

Amir sends condolences to King of Spain

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani and His Highness the Deputy Amir Sheikh Abdullah bin Hamad al-Thani have sent cables of condolences to King Felipe VI of Spain on the victims of the train collision that took place south of the country, wishing the injured a speedy recovery. HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani also sent a similar cable of condolences to Prime Minister of Spain Dr Pedro Sanchez, wishing the injured a speedy recovery. **(QNA)**

Al-Subaie meets Algerian minister

HE the Minister of Environment and Climate Change Dr Abdullah bin Abdulaziz bin Turki al-Subaie met with Minister of Agriculture, Rural Development and Fisheries of Algeria Yacine El-Mahdi Oualid, during his visit to Algeria. During the meeting, the two sides discussed ways to strengthen co-operation between the countries in the fields of environment, wildlife protection, and biodiversity conservation, in addition to a number of topics of mutual interest. **(QNA)**



Secretary-general of Ministry of Foreign Affairs meets Greek envoy



HE the Secretary-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Dr Ahmed bin Hassan al-Hammadi met yesterday with Hellenic Republic ambassador to Qatar, Christos Kapodistrias. During the meeting, they discussed co-operation between the countries. **(QNA)**

PM meets Swedish counterpart, FM and Speaker of parliament

Prime Minister of Sweden Ulf Kristersson met in Stockholm yesterday with HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani. During the meeting, they discussed bilateral co-operation between the countries and ways to support and strengthen them, particularly in the fields of economy, trade, technology, health, and defence, in addition to several other topics of mutual concern. Both sides affirmed their commitment to continued consultations in the coming period to enhance co-operation in a way that serves shared interests. **(QNA)**



HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani met yesterday in Stockholm with Minister of Foreign Affairs of Sweden Maria Malmer Stenergard. Discussions during the meeting dealt with bilateral relations and ways to support and strengthen them, as well as developments in the region, particularly in the Gaza Strip and the occupied Palestinian territories, in addition to a number of other issues of mutual interest. **(QNA)**



HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani met yesterday in Stockholm with Speaker of the Swedish Parliament Andreas Norlen. Discussions during the meeting dealt with bilateral relations and ways to support and strengthen them, in addition to a number of issues of common interest. Several representatives of parliamentary committees attended the meeting. **(QNA)**

Congratulations

Darwish Interserve Facility Management Company

extends its sincere congratulations and best wishes to

Mohamed Saadeh

General Manager



On the occasion of his election as a **Board Member** of the Board of Directors at the Arab Council for Asset, Facility and Maintenance Management (OMAINTEC) for the new term (2026–2030). OMAINTEC is recognized as one of the leading professional organizations dedicated to the development and regulation of the asset, facility, and maintenance management sector across the Arab world.

The Arab Council for Asset, Facility, and Maintenance Management is a well-established and distinguished professional organization, and one of the foremost specialized entities in the Arab world, with a legacy spanning over 23 years since its establishment in 2004. The Council aims to advance the asset and facilities management sector by establishing professional frameworks and standards, promoting best operational practices, and supporting the principles of sustainability, governance, and innovation. These efforts contribute to enhancing the efficiency of asset and infrastructure management, while fostering integration and the exchange of expertise among institutions and professionals across the Arab region, under the guidance of a select group of experienced leaders and specialists in the field.

The election of Mr. Mohamed Saadeh to the Board of Directors of this esteemed professional body for the 2026–2030 term reflects the strong confidence in his leadership capabilities and distinguished professional career. We hope that his membership will contribute significantly to advancing the Council's mission and achieving its strategic objectives.

Darwish Interserve Facility Management wishes him continued success and prosperity, and further achievements in serving and advancing the asset and facility management sector across the Arab world.

New chapter in Qatar-Canada relations

Joint statement by Qatar and Canada on the occasion of Prime Minister Mark Carney's visit to Doha

A joint statement was issued on Sunday by Qatar and Canada, on the occasion of the visit of Prime Minister Mark Carney to Doha.

The statement reads as follow:

“Based on the close relations between Qatar and Canada, and in response to a kind invitation from His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani, Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney paid an official visit to Qatar on January 18.

“This is the first visit by a sitting Canadian prime minister to Doha, emphasising the shared commitment to promoting mutual prosperity, regional and international peace, stability, security, and a resilient multilateral system.

“In an atmosphere of mutual trust, His Highness the Amir and the Canadian prime minister held a session of talks that focused on relations between the two friendly countries, and ways to strengthen and develop them across all fields, especially trade and investment to achieve the aspirations of the people of the two friendly countries.

“Qatar and Canada enjoy a positive and growing partnership built on shared priorities, similar values, and mutual respect.

“Since establishing diplomatic relations over 50 years ago, the two countries have been continuously working to deepen ties through high-level visits and agreements that advance co-operation in trade, defence, education, and international development.

“Recent milestones include a

visit of His Highness the Amir to Ottawa in September 2024, during which both sides signed memoranda of understanding (MoU) on development co-operation as well as annual political consultations and finalised expanded air transit arrangements, underscoring a commitment to closer dialogue and connectivity.

“The Qatar-Canada relationship holds immense potential for growth. The visit of Prime Minister Carney has deepened bilateral relations through trade and investment, security, technology, mining, and agriculture.

“Both countries are committed to advancing shared objectives – Canada’s goal of trade and security diversification and Qatar’s Vision 2030 – that deliver economic benefits for both Canada and Qatar.

“Today, we have marked a new chapter, one that will strengthen our ties and create new opportunities for co-operation in the years ahead, during which several MoUs were signed in areas of co-operation that will pave the way for a strategic partnership through institutional frameworks that will sustain long-term and structured co-operation.

“Qatar and Canada will elevate their bilateral consultations to a foreign ministers-level strategic dialogue, reflecting the growing strength of their relationship.

“Both sides recognise the growing strategic relevance of the region and the value of deepening practical ties to support co-ordination.

“In this context, the two countries acknowledge ongoing Canadian efforts toward the establishment of a resident defence attaché presence in Doha and a broader set of co-operation initiatives, including an intention to establish a defence, security and intelligence

and success during the 2022 tournament.

“Investment plays a critical role in advancing economic prosperity. Qatar affirms its commitment to make significant strategic investments in Canada’s nation building projects.

“Likewise, Canada commits to bringing a delegation of investors, including its major pension funds, to Qatar to explore opportunities



Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney departed Doha yesterday morning, after his state visit to the country. Pictured is Carney at Hamad International Airport. The prime minister and his delegation were seen off by HE the Minister of State for Energy Affairs Engineer Saad bin Sherida al-Kaabi and Canada’s ambassador to Qatar Karim Morcos.

- QNA

framework (including military training).

“Looking ahead to the 2026 FIFA World Cup tournament co-hosted by Canada, the two sides signed a Letter of Intent (LoI) on Security Co-operation for the FIFA World Cup 2026, committing to strengthening security co-operation for the tournament, building on Qatar’s experience

for bilateral and joint investment.

“Qatar and Canada further share a desire to establish a foundation for enhanced collaboration across key sectors in trade and investment, including mining, agriculture, telecommunications, information and communication technology, science, transportation, and other areas of mutual interest.

“To enable this, the two sides signed MoU on Joint Economic, Commercial and Technical Co-operation, establishing a Joint Economic Commission to augment bilateral economic ties.

“Qatar and Canada have a shared commitment to leveraging innovation for global progress.

“Both countries are committed to building a strategic partnership that supports the ambitious growth and diversification objectives of Vision 2030, particularly in artificial intelligence (AI) and emerging technologies.

“To further the bilateral partnership in this domain, the two sides signed MoU for Co-operation in the Field of Information Technology.

“Recognising the value of deepening economic ties and supporting expanded investment opportunities for Qatari and Canadian businesses, as well as reinforcing long-term growth in our bilateral commercial relationship, both sides commit to conclude negotiations on a Foreign Investment Promotion and Protection Agreement (FIPA) in a timely fashion, with a view to signing the agreement in the summer of 2026.

“The two sides also agreed to commence negotiations on a Double Taxation Agreement (DTA).

“The two countries further agreed to enter a negotiation phase on MoU for co-operation in the financial and economic fields, with a view to enhancing co-ordination, exchanging expertise, and strengthening institutional co-operation between the two countries.

“Based on a shared understanding of the importance of bilateral air connectivity and its role

in strengthening economic ties, Qatar and Canada affirmed their intention to further expand air services under the Qatar-Canada Air Transport Agreement.

“This year marks Qatar’s Year of Culture with Canada, which comes at a time when the strength of international relationships needs to be shaped by understanding.

“The 2026 Years of Culture offers an opportunity for Canada and Qatar to deepen people-to-people ties, strengthen cultural literacy, and invest in the soft-power foundations that support stability and dialogue.

“Through culture, creativity, and shared experience, this partnership can contribute to a more resilient and durable bilateral relationship, as cultural exchange remains one of the most effective ways to build trust, reduce misperception, and create the conditions for long-term co-operation.

“At the conclusion of the visit, Prime Minister Carney expressed his sincere appreciation to HH the Amir for the warm welcome and generous hospitality that was extended during the visit.

“He highlighted his confidence in a future marked by even deeper co-operation and prosperity that is strengthened by mutual trust, close friendship, and a common vision for advancing the partnership between the two friendly nations.

“He further extended an invitation to His Highness the Amir to visit Canada, which His Highness welcomed and promised to accept at a date to be agreed upon through diplomatic channels.”

- QNA

Education minister restructures board of Qatar Scouts and Guides Association

HE the Minister of Education and Higher Education Lolwah bint Rashid AlKhater, who is also the chairperson of the Qatar Scouts and Guides Association (QSGA) board of directors, has issued a decision restructuring the board.

The new board sees the appointment of Salem Jaber al-Harami as vice-chairman, Ghanem Abdulrahman al-Kuwari as commissioner-general, and Susan Zaghmout as assistant commissioner-general.

