Dame de l'Assumption church on January 7 would be broadcast on screens across the town, followed by a "private" burial, but did not confirm where in Saint-Tropez she would be inhumed. - AFP

Peace hopes dented as Russia claims Ukraine tried to hit Putin residence

Reuters
Moscow/Kyiv

Russia yesterday accused Ukraine of trying to attack President Vladimir Putin's residence in northern Russia, although it provided no evidence to back up an assertion that Kyiv dismissed as baseless and designed to undermine peace negotiations.

The angry exchanges - including a statement by Russia that it was reviewing its stance in negotiations in response to the attack - dealt a new blow to prospects for peace in Ukraine.

On Sunday US President Donald Trump met President Volodymyr Zelensky in Florida and said they were "getting a lot closer, maybe very close" to an agreement to end the war, although "thorny" territorial issues remained.

Putin also struck a defiant tone yesterday, telling his army to press on with a campaign to take full control of Ukraine's Zaporizhzhia region, and the Kremlin repeated demands for Kyiv to pull its forces out of the last part of the Donbas area that they still hold in eastern Ukraine.

Putin told Trump by phone that Russia, which invaded Ukraine in February 2022, was reviewing its stance following the reported drone attack, an aide said.

Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said Ukraine had tried to attack Putin's residence in the Novgorod region west of Moscow on December 28-29 with 91 long-range drones which were all destroyed by Russian air defences. No one was injured and there was no damage, he said in comments reported by Russian media.

"Such reckless actions will not go unanswered," the veteran foreign minister said, describing the attack as "state terrorism" and adding that targets had already been selected for retaliatory strikes by Russia's armed forces.

Lavrov appeared in televised remarks not to have offered any evidence for his assertions. It was not clear where Putin was at the time.

Lavrov noted that the attack took place during negotiations about a possible peace deal, and said Russia would review its negotiating stance but not quit the negotiations.

Denying Ukraine had planned such an attack, Zelensky accused Moscow of preparing the ground to strike government buildings in Kyiv, saying Russia wanted to undermine progress at US-Ukrainian talks on ending the war.

"Another round of lies from the Russian Federation," Zelensky told reporters via WhatsApp.

"It is clear that we had a meeting with Trump, and it is clear that for the Russians, if there is no scandal

between us and America, and we are making progress - for them it is a failure, because they do not want to end this war."

He added: "I am sure they are simply preparing the ground for strikes, probably on the capital, probably on government buildings."

Ukrainian Foreign Minister Andrii Sybiha said on X the attack was a fabrication intended to create a pretext for more Russian attacks on Ukraine and to undermine the peace process. He urged world leaders to condemn Russia over its accusations.

Zelensky said a bilateral agreement had been outlined with Trump on security guarantees for Kyiv on Sunday, although the US president said they were only 95% ready and Zelensky said yesterday that he had sought a 50-year security deal.

Zelensky said he expected European countries to "take over a big part" of security efforts with US backing. Agreement on such moves would be complicated, as Russia has said any foreign troop deployment in Ukraine would be unacceptable.

Zelensky said yesterday two main issues in a 20-point peace proposal remained to be resolved - control of Ukraine's Zaporizhzhia nuclear power station, which is in Russian hands, and the fate of the Donbas area.

Indonesia retirement home fire kills 16



Local people rescue an elderly woman during a fire at the Werdha Damai retirement home in Manado, North Sulawesi Province, Indonesia, yesterday. Sixteen people died in the tragedy which occurred late Sunday. The home's caretaker said its residents were the elderly, and about 30 people had been in the complex.

US pledges \$2bn for UN humanitarian aid

Reuters
Geneva/Washington

The US yesterday pledged \$2bn in assistance to tens of millions of people facing hunger and disease in more than a dozen countries next year, part of what it said was a new mechanism for the delivery of life-saving assistance following major foreign aid cuts by the Trump administra-

tion. The US slashed its aid spending this year, and leading Western donors such as Germany also pared back assistance as they pivoted to increased defence spending, triggering a severe funding crunch for the United Nations.

The billions of dollars in assistance pledged by Washington yesterday will be overseen by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the state department said,

under what it described as new model of assistance agreed with the UN that aims to make aid funding and delivery more efficient and increase accountability for the spending of funds.

UN data shows total US humanitarian contributions to the UN fell to about \$3.38bn in 2025, equating to about 14.8% of the global sum. This was down sharply from \$14.1bn the prior year, and a peak of \$17.2bn in 2022.

Cambodia violated truce, says Thai army

AFP
Bangkok

Thailand's army yesterday accused Cambodia of violating a newly signed ceasefire agreement, reached after weeks of deadly border clashes, by flying more than 250 drones over its territory.

The southeast Asian neighbours agreed to the "immediate" ceasefire on Saturday, pledging to end renewed border clashes that killed dozens of people and displaced more than a million this month.

But the fresh allegation from Bangkok and its threat to reconsider releasing Cambodian soldiers held by Thailand left a sustained truce in doubt, even as their foreign ministers wrapped up two days of talks hosted by China.