The board likewise comprises representatives from several entities, namely Ahmed Mohammed al-Harami (representing the Ministry of Sports and Youth), Salah Mahmoud al-Saadi (representing the Qatar Olympic Committee), Brigadier-General Dr Ibrahim Mohammed al-Sumeih (representing the Ministry of Interior), Abdullah Shafi al-Qahtani (representing the Ministry of Defence), Moath Youssef Hassan (representing the Ministry of Endowments [Awqaf] and Islamic Af-

fairs), Abdulrahman al-Ishaq (representing Qatar Museums), and Abdullah Hamed al-Mulla (representing the Qatar Red Crescent Society).

Other representatives from civil society and one or more representatives of the Ministry of Education and Higher Education shall be co-opted by a decision from the minister.

The aforementioned decision also stipulated that the board shall have premises or more as determined by HE AlKhater,

while the remainder of its provisions included the authorities and functions assigned to the board in accordance with the enforced regulations.

In essence, the QSGA is one of the national agencies concerned with advancing the scouts and guides movement in Qatar.

The scouts movement was established in the nation in 1956.

The association primarily intends to prepare children and young people in

terms of full education, as well as leaders, in addition to overseeing the organisation of scouts activities, camps, and conferences at home, and organising participation in Arab and international scouts fora.


Through its leveraged role, the QSGA helps promote values of citizenship, volunteerism, and belonging in children and young people, in alignment with the targets of Qatar National Vision 2030, pertaining to the human development pillar.


- QNA

FIRST

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More than a card, a statement.



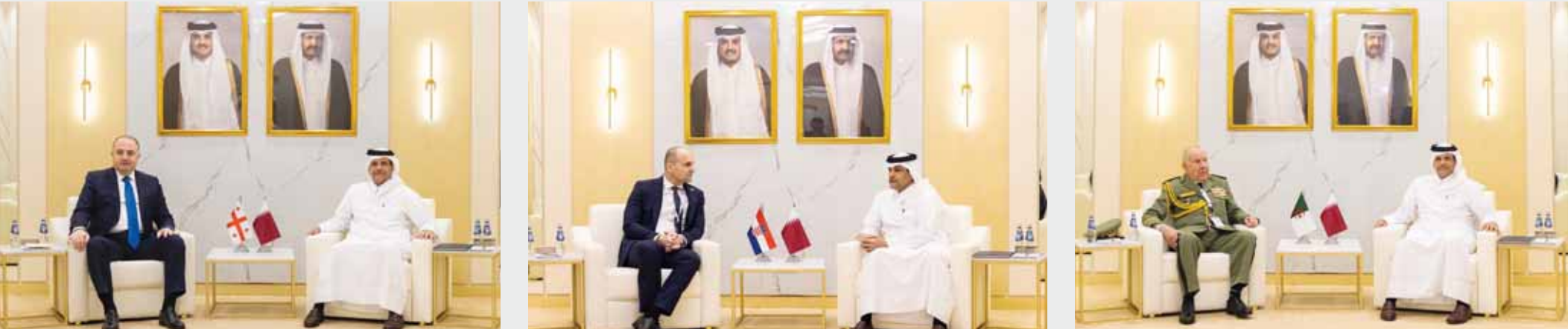
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Deputy PM holds bilateral meetings on sidelines of Dimdex



HE the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Defence Affairs Sheikh Saud bin Abdulrahman bin Hassan al-Thani held a number of bilateral meetings with several ranking international officials, on the sidelines of the first day of the Doha International Maritime Defence Exhibition and Conference (Dimdex) 2026. His Excellency met with Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defence of Georgia Irakli Chikovani, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defence of Croatia Ivan Anusic, Minister Delegate to the Minister of National Defence and Chief of Staff of the People's National Army of Algeria Gen Said Chanegriha, Minister for Defence Procurement and Industry of the United Kingdom Luke Pollard, President of Turkiye's Defence Industry Agency Dr Haluk Gorgun, and Deputy Minister of National Defence of Turkiye Musa Heybet. The meetings discussed a number of topics of common interest and ways to strengthen and develop them. The meetings were attended by a number of ranking officers and officials. (QNA)

Deputy PM attends signing of pacts on sidelines of Dimdex

HE the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Defence Affairs Sheikh Saud bin Abdulrahman bin Hassan al-Thani attended the signing of several agreements on the sidelines of the Doha International Maritime Defence Exhibition and Conference (Dimdex 2026). They included agreements between Barzan Holdings and the Turkish company STM, Orqa company (Croatia) and MKE company (Turkiye). His Excellency also attended the signing of an agreement for the purchase of two frigates between Barzan Holdings and the Turkish company TAIS, valued at \$1bn, for one of Barzan Holdings' international clients. Several senior officers and officials were also present. (QNA)



Dimdex 'enhances Qatar's position as regional hub for specialised exhibitions'

Qatar Chamber is participating in the ninth edition of the Doha International Maritime Defence Exhibition and Conference (Dimdex 2026), being held under the patronage of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani.

The event is taking place at the Qatar National Convention Centre (QNCC), and is organised and hosted by the Qatari Armed Forces. Through its participation and pavilion at the exhibition, Qatar Chamber aims to promote the national economy and showcase the investment climate and opportunities available in Qatar to exhibitors and visitors.

Qatar Chamber chairman Sheikh Khalifa bin Jassim al-Thani toured the exhibition and was briefed on the pavilions of local and international companies and institutions, as well as the latest technologies and innovations on display in the defence and security industries. He also received further information from exhibitors regarding the devices, equipment, and services being showcased in the event, in addition to the available opportunities for co-operation and partnerships.

Sheikh Khalifa stressed the importance of the exhibition in strengthening Qatar's position as a regional hub for hosting specialised events and ex-



Qatar Chamber chairman Sheikh Khalifa bin Jassim al-Thani during a tour of the exhibition yesterday.

hibitions. He highlighted the role such exhibitions play in supporting the national economy, encouraging knowledge transfer, and opening new horizons for co-operation between the Qatari private sector and its international counterparts.

He noted that Dimdex provides a valuable platform for direct engagement between official delegations, military commanders, representatives of government entities, and defence procurement agencies, contributing to the conclusion

of agreements with potential buyers and creating new commercial opportunities for participating companies.

Sheikh Khalifa also emphasised Qatar Chamber's keenness to support private sector participation in specialised exhibitions, as they serve as key platforms for networking, exploring investment opportunities, and building strategic partnerships that contribute to economic diversification and the promotion of sustainable development.

Qatar Insurance sponsors Toyota GR Yaris Cup 2026

Qatar Insurance has announced its sponsorship of the Toyota GR Yaris Cup Qatar 2026, organised by Al Abdulghani Motors from January 30 to April 18, 2026, at the Lusail International Circuit. The championship's second edition will be contested over four rounds, beginning with the opening phase on January 30 and 31. The second round will take place on February 12 and 13, while the third one will be held on February 27 and 28. The season will conclude with the fourth and final round on April 17 and 18, with the fans witnessing the crowning of this year's champion. As part of this sponsorship, Qatar Insurance unveiled its branded car for the championship, which will be competing for the 2026 title, driven by Qatari racing driver Khalid al-Maraghi. The car features QIC App branding elements and bears the number '1',

reflecting the app's pioneering position as Qatar's first platform offering both insurance and non-insurance services, enabling customers to cover a wide range of their daily needs digitally on a single interface. Rashid al-Buainain, Qatar Insurance Chief Administrative officer, said: "Our sponsorship of the competition reflects QIC's longstanding commitment to supporting the development of the national sports scene, including motorsports that enjoy strong popularity across the community. "We have consistently been at the forefront of national companies supporting sports and athletes in Qatar, and we are proud of being part of the success of numerous championships over the past decades." Al-Buainain added: "The Toyota GR Yaris Cup Qatar is more than a racing tournament. It is a unique platform that



Qatar Insurance Chief Administrative officer Rashid al-Buainain.

promotes sportsmanship and fair competition among youth, while inspiring ambition, dedication, and the pursuit of excellence. "On this basis, I am confident that this year's edition will once again be a true source of inspiration for fans, and a chance for motorsport enthusiasts to experience excitement, challenge, and speed." For more information about Qatar Insurance, visit qic.online To download the QIC App, visit app.qic.online

INVITATION TO TENDER

Tender Reference	Description	Tender Fee (QAR)	Tender Bond Value (QAR)	Bid Closing Date
CO-RFQ-439	Provision for the Supply of Professional Services Manpower to Qatar Foundation on Call-off Basis for Five (5) Years	1,000.00	100,000.00	25 th February 2026, 12:00 PM
QNL-RFQ-52	QNL IT Asset Management Solution Integrated with Jira Data Center for Hardware, Software, and License Tracking	500.00	N/A	25 th February 2026, 12:00 PM
CO-RFQ-440	Ceramic Coating on Central Plant Chiller Tube Sheet	500.00	N/A	19 th February 2026, 12:00 PM
CO-RFQ-441	Supply and Commissioning of LPG Storage Tanks in QNCC	500.00	N/A	22 nd February 2026, 12:00 PM
QNL-RFQ-51	Supply of High-Performance Workstations with warranty	1,000.00	N/A	15 th February 2026, 02:00 PM

Qatar Foundation (QF) Procurement Directorate is inviting companies to participate in the above listed public tenders. To receive the tender documents, please follow the below steps:

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

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

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

Tender Fee Payment Dates: Payment of Tender Fee online will be from **20th January until 26th January 2026.**

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

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

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

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

MoPH workshop promotes nutrition awareness for children with autism

The Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) recently organised an awareness workshop for parents of children with autism spectrum disorder on healthy nutrition and weight gain awareness, in collaboration with Hamad Medical Corporation (HMC) and Qatar Foundation's Renad Academy.