The Thai army said yesterday

"more than 250 unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) were detected flying from the Cambodian side, intruding into Thailand's sovereign territory" on Sunday night, according to a statement.

"Such actions constitute provocation and a violation of measures aimed at reducing tensions, which are inconsistent with the joint statement agreed" during a bilateral border committee meeting on Saturday, it said.

The reigned fighting this month spread to nearly every border province on both sides, shattering an earlier truce for which US President Donald Trump took credit.

Under the truce pact signed on Saturday, Cambodia and Thailand agreed to cease fire, freeze troop movements and co-operate on demining efforts and combatting cybercrime.

Man accused of fatally stabbing nine kills himself

A father suspected of stabbing four of his own children to death in a rampage that claimed nine lives in Suriname's capital Paramaribo killed himself in jail, police said yesterday. The 43-year-old attacker identified only by the initials D.A. hanged himself in a police station cell in the small country on South America's northern coast, police said in a statement. The man appeared to be suffering from mental health issues and four of his children - aged 5-15 - were killed in the attack overnight Saturday into Sunday in and around his home, police chief Melvin Pinas said.

Among those also killed was reportedly their grandparents and another child. The suspect had an argument with his wife over the phone before stabbing one of the victims, his 11-year-old daughter, 44 times in the kitchen of their home, local media reported. - Reuters

Snow and ice warning for UK



Cyclists ride through Richmond Park, as Britons expect a cold start to the New Year with snow and ice warning issued, in London, Britain, yesterday.

China holds military drills around Taiwan

AFP
Beijing

China launched live-fire drills around Taiwan yesterday that it said would simulate a blockade of the self-ruled island's key ports, prompting Taipei to condemn Beijing's "military intimidation".

Beijing claims Taiwan as part of its sovereign territory and has refused to rule out using military action to seize the island democracy.

The latest show of force follows a bumper round of arms sales to Taipei by the US, Taiwan's main security backer.

Beijing warned yesterday that "external forces" arming Taipei would "push the Taiwan Strait into a perilous situation of imminent war", but did not mention any countries by name.

Foreign ministry spokesman Lin Jian said any attempts to stop China's unification with Taiwan were "doomed to fail".

Reporters in Pingtan - a Chinese island that is the closest point to Taiwan's main island - saw fighter jets soaring across the sky and a Chinese military vessel in the distance.

Visitors said they had been unaware of the drills as they milled around snapping photos.

A tourist surnamed Guo, from Inner Mongolia, said she thinks a unification will "definitely happen". "It's just a matter of time," she said.

China said early yesterday it was conducting "live-fire training on maritime targets to the north and southwest of Taiwan" in large-scale exercises involving destroyers, frigates, fighters, bombers and drones.

Military spokesman Shi Yi said Beijing would send army, navy, air force and rocket force troops for drills code-named "Justice Mission 2025".

He said the drills would focus on "sea-air combat readiness pa-

trol, joint seizure of comprehensive superiority, blockade on key ports and areas, as well as all-dimensional deterrence outside the island chain".

Chinese authorities published a map of five large zones around Taiwan where the war games would take place.

Taiwan said China's designated exercise zones, some of which are within 12 nautical miles of its coast, have affected international shipping and aviation routes.

The island's government condemned China's "disregard for international norms and the use of military intimidation to threaten neighbouring countries", presi-

dential office spokeswoman Karen Kuo said.

Its defence ministry said it had detected 89 Chinese military aircraft near its shores yesterday - the highest number in a single day since October 2024.

It also said it had detected 28 warships and coastguard vessels.

Taiwan's civil aviation administration said China had declared a "Temporary Danger Area" for 10 hours today.

It also said "more than 100,000 (air) passengers" on 857 domestic, international and transit flights would be affected by the drills today.

Taiwan's military said it had

established a response centre, deployed "appropriate forces" and "carried out a rapid response exercise", while its coastguard said it "immediately deployed large vessels".

The drills by China's ruling Communist Party "further confirm its nature as an aggressor, making it the greatest destroyer of peace", Taipei's defence ministry said.

Chinese military spokesman Shi said the drills were "a stern warning against 'Taiwan Independence' separatist forces, and... a legitimate and necessary action to safeguard China's sovereignty and national unity".

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GULF TIMES

Institutional redesign for economic change

The Nobel Prize in economics was awarded both this year and last year to scholars who, in different ways, emphasised the importance of institutions to economic growth.

Joel Mokyr, a 2025 laureate, used historical sources to demonstrate that societies prosper when they allow new ideas to be put into practice. Philippe Aghion and Peter Howitt, his co-laureates, identified the role of creative destruction – and the institutions that enable new entrants to replace incumbent companies and technologies – in driving sustained growth.

For the 2024 laureates – Daron Acemoglu, Simon Johnson, and James A Robinson – the key to economic prosperity lies in the rule of law and enabling institutions.

Economics has broadly recognised these realities, especially now that emerging technologies are transforming the structure of production. But there is an odd disconnect between this consensus and the current economic-policy debate, which focuses mainly on narrow issues like investment in AI infrastructure and corporate taxes.

When questions of institutional design emerge, they tend to be restricted to specific bodies, such as central banks. Rarely do policymakers think about what kind of institutional climate enables innovation and experimentation.

Moreover, there are no standard institutional definitions or metrics. Economy-wide studies tend to fall back on indirect measures that many economists regard with scepticism, such as surveys of “trust in institutions” or indices of institutional quality. Likewise, the measurement of intangibles such as research and development or data assets – essential for economies and firms alike – is far less developed than other economic statistics.

The rate at which startups form and thrive is a matter of political economy, depending on their location's general environment – the business ecosystem, the partnership between private and public sectors, and the political commitment to growth

progress?

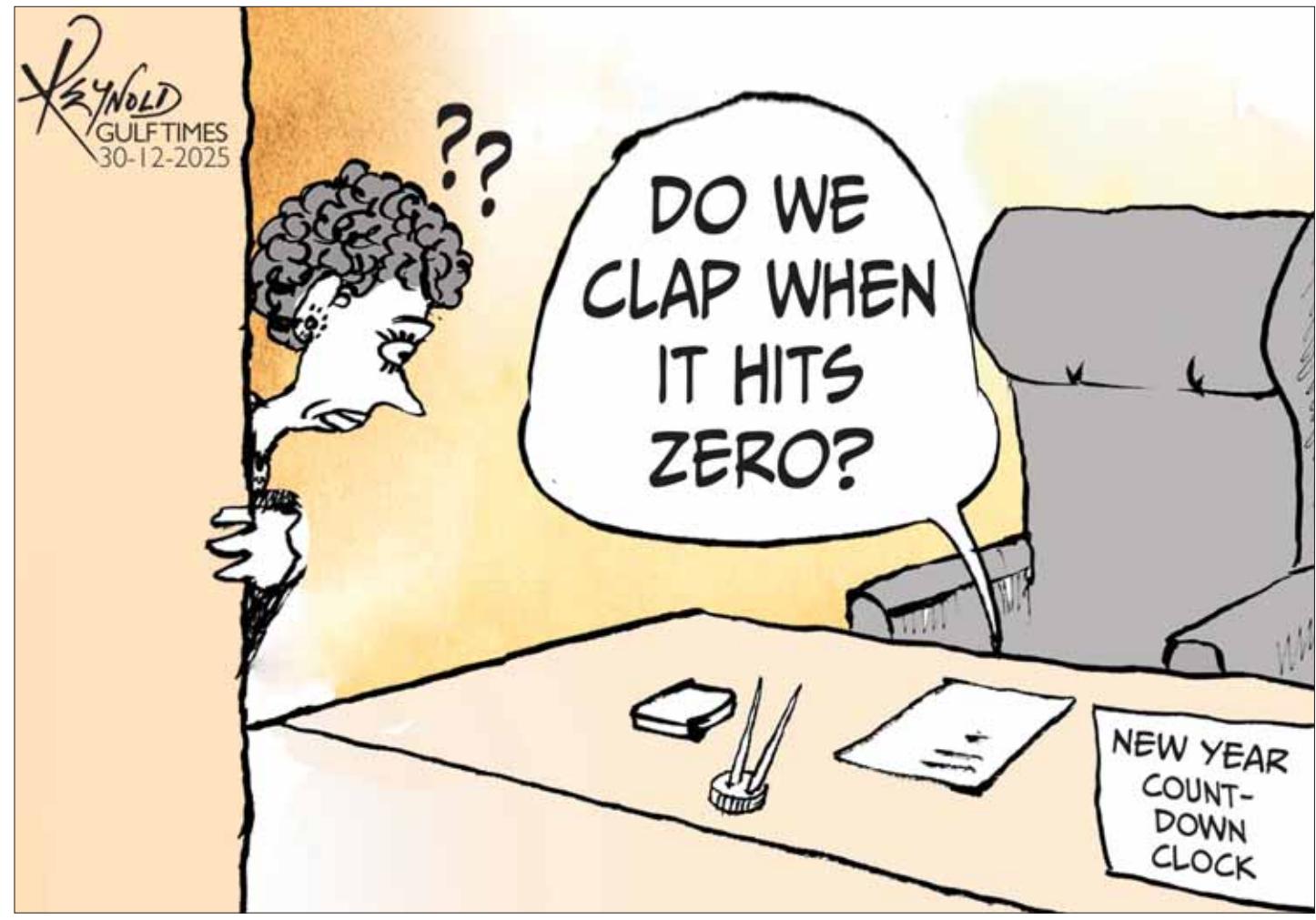
One way for policymakers to answer such questions would be to place renewed emphasis on competition policy, the importance of which has been underscored by the “development miracles” of South and East Asia in the second half of the 20th century. These economies built manufacturing bases by relying on domestic or export competition to enforce discipline in their leading industries.

Despite a growing recognition within academia that antitrust laws have been under-enforced in OECD economies since the 1980s, not much has changed. More active enforcement would require political courage to challenge powerful incumbents – and that seems in short supply.