The workshop is part of MoPH's efforts to promote the health of individuals with autism spectrum disorder in line with the National Health Strategy 2024-2030 and the Qatar National Vision 2030, which prioritises the health of the individual and family.

The workshop aimed to promote awareness of the healthy eating habits of their children with autism spectrum disorder, how to deal with their nutrition-related challenges, and raise awareness of the importance of proper nutrition and its role in preventing weight gain and associated health complications, with a focus on the specific nutritional challenges that children with autism spectrum disorder may face, and ways to



deal with them in safe ways. The workshop reviewed the importance of adopting healthy eating habits and practising physical activity, while promoting awareness of nutrition problems associated with autism spectrum disorder.

It highlighted appropriate intervention methods for prevention and comprehensive health support, in addition to providing practical guidelines to help parents encourage their children to adopt healthy and sustainable eat-

ing habits. The workshop also included presentations by nutrition and public health specialists from the MoPH and HMC which addressed the basics of balanced nutrition, ways to prepare appropriate healthy meals, mechanisms to promote positive nutritional behaviour in children, and the need for periodic follow-up with nutritionists and healthcare professionals to contribute in preventing weight gain and achieving healthy growth for children.

Deputy prime minister meets Iraq, Somalia defence ministers



HE the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Defence Affairs Sheikh Saud bin Abdulrahman bin Hassan al-Thani met separately with Iraqi Minister of Defence Thabet Muhammad Saeed al-Abbasi and Somalia's Defence Minister Ahmed Moallim Fiqi on the sidelines of the first day of the Doha International Maritime Defence Exhibition and Conference (Dimdex 2026). During the meetings, HE Sheikh Saud signed a co-operation agreements with al-Abbasi and Fiqi, aimed at strengthening areas of joint co-operation in a manner that serves mutual interests and reinforces defence partnerships. The meetings and the signing ceremonies were attended by a number of senior officers and officials. - QNA



Armed Forces chief holds meetings

HE the Chief of Staff of the Qatar Armed Forces Lieutenant-General (Pilot) Jassim bin Mohammed al-Mannai held a number of bilateral meetings with senior international officials on the sidelines of the first day of the 9th Doha International Maritime Defence Exhibition and Conference (Dimdex 2026). During the meetings, discussions focused on issues of mutual interest and ways to strengthen and further develop military co-operation in a manner that serves shared interests. The meetings were attended by senior officers and officials. - QNA



Amir opens largest Dimdex edition

From Page 1

His Highness the Amir toured the exhibition, where he viewed the latest technologies and equipment in the maritime defence and security sector, showcased by companies both local and international.

He toured several international exhibiting companies and major international pavilions, as well as national companies and entities, including the pavilions of the Qatar Armed Forces participating in the exhibition.

The exhibits include advanced systems and solutions related to naval shipbuilding, communications, radar, missiles, sea mines, cyber-security, counter-piracy operations, artificial intelligence (AI), and other specialised maritime industries and services within the military defence domain.

In his opening address, HE the Commander of the Qatar Amiri Naval Forces Major-General Abdullah bin Hassan al-Sulaiti stated: "The convening of the ninth edition of Dimdex comes at a time of rapidly evolving events affecting our region and many other parts of the world."

He further noted that the event serves as a key platform bringing together thought leaders, experts, academics and military commanders to discuss issues and developments related to maritime defence and security.

The same day also saw the signing of several contracts, memoranda of understanding, and strategic agreements in the field of maritime defence, in the presence of HE the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Defence Affairs Sheikh Saud bin Abdulrahman bin Hassan bin Ali al-Thani.

Dimdex 2026 is being held over four days under the theme *A Global Hub for Defence Innovations - Invest in Possibilities to Shape a Secure Tomorrow*, featuring the participation of more than 200 international and national companies across various maritime, land and air defence sectors.

The event also witnesses a record participation of official VIP delegations, exceeding 110 delegations from around the world.

On the first day of the event, the official opening of the visiting warships display took place at Hamad Port, which received eight visiting warships from six countries, including the multi-mission warship *Al-Fulk* of the Qatar Amiri Naval Forces - the largest of its kind in the Gulf region.

The event will also host today the Middle East Naval Commanders Conference, organised in partnership with the Joan Bin Jassim Academy for Defence Studies, under the theme *Defence Diplomacy and Maritime Security Challenges*.

For the first time, Dimdex will feature specialised workshops delivered by exhibitors in a dedicated area within the exhibition.

Qatar ties poised for next phase of growth, says envoy

From Page 1

"The coming period will focus on boosting economic partnerships, improving market access, enhancing logistics and tourism links, and promoting two-way investment," he said.

The ambassador highlighted emerging opportunities in science and technology, renewable energy, cybersecurity, and high-tech agriculture - sectors that he said align closely with Qatar's national priorities and development vision.

He explained that as Vietnam prepares for the 14th National Congress of the Communist Party this year, the country is pursuing a renewed commitment to international collaboration, with Qatar seen as a key partner in its economic and technological ambitions.

The 14th Congress, he noted, is expected to be a defining moment in Vietnam's modern journey.

It will chart the nation's strategy for the next 5-25 years, reviewing past progress while setting targets for 2030 and a long-term vision towards 2045.

"The Congress is expected to adopt forward-looking policies to



Nguyen: Vietnam views Qatar as a key partner in the Gulf region.

guide Vietnam into a new era of aspiration and development," Nguyen said, adding that it reaffirms Vietnam's priorities of reform, stability, and global engagement.

He said the Congress sends an important signal to international partners: that Vietnam will remain open to investment, committed to sustainable growth, and focused on mutually beneficial partnerships.

"The theme underscores national unity, strategic autonomy, and a determination to achieve major development goals," the envoy noted.

"The private sector is now recognised as a key driver of growth, with stronger legal guarantees

for fair competition and property rights," Nguyen said. "Foreign investment remains a top priority, particularly in high-tech, low-emission, and value-added sectors that advance technology transfer and workforce skills."

Nguyen emphasised that Hanoi is ready to work closely with Doha in building a more sustainable and balanced partnership that contributes to regional and global stability.

On the ground, Vietnamese firms are already becoming more visible in Qatar, taking part in major exhibitions and trade events such as AgriteQ, Project Qatar, Qatar Travel Mart, and Qatar Hospitality.

"In the near future, the embassy will support Vietnamese companies in establishing stronger presences in Qatar, with plans for one or two representative offices to facilitate trade," he said. "With favourable policies in both countries, we expect bilateral trade to surpass \$1bn in the coming years."

Vietnam's economic fundamentals, the ambassador added, remain among the strongest in the region.

The country recorded 8.02%

GDP growth in 2025, maintained low inflation, and preserved macroeconomic stability - giving investors confidence.

With a population of more than 100mn and a rapidly expanding middle class, Vietnam offers attractive opportunities in manufacturing, infrastructure, services, and energy.

Foreign direct investment reached \$38.42bn in 2025, supported by 17 active free trade agreements that deepen the country's integration into regional and global markets.

Nguyen noted that Vietnam's rapidly developing financial sector - including new initiatives like the International Financial Centre in Da Nang - offers additional prospects for Qatar investment in green finance, technology transfer, and joint research.

"This approach opens broader, more stable opportunities for collaboration with partners such as Qatar - across sectors from the economy and energy to technology, environment, and finance," the envoy said. "Vietnam views Qatar as a key partner in the Gulf region and an integral part of its wider foreign policy strategy."

New E-system from February 1 to speed up border crossings

From Page 1

Al-Abdalghani added that the system accommodates a wide variety of vehicle types - private, commercial, and tourist - and offers flexible coverage options, including weekly, bi-weekly, and monthly policies valid for multiple trips.

Furthermore, insured vehicles using the sys-

tem will benefit from a dedicated lane at the Abu Samra crossing, significantly reducing wait times during peak travel seasons.

Colonel Khalid Ali al-Misshal al-Buainain, chairperson of the Permanent Committee for Abu Samra Border Management, said that the initiative will enhance traffic movement and improve the traveller experience at the country's main land entry point.

He added that visitors without prior electronic insurance can still finalise their coverage through designated counters at the border for longer-term policies.

Through this initiative, Qatar seeks to simplify border procedures, bolster security, and raise public service efficiency, while offering travellers a faster and more convenient entry experience.

7th Souq Waqif Equestrian Festival kicks off today

The 7th Souq Waqif Equestrian Festival 2026, organised by the Celebrations Committee of the Private Engineering Office (PEO), will begin today amid record participation by horse owners from home and abroad.

The activities will begin today at Souq Waqif's western square.

The festival had its inaugural edition in 2018. The first three days will witness the 7th Souq Waqif International Championship for Purebred Arabian Horses (Category A).

On January 23, traditional heritage events and competitions for young riders will be held, followed by the 15th Qatar International Championship for Purebred Arabian Peninsula Horses (Category S - Beauty Class), scheduled to run from January 24-26.

The festival winds up on January 27 with an auction for purebred Arabian horses as a final event, where amateur horse riders and specialists converge. - QNA

ANNOUNCEMENT

I, SAIFUDHEEN KALAKANDA THIL THODI
holder of

Indian Passport No. T9567452
QID No. 29235651290

hereby change my name
from

SAIFUDHEEN KALAKANDA THIL THODI
to

SAIFUDHEEN KALAKANDATHIL
PALLIYALTHODI

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

ANNOUNCEMENT

I, ASIF MOHAMMAD ABDULRAHEEM MOHAMMAD
holder of

INDIA Passport No. I0686327
QID No. 28735659946

hereby change my name
from

ASIF MOHAMMAD ABDULRAHEEM MOHAMMAD
to

ASIF MOHAMMAD MOHAMMED ABDULLA

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

ANNOUNCEMENT

I, MAHMMOOD YOUSEF
holder of

IRAN Passport No. UU97749713
QID No. 28636400086

hereby change my name

from
MAHMMOOD YOUSEF

to
MOHAMMAD YOUSEF
SHANBALAK ZEHI JASKI

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



Shura Council discusses obesity among children at weekly session

The Shura Council held its regular weekly session yesterday at the Tamim bin Hamad Hall at the Council's headquarters, under the chairmanship of HE the Speaker of the Shura Council Hassan bin Abdullah al-Ghanem.