In the United States, the increased antitrust scrutiny under Lina Khan, former President Joe Biden's Federal Trade Commissioner, ground to a halt when Donald Trump returned to the White House. The European Union, for its part, has been hesitant to use the full force of its digital regulations because of the Trump administration's trade threats and strong pushback from US tech firms. The United Kingdom has pinned its growth hopes on securing inward investment from large multinationals, even going so far as to weaken the UK Competition and Markets Authority.

To take just one example, it is too costly for many European companies to fail. New research suggests that high restructuring costs limit R&D and make investment in tech and biotech startups unprofitable. But implementing “flexicurity” reforms, which combine labour-market flexibility with strong social protections, is not a silver bullet. The rate at which startups form and thrive is a matter of political economy, depending on their location's general environment – the business ecosystem, the partnership between private and public sectors, and the political commitment to growth.

With the multilateral system all but defunct, the clean-energy transition well underway, and AI advancing at breakneck pace, we need to fling the Overton window wide open and create space for new policy ideas across multiple domains. – Project Syndicate



Will dollar dominance survive digital money?

By Silvia Sgherri
Washington, DC

Twice in the last century, the foundations of global finance shifted, because the burden placed on the machinery of money became unsustainable. Today, we are witnessing another shift, driven by the rise of stablecoins, tokenised deposits, and central bank digital currencies (CBDCs). But, this time, change is not unfolding through treaties or exchange-rate policies. The question is no longer which central bank issues the global monetary system's “anchor” asset, but on whose infrastructure value circulates.

When Allied countries agreed in 1944 to establish a post-World War II global monetary architecture based on US economic might and a gold-backed dollar, governments accepted limits on their monetary sovereignty in exchange for stable exchange rates and a reliable supply of global liquidity, provided by the United States.

As capital markets deepened, however, the Bretton Woods system became untenable. In 1971, the US abandoned dollar convertibility to gold, and the world shifted to a dollar-based floating exchange-rate regime, which was flexible enough for an increasingly integrated global economy and complex financial system, but also fragile and prone to recurrent crises. Nonetheless, the US dollar retained its dominance in international transactions and reserves, thanks to the depth and safety of US Treasury markets, the global reach of US finance, and the credibility of US institutions.

Today, the structure of the global economy has changed:

China is now the world's largest trader; the eurozone is a major capital exporter; and emerging economies, such as India and the Asean countries, are central to supply chains and key sources of energy demand. But while the economy has shifted toward multipolarity, the monetary system remains largely unipolar. The dollar still accounts for roughly half of cross-border loans, some 60% of global foreign-exchange reserves, and over 50% of trade invoicing. It is also the currency against which nearly all stablecoins now in circulation are pegged.

The resulting structural mismatch has far-reaching consequences, as countries worldwide – even those that have established themselves as global production hubs – remain exposed to US monetary cycles, periodic dollar shortages, and asymmetric shocks.

These vulnerabilities are systemic, not episodic, reflected in the global funding gaps that occurred in 2008 with the onset of the global financial crisis, in 2020 during the Covid-19 pandemic, and in 2022 when the US Federal Reserve began raising interest rates to combat inflation. Imbalances were managed, but never resolved.

The rise of digital money may now break this stalemate. The critical innovation here is not the currencies themselves, but rather the underlying settlement layers. Tokenised assets, programmable payments, and upgraded messaging frameworks enable states and private actors to build alternative infrastructure capable of circumventing legacy intermediaries. Properly designed, these monetary rails can underpin a stable open system, expanding access, reducing friction, and

modernising the world's aging financial infrastructure.

But there is another, less desirable possibility: this new monetary architecture can entrench a bipolar system, comprising competing geopolitical blocs with incompatible standards. This explains why digital-currency projects have become instruments of geopolitics. China's cross-border CBDC pilots are as much about shaping governance norms as they are about improving efficiency. Europe's pursuit of “digital sovereignty” is rooted in security concerns, stemming from America's apparent unreliability as a partner. Emerging economies are building new clearing arrangements outside traditional dollar channels. Meanwhile, privately issued stablecoins are forcing governments to rethink how influence is exerted.

Technology is thus achieving what politics has not: a bottom-up realignment of monetary power. The US still has the potential to lead, because its institutions remain the most trusted, its capital markets the deepest, and its reserve-asset ecosystem the strongest. But fulfilling this potential will depend as much on architecture as on assets. The threat to the dollar's primacy is not a rival currency, but the possibility that the global financial infrastructure will evolve in ways that dilute the advantages of openness, including the network effects that make holding and settling in dollars attractive.

To retain its position at the centre of the global monetary system, the US must help build the rails that will convey global liquidity in the digital era. This means upgrading domestic and cross-border payment infrastructure for interoperability,

thereby avoiding digital Balkanisation. It also means providing regulatory clarity on dollar-denominated stablecoins and tokenised bank liabilities, so that private actors are not conducting quasi-central-bank functions without safeguards. And it means advancing a multilateral governance framework that ensures that cross-border digital rails reflect the principles that made the post-1970s system resilient: openness, transparency, and trustworthy governance.

Such a system is in everyone's interest. For Europe and China, modernised digital-payment rails would enable greater monetary autonomy without the disadvantages of fragmentation. For emerging economies, they would provide a credible path to reducing exposure to external shocks.

And for the US, they would strengthen supply-chain resilience, forestall reliance on rival digital ecosystems, and enhance investment competitiveness by making dollar assets programmable and attractive as collateral.

Moreover, embedding trusted digital-identity and compliance standards into the global financial plumbing would extend US influence in commercial statecraft.

An open, interoperable, standards-based monetary order could finally deliver what neither the Bretton Woods system nor the floating exchange-rate regime could simultaneously: liquidity, stability, and sovereignty. – Project Syndicate

• Silvia Sgherri is a visiting scholar and adjunct professor at the George Washington University's Elliott School of International Affairs.



The threat to the dollar's primacy is not a rival currency, but the possibility that the global financial infrastructure will evolve in ways that dilute the advantages of openness, including the network effects that make holding and settling in dollars attractive.

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Qatar's stellar mediation caps a glorious year

From Page 1

The attack drew widespread international condemnation, with expressions of solidarity affirming Qatar's sovereignty and recognising its diplomatic role.

Beyond Gaza, Qatar achieved notable humanitarian breakthroughs in the Ukrainian-Russian conflict.

On August 22, 2025, Doha announced the successful reunification of four Ukrainian children with their relatives and the return of three children to their families in Russia, bringing the total number of children reunited through Qatari mediation to 107.

In Africa, Qatar intensified its peace diplomacy by hosting the signing ceremony of the Doha Framework Agreement for Peace on November 15, 2025, between the government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Congo River Alliance (March 23 Movement).

The framework builds on the Doha Declaration of Principles signed on July 19, 2025, and serves as a reference document for broader peace efforts in eastern Congo.

The declaration followed a tripartite

summit hosted by Doha on March 18, 2025, at Lusail Palace, bringing together His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani, Rwandan President Paul Kagame and Congolese President Felix Tshisekedi, marking a crucial step in confidence-building and direct dialogue.

Qatar also mediated escalating tensions between Pakistan and Afghanistan following the most violent border clashes since 2021.

Beginning on October 17, 2025, Doha hosted high-level delegations from Islamabad and Kabul, facilitating negotiations that led to an immediate ceasefire, with follow-up talks agreed to ensure its sustainability.

In its most recent mediation effort, Qatar joined Norway, Spain and Switzerland in issuing a joint statement on December 5, 2025, regarding negotiations in Doha between the Colombian government and the self-proclaimed EGC group, focusing on disarmament and peacebuilding.

Alongside direct mediation, Qatar continues to reinforce its diplomacy through international conferences and dialogue platforms aimed at expanding dialogue,

preventing conflict escalation and producing practical policy recommendations, underscoring its long-term commitment to peacemaking and global stability.

Over the past two decades, Qatar has translated this constitutional commitment into an active and sustained diplomatic doctrine, positioning itself as a credible and reliable mediator in some of the world's most complex regional and international conflicts.

Through neutrality, discretion and consensus-based facilitation, Doha has emerged as a trusted venue for dialogue, preventive diplomacy and mediation between states as well as between governmental and non-governmental actors, provided all parties consent to its role.

This approach has enabled Qatar to become a global hub for addressing sensitive conflict files, enhancing its international standing as an impartial broker capable of operating in politically polarised environments.

Qatar's mediation policy is not driven by geopolitical ambition or power projection, but by a principled belief in dialogue, humanitarian responsibility and long-term stability, an approach that has earned it broad international recognition.

Institutionally, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) has worked to strengthen and activate mediation tools across its departments.

In 2023, the ministry introduced new ministerial portfolios to elevate peacebuilding and mediation files at the political and diplomatic levels, alongside reinforcing specialised teams of senior officials, diplomats and technical experts with experience in conflict resolution and humanitarian diplomacy.

Qatar has also expanded its mediation capacity through strategic international partnerships.

Memorandums of understanding were signed with Sweden, Norway and Finland to enhance co-operation in peacebuilding, reconciliation and conflict resolution, as well as to exchange best practices and technical expertise in preventive diplomacy.

According to the MoFA, Qatar's mediation efforts pursue a range of objectives, including achieving ceasefires, restoring diplomatic relations, facilitating prisoner exchanges, supporting national dialogue processes, resolving border disputes and strengthening humanitarian access.

These efforts also include opening channels of communication with non-state actors and engaging minority or marginalised groups, recognising the importance of inclusivity in achieving sustainable peace.

Senior researcher at the Al Jazeera Centre for Studies, Dr Liqaa al-Azzawi, told the Qatar News Agency (QNA) that Qatar's key distinguishing feature as a mediator lies in its detachment from geopolitical interests in the disputes it seeks to resolve.

This neutrality, he explained, has allowed Qatar to gain the trust of conflicting parties and to act without the perception



Qatar's Mediation Efforts

New Year of Difficult Negotiations, Successful Diplomacy

The State of Qatar has become a hub for discussing the most complex international and regional conflict.

» January: Qatar played a pivotal role in cooperation with Egypt and the United States, which led to reaching a ceasefire agreement.