At the outset of the session, HE the Secretary-General of the Council Nayef bin Mohammed al-Mahmoud read out the agenda, following which the council approved the minutes of its previous session.

During the session, the Council reviewed a request submitted by members to hold a general debate on the prevalence of childhood obesity in Qatar.

HE al-Ghanem commended Qatar's commitment to safeguarding public health, particularly the health of children and youth, in line with the directives of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani, and stressed that human health constitutes a firmly established national priority within the State's public policies.

HE the Speaker referred to Articles (22) and (23) of the Constitution, which affirm the State's responsibility to care for and protect children from neglect and exploitation, ensure their sound physical, mental, and spiritual development, and provide public healthcare along with means of disease prevention and treatment.

He noted that these provisions form a comprehensive constitutional framework for protecting individuals and promoting societal health, in alignment with Qatar National Vision 2030.

HE al-Ghanem further emphasised that the rising rates of obesity in society, particularly among children and youth, represent a serious health and social challenge that



requires co-ordinated efforts and integrated roles among relevant stakeholders.

The Shura Council members expressed appreciation for the State's efforts to promote public health and develop preventive policies, and commended initiatives and programmes aimed at reducing the prevalence of chronic diseases, particularly obesity.

They noted that the spread of obesity is linked to several interrelated factors, most notably modern lifestyles, insufficient physical activity, increased consumption of fast food and sugary beverages, changes in family dietary patterns, and a lack of nutritional awareness among some parents.

They highlighted the importance of regulating food-related activities in schools and educational institutions, ensuring that

school canteens comply with approved health standards, strengthening awareness programmes within educational settings, and integrating concepts of healthy nutrition and physical activity into both curricula and extracurricular activities.

The Shura Council members also stressed the need to require that restaurants and food companies clearly disclose calorie counts, meal ingredients, and food sources, thereby enhancing consumer awareness and enabling families to make informed and healthy dietary choices for their children.

They drew attention to the growing influence of food delivery companies and their role in promoting unhealthy dietary habits, and emphasised the need to strengthen oversight of this sector, regulate its operations in a manner that considers

public health concerns, and protect children and youth.

The Shura Council members also called for stricter controls on the marketing of unhealthy foods through social media platforms, particularly content targeting children and adolescents.

They referred to the alarming rise in overweight and obesity rates indicated by national and international statistics, underscoring the importance of relying on accurate and up-to-date data to monitor the scope of the issue.

The Shura Council members stressed the need to conduct a comprehensive national study to assess obesity rates, analyse underlying causes, and examine age-related and geographical distribution, with a view to utilising the findings in the development of preventive policies and programmes.

They also stressed the importance of developing a comprehensive national plan to reduce obesity rates, to be formulated and implemented with the participation of relevant health, education, sports, municipal, trade, economic, media, and regulatory authorities.

Such collaboration, the Shura Council members added, would ensure unified efforts and achieve sustainable, measurable impact.

Following discussions reflecting a shared commitment to promoting community health – particularly among children and youth – and achieving a balance between modern lifestyle demands and public health requirements, the Council decided to refer the request for a general debate to the Health, Public Services, and Environment Committee for comprehensive study and consideration of all related aspects. – QNA

QRCS, JHCO provide hot meals to 72,000 across Gaza

The Qatar Red Crescent Society (QRCS) has launched a new food distribution project for the benefit of 72,000 war-affected and internally displaced people (IDPs) across the Gaza Strip.

The initiative is co-implemented by Jordan Hashemite Charity Organisation (JHCO) as part of the ongoing Qatar aid programme for the people of Gaza.

The project is aimed at alleviating the suffering of those worst hit by the recent war, including patients (kidney failure, cancers, heart disease, diabetes and chronic diseases, disabilities, malnutrition, and war injuries); IDPs and destroyed homes; children and young people; socially vulnerable families and older persons; and other victims of bombing and zero-income workers who have lost their jobs.

Relief catering hubs have already been set up to prepare and pack the family-size hot meals, each of which is sufficient for 3-5 persons.

The project's field team is deployed to distribute the ready-made meals in the target areas over 12 days, at a rate of 450-500 meals per day for each of the project's three phases. – QNA

Thai foreign ministry receives copy of Qatar envoy's credentials

The director-general of the Protocol Department in the Thai ministry of foreign affairs, Chakkrid Krachaiwong, has received a copy of the credentials of Qatar's ambassador to Thailand, Abdulaziz bin Mohamed al-Sada. Pictured are Chakkrid with al-Sada. – QNA



Minister meets Japanese official in charge of Gaza reconstruction

HE the Minister of State at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Dr Mohammed bin Abdulaziz bin Saleh al-Khulaifi has met Okubo Takeshi, the special assistant to the Japanese minister of foreign affairs and ambassador in charge of the reconstruction of the Gaza Strip, who is visiting Qatar.

Discussions during the meeting centred on avenues for advancing bilateral co-operation between the two countries, the latest developments in the region, particularly in the Gaza Strip and the occupied Palestinian territories, as well as a range of matters of shared interest.

HE Dr al-Khulaifi underscored the importance of concerted regional and global efforts to ensure the full enforcement of the ceasefire accord in the Gaza Strip, paving the way for sustainable peace and the desired stability in the region. – QNA



Dimdex reflects Qatar's 'commitment to diplomacy, joint security initiatives'



The ninth Doha International Maritime Defence Exhibition and Conference (Dimdex 2026), said Qatar Amiri Naval Force commander HE Staff Major-General (Navy) Abdullah bin Hassan al-Sulaiti, is a forum for innovation, offering the latest maritime defence technologies alongside supporting systems critical to military operations.

Speaking at the opening ceremony, HE Staff Major-General al-Sulaiti emphasised the importance of defence exhibitions in equipping armed forces with the capabilities needed to safeguard sovereignty and national security.

The four-day event, held under the theme *A Global Hub for Defence Innovation – Invest in Possibilities to Shape a Secure Tomorrow*, highlights the role of naval defence in regional and global security.

The exhibition also serves as a platform for senior military leaders, academics, and experts to discuss emerging issues in maritime defence and security through the Middle East Naval Commanders Conference.

The event, HE Staff Major-General al-Sulaiti said, reflects Qatar's commitment to diplomatic solutions, regional co-operation, and joint security initiatives.

More than 200 international, regional, and national companies are taking part in the event, showcasing advanced technolo-

gies including cybersecurity, anti-piracy systems, artificial intelligence (AI), unmanned systems, and C5ISR (Command, Control, Communications, Computers, Cyber, Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance) solutions.

The exhibition has attracted a record 110 high-level official delegations from all over the world.

The first day saw the official opening of the naval ship display at Hamad Port, which received eight visiting warships from six countries, including Qatar's multi-role warship *Al-Fulk*, the largest of its kind in the Gulf region.

Several defence-related contracts, memoranda of understanding, and strategic agreements in the field of maritime defence were signed during the opening of Dimdex 2026, in the presence of HE the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Defence Affairs Sheikh Saud bin Abdulrahman bin Hassan al-Thani.

The Middle East Naval Commanders Conference is organised in partnership with Joaan Bin Jassim Academy for Defence Studies, under the theme of defence diplomacy and maritime security challenges.

Over the following days, exhibitors will hold specialised workshops demonstrating their latest defence innovations and technologies. – QNA

ICSEI 2026 kicks off at Qatar University

Organised by the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MoEHE), the 39th International Congress for School Effectiveness and Improvement (ICSEI 2026) kicked off yesterday at the Qatar University.

The conference, which runs until January 22, is held under the theme *Crossing Boundaries in Education: Fostering Innovative, Inclusive and Sustainable Learning Environments*.

More than 500 representatives of an elite group of experts and those interested in developing education and improving the performance of schools and educational systems are taking part.

The opening ceremony was attended by HE the Undersecretary of the MoEHE Dr Ibrahim bin Saleh al-Nuaimi, Lebanon's Minister of Education and Higher Ed-

ucation Dr Rima Karami, and ICSEI president Dr Danette Parsley, along with senior officials from the MoEHE and Qatar University, as well as academics and those interested in educational affairs.

In his opening remarks, HE Dr al-Nuaimi emphasised that Qatar believes that progress in education is not measured by replicating global models, but rather by the ability of the education system to absorb and reproduce best international practices in a manner that suits the local context, cultural values, and national priorities.

This, he said, is the approach that Qatar is taking in developing its education system.

HE Dr al-Nuaimi added that education occupies a pivotal position in Qatar National Vision 2030, which has placed human development at the heart of the

state's project for achieving comprehensive and sustainable development.

He said that Qatar continues to invest intensively and effectively in a high-quality education system that focuses on empowering the learner, supporting the teacher, developing educational leadership, and building fair, inclusive, and stimulating learning environments that encourage thinking and innovation.

The head of the local preparatory committee for the conference, Dr Asmaa al-Fadala, said that the current edition is the first to be held in the Gulf region, and is witnessing for the first time the acceptance and participation of scientific research in Arabic.

She said that the hosting of the ICSEI conference in Doha is more than just an academic event; it is a scientific partnership that reflects

the region's presence as an active partner in formulating important educational issues and questions, especially in light of a rapidly changing world full of challenges and opportunities.

Dr al-Fadala indicated that the conference represents a real opportunity to build research teams, generate joint ideas, and launch initiatives that contribute to advancing education globally.

The conference is one of the key international forums specialising in the development of education and the improvement of the performance of schools and educational systems, as it provides a global platform for exchanging experiences, discussing contemporary educational issues, and reviewing successful experiences in the field of educational effectiveness.