» August: Qatar succeeds in reuniting four children with their relatives in Ukraine, and the return of three children to their families in Russia.

» October: Qatar held negotiations and announced an immediate ceasefire and truce between Pakistan and Afghanistan.

» November: The signing ceremony of the Doha Framework Agreement for Peace between the Government of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and the Congo River Alliance.

» December: Negotiations in Doha between the delegations of the Colombian government and the self-proclaimed EGC group, concerning the process of disarming the group and building peace in its regions.

of bias or hidden agendas.

Dr al-Azzawi noted that such neutrality is increasingly difficult to find among states seeking mediation roles, particularly major regional or global powers whose political or strategic interests often undermine their credibility.

He stressed that successful mediation depends not on the power of the mediator, but on transparency, trust and the ability to present settlement proposals without preconceived positions or partiality.

Dr al-Azzawi added that Qatar's long-standing engagement in humanitarian missions and development initiatives has further reinforced its moral credibility.

Through sustained contributions in education, development and humanitarian relief, particularly in the Global South, he said, Qatar has established a foundation of goodwill that enhances its effectiveness as a mediator.

This humanitarian record, combined with Qatar's ability to maintain relations with internationally controversial actors, has enabled it to play decisive mediation roles at critical moments.

In several cases, Doha has successfully transformed complex negotiations into tangible outcomes by leveraging trust, discretion and timely diplomatic engagement.

Since 2004, Qatar's mediation footprint has expanded across multiple regions, with notable involvement in Palestine, Afghanistan, Lebanon, Sudan, Chad and Ukraine.

In 2025, this role broadened further to include new conflict theatres, underscoring Qatar's growing capacity to contribute

constructively to regional and international peace and security.

Assistant Research Professor of International Affairs, Security and Defence at Qatar University, Dr Ali Bakir, told the QNA that mediation has become a defining hallmark of Qatari foreign policy and an integral component of its diplomatic identity.

What began as a pragmatic tool for resolving disputes, he said, has evolved into a constitutional and ethical duty rooted in Qatar's unwavering belief in peaceful conflict resolution.

This constitutional grounding, Dr Bakir explained, provides Qatar with moral authority and legal legitimacy in its mediation efforts, allowing Doha to operate flexibly and sustainably in a complex geopolitical environment where traditional diplomacy often falters.

Qatar's approach, he added, enables it to adapt to shifting dynamics while remaining anchored in consistent principles.

Dr Bakir stressed that Qatar's success in mediation is fundamentally linked to its unique ability to communicate with all parties amid deep divisions and polarisation.

By maintaining open channels with adversaries who may not engage directly with one another, Qatar has often served as the sole conduit for dialogue, facilitating trust-building and incremental progress.

This credibility, he added, has been strengthened by decades of diplomatic experience and a record of tangible achievements, consolidating Qatar's reputation as an impartial and objective mediator capable of delivering results. - QNA



Qatar's Mediation Efforts

New Year of Difficult Negotiations, Successful Diplomacy

In Exclusive Statement to QNA

Dr. Liqaa Al Azzawi
Senior Researcher at Al-Jazeera Center for Studies

Dr. Ali Bakir
Professor of International Affairs, Security, and Defense at Qatar University

Qatar's success in mediation and conflict resolution is fundamentally based on its unique ability to communicate with various parties.

This credibility has been strengthened thanks to a long diplomatic experience and a record full of tangible achievements.

2024
The effectiveness of these mediations has been evident in several regions, including Palestine, Afghanistan, Lebanon, Sudan, Chad, and Ukraine.

2025
The expansion of Qatar's role and its ability to contribute to achieving regional and international security and stability.

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Final weeks to experience M7's fall exhibitions

Qatar residents and visitors will have the opportunity to see and explore a number of exhibitions at M7, from fashion and design to cultural storytelling, before concluding in January 2026, according to Qatar Museums (QM).

"FTA: Threads of Impact. Celebrating 7 Years of Fashion Trust Arabia" will run until January 3, while "Amazigh Hair Couture, and Houbara Haven: A Chaumet Tiara," will remain on view until January 12.

"FTA: Threads of Impact" marks the seventh anniversary of the FTA, the pioneering initiative that offers unique opportunities to emerging fashion designers from the Middle East and North Africa (Mena) region.

The exhibition, which charts the FTA's transformative impact in shaping the careers of emerging designers from across the Mena, is presented by the FTA in collaboration with M7.

It features the work of more than 80 designers supported by the FTA, including winners and finalists of the FTA Prize and special guest country designers.

Surge in reconciliation as judges prioritise unity over divorce

From Page 1

They included Judges Harib al-Muhammadi, Nayef al-Kuwari, Dr Salam al-Kuwari, Ali al-Ansari and Raji Jaafar.

The recognition was presented in appreciation of their outstanding performance and leadership in advancing reconciliation outcomes. It also reflects the court's continued commitment to supporting judicial circuits and motivating judges to sustain this approach, which promotes the values of tolerance, understanding and long-term family stability.

In a development that reinforces

the notion that courtrooms are not solely venues for issuing rulings but also spaces for deliberation and wisdom, data showed that reconciliation cases conducted directly before judges accounted for the largest share of agreements reached between spouses.

Reconciliation rates stood at 64% in cases involving Qatari nationals and rose to 72% among non-Qatari, highlighting the effectiveness of judicial intervention in narrowing differences and restoring dialogue.

These outcomes reflect the sustained efforts exerted by judges to provide disputing parties with genuine opportunities to reconcile and rebuild marital life before

resorting to divorce, particularly in cases where dialogue remains possible.

Beyond the courts, several affiliated entities played complementary roles in supporting reconciliation.

The Family Consulting Centre (Wifaq) ranked second as a key contributor to family stability, achieving reconciliation rates of 51% among Qatari and 18% among non-Qatari, underscoring its role in providing psychological and social counselling.

The Arbitrators' Office contributed 11% of reconciliation cases among Qatari and 15% among non-Qatari, demonstrating the importance of arbitration as a le-

gitimate mechanism for dispute resolution.

Meanwhile, the Family Reconciliation Office continued its supportive role, contributing 16% of reconciliation cases and strengthening the social safety net for families in dispute.

A closer look at cases reviewed in November, which totalled 171, further illustrated the impact of these efforts.

Among Qatari nationals, divorce rulings numbered 47 compared with 45 reconciliation cases, indicating that nearly half of disputes were resolved amicably.

Among non-Qatari, 29 reconciliation cases were recorded alongside 50 divorce rulings.



Threads of Impact exhibition.

Led by creative director Ilham Mestour, a Moroccan-born, Netherlands-based artist, and curated by Rajae El Mouhandiz, an interdisciplinary artist and curator based in Rotterdam, the exhibition brings together fine art photography, scent, hair installations, textile works, and ethnographic archival material.

"Amazigh Hair Couture" reclaims authorship of the aesthetic traditions of the Amazigh people, the Indigenous communities of North Africa with traditions rooted primarily across Morocco, Algeria, and Tunisia, which have been historically co-opted by the global fashion industry.

The exhibitions are 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.

"Amazigh Hair Couture" celebrates the artistry, heritage, and cultural symbolism of Amazigh hair traditions.

The piece pays homage to Qatar's desert landscapes and the wildlife that inhabits them.

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2026 – 2028 Strategy

Vision
Universal access

Mission
Empowering people with disabilities and elderly to enjoy a high-quality of life through universal access services and solutions and strengthening a comprehensive access ecosystem

Strategic Outcomes

- PWD and elderly enjoying a better quality of life through the empowerment of assistive technology
- A distinguished position for the State of Qatar in scientific research and innovation in the field of access in Arabic
- Participation in empowerment and specialised capacity development
- Advocacy for universal access policies and practices

Through 4 strategic programs

- Inclusive Education Program
- Access to Employment Program
- Empowered Community Program
- Research & Innovation Program "Edge"

Values

- People centric
- Empathy & Advocacy
- Encouraging Innovation
- Community Partnership
- Quality & Sustainability

Mada Centre launches 'Universal Access for All' strategy through 2028

From Page 1

The strategy further aims at empowering the community with the third programme that is centred on building a community capable of participating and engaging effectively through raising awareness and developing environments and services that enable greater participation of people with disabilities and the elderly in public life.

The fourth programme is a research and innovation project titled "Edge".

It serves as a supportive track for advancing knowledge and

innovative solutions in accessibility, highlighting research and innovation as key drivers of tangible impact – particularly in the context of the Arabic language and the associated technical and knowledge-based challenges of universal access.

Mada's 2026-28 strategy reflects a practical direction toward translating the concept of universal access into measurable programmes and outcomes, with a focus on assistive technology, capacity building, activating partnerships, and embedding policies and practices that support universal access.



Qatari Diar Egypt awards CityGate project construction package to Concrete Plus

Qatari Diar Egypt has announced the award of one of the main construction packages for the CityGate Cairo project to Concrete Plus, one of Egypt's leading construction and engineering companies.

This award comes as part of Qatari Diar's strategy to accelerate construction progress on one of Egypt's largest integrated urban developments, reflecting the company's commitment to applying the highest international standards in quality, planning, and execution.

"CityGate represents one of the flagship models of Qatari Diar's vision to develop fully integrated urban communities that are managed according to the highest international standards and delivered by Egyptian expertise," said Qatari Diar chief executive Sheikh Hamad bin Talal al-Thani.

"In line with this approach, the contract for one of the project's main construction packages has been awarded to Concrete Plus, with a total value of EGP3.5bn, covering the construction of 300 residential units in addition to the execution of infrastructure works, to be delivered over a 30-month period according to a clear and precise implementation schedule," he said.

"This contract forms part of Qatari Diar Egypt's strategy to accelerate delivery while ensuring the highest levels of quality, enhancing the project's investment value and meeting the growing market demand for modern and sustainable communities," Sheikh Hamad added.