The conference is held in part-



nership with Qatar University, the College of Public Policy at Hamad bin Khalifa University, and the Arab Educational Training Centre for Gulf States, with a diverse sci-

entific programme that includes scientific sessions, advanced specialised sessions, and field visits to a number of schools within the local educational system. – QNA

Zulal Wellness Resort by Chiva-Som receives Travelife Gold Certification in sustainability for the second consecutive year



Zulal Wellness Resort by Chiva-Som, the Middle East's first and largest fully immersive wellness destination, has been awarded the prestigious Gold Certification in Sustainability by Travelife, marking the second consecutive year the resort has achieved this global recognition. Zulal also remains the first wellness resort in Qatar to be certified by Travelife, a leading international accommodation sustainability certification body.

Following an extensive independent audit against the rigorous Travelife Standard, the resort earned Gold status in recognition of its exemplary commitment to sustainable practices. These include reducing environmental impact, supporting local economic and social development, upholding human rights and fair labour practices, and protecting animal welfare and biodiversity.

Commenting on the achievement, Ammar Samad, General Manager of Zulal Wellness Resort by Chiva-Som, said: *"Receiving the Travelife Gold Certification for the second consecutive year is a meaningful validation of our long-term commitment to responsible tourism. At Zulal, wellness and sustainability are deeply interconnected - not only for our guests, but for the communities we serve and the environment we share. We believe it is our responsibility as a wellness leader to operate with integrity, support local communities, care for the planet, and uphold the highest sustainability standards in everything we do, today and for the future."*

Travelife is globally recognised for strict sustainability criteria aligned with the Global



Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC), covering emissions reduction, biodiversity conservation, human rights, fair labour, child safeguarding, and animal welfare.

This achievement reinforces Zulal Wellness Resort's position as a global leader in wellness, hospitality, and sustainability, continuing to set benchmarks in holistic wellbeing while creating a positive impact for guests, communities, and the planet.

SCAN TO GET CONNECTED



For more information or reservations, please email Zulal Wellness Resort by Chiva-Som at reservations@zulal.com, call/WhatsApp +974 4477 6555 or visit www.zulal.com.

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BOOK A TEST DRIVE





Qatar Academy Al Khor holds first parents' symposium

By Joseph Varghese
Staff Reporter

Qatar Academy Al Khor (QAK), part of Qatar Foundation's Pre-University Education (QF-PUE), held yesterday the first parents' symposium under the theme 'Together for Success' with the participation of a large number of parents.

Aimed at strengthening the vital partnership between home and school, the symposium featured a series of engaging workshops to support student success and foster community connection.

Abeer al-Khalifa, president of QF-PUE, was the guest of honour on the occasion, and a number of officials from various organisations were present at the symposium's opening session.

Dr Aisha al-Megbali, director of QAK, said the parental symposium was held to break down barriers between the school and families. "We want the parents to be more engaged in the strategic development of the school. We want to open the doors for them to give their opinions, suggestions, recommendations and how we can work collaboratively together for the development of the children," explained Dr al-Megbali.

The director said that a large number of parents are attending the symposium. "Immediately after the opening session, there



Abeer al-Khalifa and other dignitaries at the opening session of the event.

are different sessions where parents are engaging themselves with the representative from the school and will take part in workshops on different topics," she said.

According to the official, it is a unique programme for various reasons. "This is the first parental symposium at QAK. It is a unique programme, and we are aiming to have another version of it next year or the year after," she underlined.

QAK has been in existence since 2008 and currently has more than 1,200 students, offering the International Baccalaureate (IB) curriculum.

"After the symposium, we will collect all the recommendations or suggestions by the parents, and we will also develop action plans to improve the school and make it a better school. I have a session with parents for an

analysis to identify the school's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats that we might have. We will collect all the information and embed it within our strategic plan for the next three to five years," said the official.

Moza al-Kuwari, an Arabic teacher and activity co-ordinator at QAK, said the event was of great importance to the school and its community.

"We have organised the event to enhance the bond between the school and the parents and the larger community. We hope that it will help to build a very firm and lasting relationship among the stakeholders of the school," al-Kuwari added.

There were many student performances during the opening session, followed by a panel discussion and a number of workshops.



A performance by the students of QAK. PICTURES: Shaji Kayamkulam

Justice minister meets German envoy



HE the Minister of Justice and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Ibrahim bin Ali al-Mohannadi met yesterday with Germany's ambassador to Qatar, Oliver Owczka. During the meeting, they discussed legal and judicial co-operation between the countries, and ways to strengthen and develop them. (QNA)

Doha Forum 2026 unveils 'Redefining Global Trust' as theme

Doha Forum, a leading global platform for dialogue and diplomacy, yesterday announced the theme of its 24th edition, "Redefining Global Trust," ahead of a panel co-hosted with Foreign Policy, at the Invest Qatar Pavilion during the World Economic Forum Annual Meeting 2026, in Davos, Switzerland.

The theme highlights the growing need to reassess long-held assumptions about global co-operation and to chart new pathways for building trust in an increasingly complex international landscape.

To take place in Doha, in December 2026, the Doha Forum 2026 will convene political leaders, policymakers, experts, and practitioners from diverse regions and sectors to explore what it means to redefine trust in today's global context.

Discussions will examine how diplomacy, mediation, credible institutions, and effective co-operation can continue to evolve to meet contemporary realities, bridge divides, and identify practical pathways towards stability, collaboration, and shared prosperity.



Speaking at the Doha Forum panel in Davos, Executive Director of Doha Forum Mubarak Ajlan al-Kuwari emphasised the need to move beyond inherited assumptions about trust.

"In a world undergoing profound change, trust can no longer be taken for granted or sustained by past assumptions alone," al-Kuwari said.

"It must be redefined for contemporary realities — deliberately built, continuously earned, and actively reinforced through inclusive dialogue, credible institutions, and co-operation that delivers tangible outcomes."

In turn, General Manager of Doha Forum Maha al-Kuwari added, "Redefining Global Trust reflects a forward-looking recognition that trust must continuously

evolve alongside changing global dynamics. Doha Forum 2026 will provide a global platform for inclusive dialogue, enabling stakeholders to explore new avenues for co-operation, accountability, and responsible leadership."

As global systems face growing demands for fairness, accountability, and representation, "Redefining Global Trust" frames trust not as a given, but as something that must be actively shaped and sustained in response to a rapidly changing world.

Doha Forum is a global platform for dialogue, bringing together world leaders, policymakers, business executives, civil society representatives, and thought leaders to exchange ideas and drive solutions to the most pressing challenges of our time. (QNA)

SJC streamlines procedures, speeds litigation process

By Ayman Adly
Doha

The justice system in Qatar has achieved various milestones through the National Initiative to advance judicial systems (2019-2025), according to HE Dr Hassan bin Lahdan al-Mohannadi, president of the Supreme Judicial Council (SJC) and president of the Court of Cassation.

Through the official account of SJC on X, he stressed that this reflects the unlimited support of the wise leadership of the country and the state's keenness to maintain the independence of the judiciary, the rule of law, and the establishment of accomplishing justice.

He pointed out that the Na-

tional Initiative to advance judicial systems has been instrumental in modernising legislative tools and judicial procedures, and in supporting digital transformation in courts, as well as in electronic integration with related government entities.

Academic and professional partnerships, along with specialised training, have enhanced the proficiency of the judicial cadre and administrative staff. These have helped in speeding the work procedures and improved the quality of judicial services.

In addition, he stressed that such achievements have enhanced the SJC regional and international presence, supporting the state's vision for comprehensive development as part of Qatar Vision

2030. These have also established Qatar's international status regarding the rule of law.

The initiative has resulted in producing an advanced system of legislation with six laws issued regulating the judicial system within the past five years, in addition, the litigation period at the Qatari courts has become considerably shorter, with an average of 38 days to resolve a case.

Accordingly, almost 94.3% of the cases at the judicial season are resolved within a six-month period, while 98.4% of the cases were resolved across all the courts of the country over the past five years.

Similarly, same day rulings have increased annually. An electronic integration link with 23 govern-

HE Dr Hassan bin Lahdan al-Mohannadi, president of the SJC and the Court of Cassation has said the National Initiative to advance judicial systems has modernised legislative tools, judicial procedures and supported digital transformation in courts

ment entities has been maintained to exchange information and data and expedite related procedures. In the meantime, Qatarisation among the judicial cadre reached 70%, and 75% among the administrative staff.

The SJC maintained several technical upgrades for its services and procedures. The court case file

and the accompanying requests were fully digitised. The court memoranda, pleas, claims, demands, and other documents can be submitted electronically, and the judgment or ruling be issued electronically as well. The courts' e-portal was launched, and many court services and family authentications were automated. Fur-

ther, call centre and administrative platforms were launched to manage requests, the progress of lawsuits, and notifications. Accordingly, Qatar has ranked second in the region for rule of law and 43, globally.

The SJC has also introduced specialised courts and various alternatives to litigation to speed up the processes involved. At the family court, the alternatives for resolving disputes were expanded, and the rates of reconciliation and friendly settlements increased accordingly. The first specialised court was introduced to serve businesses and boost economic transactions through the investment and trade court. Further, specialised circuits were introduced at all the different degrees of litigation.

Students debate global issues as ABP concludes Harvard Model Congress Middle East

The Academic Bridge Program (ABP), part of Qatar Foundation's Pre-University Education, concluded the Harvard Model Congress Middle East 2026 in Education City in collaboration with the University of Harvard under the theme 'Diplomacy in the Age of Innovation' with the participation of approximately 150 students from Qatar and 10 more countries.

The conference aims to provide students with a hands-on educational experience through realistic simulations of negotiation and decision-making. Students took part in multiple sessions and committees that mirrored

the work of parliaments, international forums, and United Nations sessions. During these sessions, participants assumed the roles of legislators and policymakers, discussed contemporary global issues, and proposed solutions to complex challenges.

The conference featured 11 international and local committees addressing a range of current issues, including digital infrastructure, digital banking in emerging European markets, and the impact of technology and innovation — such as smart cities — on democratic systems and policymaking. Sessions were led by students from Harvard University, who

oversaw discussions and guided participants throughout the conference.

"Hosting this conference aligns with the Academic Bridge Program's mission to prepare students academically, intellectually, and personally for higher education, while enabling them to develop critical thinking, constructive dialogue, and decision-making skills," said Dr Saheim Khalaf al-Temimi, director, ABP. "We are also pleased to announce that the Harvard Model Congress Middle East will be hosted again in Education City next year, continuing this educational collaboration." "The experience contrib-



About 150 students took part in the conference.

uted to developing essential skills students need for their future pathways, whether in higher education or in fields such as public service, science, technology, and international affairs."

Dr al-Temimi said that organising the conference reflects QF's commitment to supporting experiential learning, empowering youth, and enhancing their engagement with global issues, while reinforcing Qatar's role as a hub for

dialogue, education, and innovation.

He also emphasised the importance of students continuing to uphold the spirit of inquiry, responsibility, and global citizenship that characterised the conference, while remaining committed to asking questions, demonstrating leadership, and making positive contributions to their communities and the wider world.

Salma Boukouj, president of the

Harvard Model Congress Middle East, added: "It was an intensive and enriching experience, during which students engaged in in-depth discussions and addressed real-world challenges that reflected their high level of commitment and seriousness. It was inspiring to see their passion, ambition, and depth of thinking, and I hope this experience will have a lasting impact on their journeys, as it did on mine."

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

Arab League, MWL welcome Syria ceasefire, SDF integration

The Arab League and Muslim World League have welcomed the ceasefire agreement and the full integration of the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) into Syrian state institutions and administrative structures, which was announced by the Syrian Presidency on Sunday. In a statement, the Arab League described the agreement as an important step towards building the new Syrian state, strengthening its institutions, and extending its sovereignty over the entirety of its territory, within a framework of national partnership, as affirmed by the recent Syrian presidential decree. - **QNA**

WARNING

Yemen humanitarian crisis set to worsen in 2026: UN

The humanitarian crisis in Yemen is set to get much worse in 2026 as food insecurity increases and international aid evaporates, the UN warned yesterday. Julien Harneis, the UN resident and humanitarian co-ordinator for Yemen, said he feared the calamitous situation would go under the radar until the death toll mounts. The picture in Yemen is "very, very concerning", he told reporters in Geneva. Last year, 19.5mn people in the country needed humanitarian aid – and the UN's response plan for the country was only 28% financed, at \$688mn. "We are expecting things to be much worse in 2026," said Harneis. - **Reuters**

LAW AND ORDER

Iran police chief issues surrender ultimatum over 'riots'

Iran's national police chief said people who were "deceived" into joining demonstrations the authorities have deemed "riots" would receive lighter punishment if they turned themselves in within three days. "Young people who became unwittingly involved in the riots are considered to be deceived individuals, not enemy soldiers", and "will be treated with leniency by the Islamic republic system", Ahmad-Reza Radan said, adding they had "a maximum of three days" to surrender. Iranian officials have said the demonstrations were peaceful before turning into "riots" fuelled by US and Israel and aimed at destabilising the Islamic republic. - **Reuters**

WILDLIFE

Shark mauls surfer in Sydney, third attack in two days

A shark mauled a surfer off an ocean beach in Sydney yesterday in the Australian city's third shark attack in two days, authorities said. The surfer, believed to be in his 20s, was in a critical condition in hospital with serious leg injuries after the attack at a northern Sydney beach, police said. All of Sydney's northern beaches were closed until further notice. The attack at North Steyne Beach in the suburb of Manly came hours after a shark bit a large chunk out of a young surfer's board about 4kms north along the coast at Dee Why Point. That surfer was uninjured - **Reuters**

Trump links Greenland threat to Nobel Peace Prize snub, EU prepares to retaliate

Reuters
Paris/Oslo

US President Donald Trump has linked his drive to take control of Greenland to his failure to win the Nobel Peace Prize, saying he no longer thought "purely of Peace" as the row over the island threatened to reignite a trade war with Europe.

Asked by NBC News in a brief telephone interview yesterday if he would use force to seize Greenland, Trump said "No comment," adding he would "100%" follow through on plans to hit European nations with tariffs without a Greenland deal.

Trump has intensified his push to wrest sovereignty over Greenland from fellow Nato member Denmark, prompting the European Union to weigh hitting back with its own measures.

The dispute is threatening to upend the Nato alliance that has underpinned Western security for decades and which was already under strain over the war in Ukraine and Trump's refusal to protect allies which do not spend enough on defence.

Trump's threat has rattled European industry and sent shockwaves through financial markets amid fears of a return to the volatility of 2025's trade war, which only eased when the sides reached tariff deals in the middle of the year.

In a text message on Sunday to

Norway's Prime Minister Jonas Gahr Støre, Trump said: "Considering your country decided not to give me the Nobel Peace Prize for having stopped 8 Wars PLUS, I no longer feel an obligation to think purely of Peace, although it will always be predominant, but can now think about what is good and proper for the United States of America."

Norway's government released the messages yesterday under the country's freedom of information act. Støre had sent an initial message on behalf of himself and Finnish President Alexander Stubb, calling for de-escalation of tensions and suggesting a call, eliciting a response from Trump less than half an hour later.

The Norwegian Nobel Committee annoyed Trump by awarding the 2025 Nobel Peace Prize not to him but to Venezuelan opposition leader Maria Corina Machado.

In his message, Trump also repeated his accusation that Denmark cannot protect Greenland from Russia or China.

"... And why do they have a 'right of ownership' anyway?" he wrote, adding: "The World is not secure unless we have Complete and Total Control of Greenland."

Trump vowed on Saturday to implement a wave of increasing tariffs from February 1 on EU members Denmark, Sweden, France, Germany, the Netherlands and Finland, along with Britain and Norway, until the US is allowed to buy Green-

land, home to only 57,000 people.

"We are living in 2026, you can trade with people, but you don't trade people," Denmark's Foreign Minister Lars Lokke Rasmussen said during a visit to London yesterday.

In a post on Facebook, Greenland Prime Minister Jens-Frederik Nielsen said the territory should be allowed to decide its own fate.

"We will not let ourselves be pressured. We stand firm on dialogue, on respect and on international law," he said. Denmark's military said planes carrying Danish soldiers and army commander Peter Boysen would land in Kangerlussuaq, western Greenland, describing it as a "substantial contribution" to the Arctic Endurance military exercise.

Norway's Støre amended his schedule, announcing that he would attend the World Economic Forum in Davos tomorrow and Thursday, overlapping with Trump's planned appearance at the annual gathering of the global political and business elite.

Trump is expected to deliver a keynote address tomorrow in his first appearance at the conference in six years. German Chancellor Friedrich Merz said he too would try to meet Trump tomorrow, adding that a trade dispute was not wanted. "But if we are confronted with tariffs that we consider unreasonable, then we are capable of responding," Merz said.



UAE President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed al-Nahyan walks with India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi upon his arrival at the airport in New Delhi, India, yesterday.

India, UAE sign \$3bn LNG deal, to boost trade, defence ties

Reuters
New Delhi/Dubai

India yesterday signed a \$3bn deal to buy liquefied natural gas from the United Arab Emirates, making it the UAE's top customer, as the leaders of both countries held talks to strengthen trade and defence ties.

The agreement was signed during a very brief two-hour visit to India by UAE President Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed

al-Nahyan for talks with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi. They pledged to double bilateral trade to \$200bn in six years and form a strategic defence partnership.

Abu Dhabi state firm ADNOC Gas will supply 0.5mn metric tonnes of LNG a year to India's Hindustan Petroleum Corporation for 10 years, the companies said.

ADNOC Gas said the agreement brings the total value of its contracts with India to over \$20bn.

"India is now the UAE's largest customer and a very important part of ADNOC Gas' LNG strategy," the company said.

The United Arab Emirates is India's third largest trading partner and Sheikh Mohammed was accompanied by a government delegation that included his defence and foreign ministers. The two sides signed a letter of intent to work towards forming a strategic defence partnership, India's foreign secretary Vikram Misri told reporters.

Gas discovery provides boost to Philippines fast-dwindling reserves

Philippines President Ferdinand Marcos yesterday said a "significant" discovery of natural gas had been made near the country's sole producing offshore site. About 98bn cubic feet (2.8bn cubic metres) of natural gas – enough to provide power to 5.7mn homes for a year – has been found east of the Malampaya Field near the island of Palawan, Marcos said. The Philippines has some of the region's highest energy costs and faces a looming crisis as the Malampaya gas field, which supplies about 40% of power to the archipelago's main island, Luzon, is expected to run dry within a few years. The discovery – 5kms east of the Malampaya Field – is the first in more than a decade and suggested the potential to produce even more, Marcos said. "This helps Malampaya's contribution and strengthens our domestic gas supply for many years to come. Initial testing showed that the well flowed at 60mn cubic feet per day," Marcos said in a statement.

Queen Camilla at National Library of Scotland



Britain's Queen Camilla takes part in a drawing class during a visit to The National Library of Scotland in Edinburgh yesterday, to mark the launch of the National Year of Reading in Scotland, led by the department for education and the National Literacy Trust.

Japan PM calls snap election on Feb 8

AFP
Tokyo

Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi yesterday said she would dissolve parliament this week ahead of a snap election on February 8, hoping for a stronger mandate to push through her ambitious policy agenda.

The country's first woman leader is banking on her high poll numbers to lead the unpopular ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) to victory.

"Is Sanae Takaichi fit to be prime minister? I wanted to ask the sovereign people to decide," she told a news conference.

"Following the dissolution of the lower house on January 23, the schedule will be set for campaigning to start on January 27 and voting and counting held on February 8."