"Qatari Diar Egypt continues to strengthen its position in Egypt's real estate sector, having achieved sales exceeding \$1bn, alongside direct investments surpassing \$7bn – underscoring its long-



term commitment to the Egyptian market and its strategic importance within Qatari Diar's global portfolio," he stated.

"Winning the CityGate project reflects the strong confidence placed in Concrete Plus by major real estate developers and highlights our extensive experience in delivering integrated residential developments in accordance with the highest technical and engineering standards, while adhering to agreed quality benchmarks and delivery schedules," said Concrete Plus founder and chief executive Engineer Tarek Youssef.

CityGate is one of the most prominent strategic projects within Qatari Diar's Egyptian portfolio.

The project spans approximately 8.5mn sq m in a strategic location linking New Cairo with the New Administrative Capital, with total investments exceeding \$12bn upon completion.

The development includes a comprehensive network of services and facilities

such as business districts, world-class golf courses, educational, healthcare, and sports facilities, as well as extensive green spaces.

The project is expected to generate more than 200,000 direct and indirect job opportunities throughout its various development phases.

Qatari Diar Egypt holds a substantial investment portfolio, including a land bank exceeding 60mn sq m, alongside several landmark developments spanning Greater Cairo, the Red Sea, and the North Coast.

Aside for CityGate, other key projects include the St Regis Cairo, which offers a luxury hospitality experience featuring 232 elegantly designed guestrooms, 50 luxury suites, 80 serviced apartments, and 149 branded residences, as well as a strategic partnership in New Giza, one of Egypt's largest integrated developments.



Truffle exhibition and auction at Souq Waqif set to attract more customers

By Ayman Adly
Staff Reporter

The third edition of Souq Waqif Truffle Exhibition and Auction has been witnessing excellent turnout of customers, with heated bidding among potential customers to get hold of the best varieties of wild desert truffles on display.

The exhibition and auction, organised at Souq Waqif's eastern square, started on Sunday morning and is set to go on for few days, with the auction starting from 8am to 12pm or until the whole amount on display is sold out.

Yesterday a total of 1,300kg of truffles were on display, includ-

ing Saudi Zubaidi and Algerian and Moroccan Khalasi varieties, distributed across 250 boxes, each weighing approximately 3kg.

Within an hour and a half – from 8am-9.30am – the entire quantity on display was sold out.

Bidding is conducted on two boxes at a time. If a customer requests a single box, he can also get it without having to buy the two.

The most expensive box of Zubaidi truffles was sold for QR3,200, while the least expensive Zubaidi box sold for QR1,300.

For Khalasi truffles, the lowest-priced box sold for QR600 and the highest for QR700.

The quantities offered at the auction increase daily throughout the season as more amounts hit the market.

Jamal al-Ishaq, supervisor of the truffle auction, noted that most buyers are currently traders, with a small percentage of consumers.

He expects the consumer turnout to increase once they become aware of the auction.

Accordingly, al-Ishaq thanked the management of Souq Waqif, the Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MoCI), and the Ministry of Municipality for providing a venue for the auction, as well as providing parking spaces, a specialised doctor to inspect the truffles on offer, and a consumer protection officer from the MoCI.

Auction organiser Abdulaziz Abu Abdullah al-Mubarak said that the activity is well organised and located in a better area within Souq Waqif.

He said that the premium varieties on offer are Saudi first, followed by Algerian and Moroccan, and inviting the public to visit the auction and view the varieties and quantities available.



Qatar Charity inaugurates its 10th Qur'an memorisation centre in Somalia this year

Qatar Charity (QC) has inaugurated the "Amina Centre for Qur'an Memorisation" in the Kanda area of Somalia's Banadir region, the 10th centre that the QC has built this year.

The centre consists of three classrooms and a fully equipped administrative office.

The building has been equipped with all essential facilities required to operate Qur'an memorisation sessions, ensuring a safe and conducive learning environment for both male and female students.

The QC is committed to teaching Holy Qur'an as part of its development projects in the fields of education and culture.

This includes building, equipping, and operating centres for teaching

and memorising the Qur'an.

Qatar Charity also focuses on this aspect through its "Furqan" project, implemented by its "Rofaqa" initiative in several countries.

This initiative targets orphans sponsored by the "Rofaqa" programme, particularly in non-Arabic speaking countries.

The project focuses on teaching them the Arabic language and improving their skills to better understand the Qur'an, learn the correct way to read and memorise it and instil and reinforce Islamic values.

Saadie Ibrahim Abdi, spokesperson for Al Bashair Centre for Qur'an Memorisation, emphasised that the project "represents added value to Quranic education and opens new doors for our sons and daughters to

memorise the Book of Allah in a safe and nurturing educational environment".

"Such projects are a fundamental pillar in spreading moderation and consolidating Qur'anic values," said Ministry of Endowments and Islamic Affairs representative Sheikh Abu-bakr Ali Jabu. "We appreciate all efforts that serve the Holy Qur'an and provide a sound educational environment for our children."

Abdul Razzaq Muhammad Sheikh Abdullah, the official in charge of Kahda, affirmed that the project represents "an important addition to educational services in the area and contributes to developing the capabilities of young people and promoting Islamic education in the community".