If elected, Takaichi pledged

yesterday to cut a tax on food for a two-year period to "alleviate the burden" on people struggling with inflation.

Takaichi's cabinet approved a record 122.3tn-yen (\$768bn) budget for the fiscal year from April 2026, and she has vowed to get parliamentary approval as soon as possible to address rising prices and shore up the world's fourth-largest economy.

"We have a responsibility to overcome the shackles of excessive austerity and take immediate action against the crisis at hand," she told reporters.

The LDP has governed Japan almost uninterrupted for decades, albeit with frequent leader changes.

Takaichi was appointed premier in October, and her cabinet is riding high in the polls despite her party's flagging popularity.

Daily Mail complicit in unlawful acts: Harry's lawyer tells court

Reuters
London

Prince Harry, Elton John and five other public figures were victims of widespread phone hacking and other unlawful acts by Britain's powerful Daily Mail with the complicity of executives and senior journalists, their lawyer told a court yesterday.

The British royal and other claimants accuse the Mail's publisher Associated Newspapers of unlawful behaviour violating their privacy from 1993 until 2011

and beyond in one of the most high-profile civil cases in the UK for years.

Harry, 41, who arrived smiling and waving at court, said in a witness submission that it was "disturbing to feel that my every move, thought or feeling was being tracked and monitored just for the Mail to make money out of it." Associated calls the allegations "preposterous smears" and part of a co-ordinated conspiracy by a wealthy group driven by personal animosity towards the media. Over nine weeks, the legal team for Harry, singer John and the other claimants – actors Liz Hur-

ley and Sadie Frost, anti-racism campaigner Doreen Lawrence and former lawmaker Simon Hughes – will argue private investigators instructed by the Mail unlawfully obtained material about them.

Their lawyer David Sherborne said practices included hacking voicemail messages, bugging landlines and obtaining private information by deception, known as "blagging". "There was clear, systematic and sustained use of unlawful information gathering at both the Daily Mail and the Mail on Sunday," Sherborne said at the start of the trial at London's High Court.

Harry, who has long blamed the press for the death of his mother in a Paris car crash in 1997 as her vehicle sped away from paparazzi, listened in court, sitting behind his lawyers with Hurley, Frost and Hughes.

Among those accused of involvement in wrongdoing were managing editors and senior journalists including the current editors of the Mail on Sunday and Sun newspapers.

Examples included finding out precise travel plans of Harry's former girlfriend Chelsy Davy, and a report about "private and intimate conversations" between

Harry and his elder brother Prince William about a statement regarding images of their dead mother, the claimants' written submissions said.

In his witness statement, quoted in the submissions, Harry, whose case is based on 14 published newspaper stories, says the intrusion had been "terrifying" for loved ones, and created a "massive strain" on personal relationships.

Associated's titles had not previously been embroiled in the phone hacking scandal hanging over the British press for two decades until the case was filed in 2022. It denies wrongdoing

and says the lawsuits should have been brought sooner. It says evidence from former private detectives is untrustworthy. Some have been convicted of crimes and Associated says the claimants' legal team has paid for some testimonies.

"The allegation that these practices were 'habitual and widespread' at Associated's titles was simply untrue," the publisher said in its written submission.

Judge Matthew Nicklin's conclusions will not just put reputations on the line, but also determine legal costs running to tens of millions of dollars.

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GULF TIMES

American CEOs push back on govt ... mildly

Speaking before a darkened ballroom, US Chamber of Commerce CEO Suzanne Clark called on executives to be “fearless” in defence of free markets over government control and said the US must remain “open to the world, open to the global exchange of talent and goods and ideas and innovation.”

The comments by the head of the most powerful US business lobby group could be seen as mild pushback against President Donald Trump, who has waded into business mechanics like no other US president. He has directed the US to take stakes in tech companies, asserted control of corporate equity structures, imposed tariffs, and advanced immigration policies opposed by the chamber.

This month, several CEOs, including Exxon Mobil’s Darren Woods and JPMorgan’s Jamie Dimon, also have offered temperate critiques of certain Trump agenda items. But they limited their remarks to sectors where they have interests - Venezuela’s oil and the US Federal Reserve, while Clark did not mention Trump by name or his policies during the speech.

Even as masked immigration agents confront US citizens in Minneapolis and Trump considers seizing Greenland, which may cut off American businesses from European markets, the response from business leaders has been milquetoast, said Richard Painter, University of Minnesota law professor and chief ethics lawyer for former President George W Bush.

“I’d like to see a lot more aggressive stance from the Chamber here,” Painter said of Clark’s speech. “A lot of executives may have voted for Trump, but they need to speak out against coercion, whether it’s aimed at a protester in the streets or aimed at a CEO who isn’t doing what the president wants them to.”

Mark Levine, a Democrat who is the new New York City Comptroller overseeing public pension funds with stakes in the largest US companies, said CEOs have taken only “baby steps,” speaking up only when Trump’s actions directly affect their businesses. Asked for comment, a Chamber spokesman noted a briefing that Clark held for reporters in which she said that “We are against government intervention in business, no matter which party is suggesting it.”

She added that CEOs have been doing “quiet work” to promote sound public policies behind the scenes, and “not rushing to outrage.”

In August, Neil Bradley, the chamber’s chief policy officer, told Reuters the group aimed to respond to Trump in a nonpartisan way, to preserve support for free markets. Trump’s approval rating on the economy currently stands at a lacklustre 36%, below his overall 41% rating even as he portrays his economic policies as succeeding by conventional measures.

“Under our administration, growth is exploding, productivity is soaring, investment is booming, incomes are rising, inflation is defeated, America is respected again like never before,” Trump said in Detroit on Tuesday. A few prominent CEOs have openly questioned some of his actions.

On January 13, JPMorgan’s Dimon said he supported the independence of Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell, days after the administration opened a criminal investigation into Powell’s conduct. Dimon added that Trump’s meddling in the Fed could spike inflation. “I don’t care what he says,” Trump told Reuters about Dimon’s comments. A JPMorgan representative declined to comment for this article.

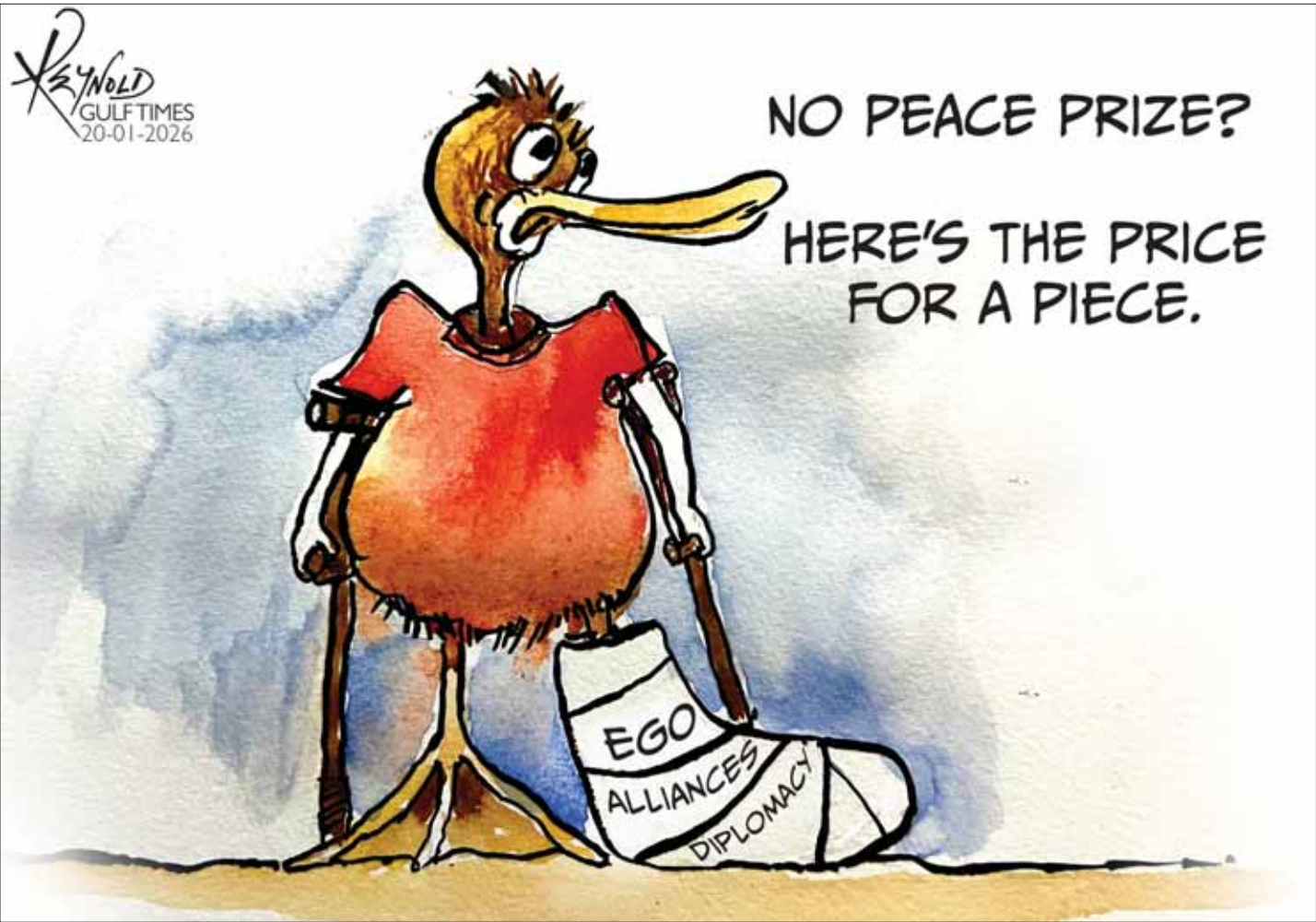
A day earlier, Albert Bourla, CEO of Pfizer, said he was annoyed by Health Secretary Robert F Kennedy Jr’s move to roll back vaccine recommendations for children. “I’m seriously frustrated, because what is happening has zero scientific merit,” he told journalists in San Francisco. Pfizer representatives did not respond to questions.

The Conference Board released a survey showing that for US CEOs, the biggest risk factor in 2026 is uncertainty. Dana Peterson, chief economist at the Conference Board, said the survey did not specifically ask about Trump, but that “the executives I’ve spoken with understand that lobbying is different now.”

Gary Clyde Hufbauer, senior fellow of the Peterson Institute for International Economics, said CEOs may be calibrating their comments to avoid blowback and to position their companies to benefit from Trump’s policies or interests.

But unless companies push back, this could open the door to heavier regulation after Trump leaves office, Hufbauer said. “My guess is they (CEOs) think the actions are a passing fad,” Hufbauer said. “Since state capitalism is catnip both to progressive Democrats and to some MAGA Republicans, executives and investors could be asleep at the switch,” he said. – Reuters

CEOs may be calibrating their comments to avoid blowback and to position their companies to benefit from Trump’s policies or interests



272mn children are not in school: time for better decision-making

By Dr Logan Cochrane
Doha

In 1990, the United Nations launched Education for All, an initiative eventually followed by Goal 2 of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and Goal 4 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) with the former committing to universal access to primary education by 2015. Yet at the time of writing, more than 270mn children around the world are not in school, up 20mn on the previous year.

Despite all the declarations, efforts to get children to school are not proving as effective as they should be. Climate change, conflict and other challenges further complicate attempts to provide access to education, particularly where it is needed most. In order to turn this negative trend around, and make more informed interventions and policies in the process, educators and policymakers need credible evidence on what really works.

To this end, Qatar’s Hamad Bin Khalifa University (HBKU) and Education Above All (EAA) are dedicated to redressing the balance. Working in more than 60 countries and supporting over 22mn learners, EAA is a non-profit organisation committed to ensuring no child is left behind. Since 2022, HBKU’s College of Public Policy has supported this vision as a knowledge partner. Both work together to provide much-needed evidence for improved decision making.

Neither HBKU nor EAA are outsiders looking in on one of the gravest challenges facing educators worldwide. Both organisations have extensively analysed government policies, public spending, as well as access to higher education during conflict. Their research also spans trends in foreign aid (and if education-focused decisions are based on needs), assessing government investments, as well as the international community’s commitment to Education for All. From Afghanistan to Zimbabwe, they’ve also worked with academics and policymakers on country-specific projects.

Their findings indicate that the reasons why children and youth are not in school vary widely, and are not always attributable



Dr Logan Cochrane

to education policies and systems. This means that different interventions have to be designed to address unique root causes rather than align with one-size-fits-all “best practices.” For example, barriers to education

Working in more than 60 countries and supporting over 22mn learners, EAA is a non-profit organisation committed to ensuring no child is left behind. Since 2022, HBKU’s College of Public Policy has supported this vision as a knowledge partner. Both work together to provide much-needed evidence for improved decision making.

could be financial, with people living in poverty unable to afford the direct, or indirect, costs of education. Geography, gender, displacement, infrastructure, and more, also present distinct challenges. Providing evidence for each specific circumstance should allow for more effective interventions.

Both organisations strive to ensure that the findings of these studies are shared globally, and in different formats – from policy briefs and working papers to social media posts and webinars. EAA also curates a database of hundreds of education projects, making its research efforts accessible to all. Scholars connected to these projects are regularly featured in relevant academic journals and specialist publications.

Taking evidence from these studies and having it reach decision makers means doing more than just publishing academic papers and making media contributions. This research being produced supports the work of Education Above All, as effectively supporting children and youth requires evidence to implement impactful interventions. Making this research available to everyone supports all other actors to do the same.

The research has been published and made available to governments, intergovernmental agencies and non-governmental organisations who are also working toward ensuring no child is left behind. The challenges are significant. This means taking new approaches. It means exploring innovative approaches, from novel financing mechanisms to integrating conflict resolution activities.

Ensuring all children and youth have access to quality and inclusive education remains a challenge. Together, EAA and HBKU are leading the generation and dissemination of evidence to make progress on the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly SDG4, access to education for all.

(Dr Logan Cochrane is Acting Dean of Hamad Bin Khalifa University’s College of Public Policy and Professor in Public Policy at the same institution. This piece has been submitted by HBKU’s Communications Directorate on behalf of its author. The thoughts and views expressed are the author’s own and do not necessarily reflect an official University stance.)



Palestinian children walk next to the ruins of Al-Farouq Mosque, destroyed during Israeli bombardment in Rafah in the southern Gaza Strip, in a file photo. Climate change, conflict and other challenges further complicate attempts to provide access to education, particularly where it is needed most. (AFP)

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OBITUARY

Italian fashion great
Valentino dead at 93

Italian fashion designer Valentino Garavani has died, his foundation said yesterday. Usually known only by his first name, Valentino was 93, and had retired in 2008. Founder of the eponymous brand, Valentino scaled the heights of haute couture, created a business empire and introduced a new colour to the fashion world, the so-called 'Valentino Red'. "Valentino Garavani passed away at his Roman residence, surrounded by his loved ones," the foundation said on Instagram. The lying in state will be tomorrow and Thursday, while the funeral will take place in Rome on Friday at 11am (1000 GMT), it added. - Reuters

DISASTER

Death toll from floods rises
in Mozambique, South Africa

Mozambique battled severe flooding as the death toll after weeks of rain climbed, with more bodies also recovered in South Africa. Heavy rains and storms have battered the two countries for weeks, claiming at least 150 lives, authorities said. More than 110 people had been killed in Mozambique since early October, the start of the rainy season, the National Disasters Management Institute (INGD) database showed yesterday, with 13 of the deaths in the past week. Large parts of the country were still underwater, prompting President Daniel Chapo to cancel his trip to the World Economic Forum in Davos as rescue operations continued. - Reuters

CRIME

Dozens abducted in
Nigeria church attacks

Armed bandits abducted dozens of people from two churches in Nigeria's Kaduna state, police said yesterday, while a senior church leader put the number of those missing at more than 160. Kaduna state police said gunmen armed with "sophisticated weapons" attacked the two churches in Kurmin Wali, a forest community in Afogo ward, at about 11.25am on Sunday. They said officers were still trying to confirm how many people were taken. A police spokesperson said the area was remote and difficult to reach due to bad roads, making it challenging to obtain reliable information in the immediate aftermath of such attacks. - Reuters

PEOPLE

Singer Julio Iglesias seeks
dismissal of abuse complaint

Spain's veteran singer Julio Iglesias has asked authorities to dismiss a complaint filed by two former employees alleging sexual misconduct, saying Spanish courts lack jurisdiction, according to documents submitted by his lawyer yesterday. The women - a domestic worker and a physiotherapist - allege they suffered sexual and other abuse while working at Iglesias's properties in the Dominican Republic and the Bahamas in 2021. In a criminal complaint filed in Spain earlier this month, they said Iglesias subjected them to harassment, regularly checked their mobile phones and restricted their ability to leave the homes where they worked. - AFP

French premier
to force budget
through parliament
without vote

Reuters
Paris

France will use special constitutional powers to force a budget for 2026 through parliament, Prime Minister Sebastien Lecornu said yesterday after winning enough political backing for the bill to survive the inevitable no-confidence vote that would follow.

Lecornu said after a cabinet meeting that he planned to invoke article 49.3 of the Constitution to circumvent a parliamentary vote on the finance bill, breaking an earlier promise to abstain from using such powers.

"I am doing it with regret, because I am aware that I am forced to go back on my word," Lecornu told journalists.

Lecornu said he would formally invoke Article 49.3 to pass the income side of the legislation in the lower house today before it moves to the senate.

The move brings closer to a conclusion the centrist government's three-month slog to deliver a deficit-taming budget that moderate opponents could sufficiently stomach to refrain from voting the government out. The government expects the budget to be definitively passed in the first half of February, one official said.

Needing to win support from the Socialists without alienating conservatives, Lecornu had said he would no longer cut a tax rebate on pensions, and that a monthly income supplement benefit for low-income workers would rise by

some 50 euros per month for 3mn households.

Cheap meals for students in university canteens will be extended, and steps will also be taken to boost affordable housing. To help finance these measures, a corporate surtax on large companies that was supposed to last only one year will be extended through 2026 and will raise 8bn euros.

Boris Vallaud, who leads the Socialists in the National Assembly, responded to those concessions by telling newspaper *Le Parisien*: "The prime minister's announcements allow us to imagine that we will not need to vote no-confidence."

In the hunt for a budget, Macron lost two governments and saw France plunged into turmoil rarely seen since the 1958 creation of the Fifth Republic, the current system of government.

While neither the Socialists nor the conservative Les Republicains are enamoured with the proposed budget, political analysts said neither wanted to risk snap parliamentary elections with the far-right ahead in popularity polls.

Conservative chief Bruno Retailleau wrote on X that the amended budget would result in "more spending and higher taxes." However, he indicated that he would allow the government to fight another day in any ensuing no-confidence vote.

"This budget confirms that we will have to wait until the presidential election to implement the reforms the country needs," he added.



Members of the Spanish Civil Guard, along with other emergency personnel, work next to one of the trains involved in the accident, at the site of a deadly derailment of two high-speed trains near Adamuz, in Cordoba, Spain, yesterday.

39 dead in Spain after two
high-speed trains collide

Reuters
Adamuz, Spain

At least 39 people died in southern Spain after a high-speed train derailed and collided with an oncoming one on Sunday night in one of the worst railway accidents in Europe in the past 80 years.

Twelve were in intensive care after the accident near Adamuz in the province of Cordoba, about 360km south of Madrid, according to emergency services. Experts studying the crash site say a faulty rail joint may be key to de-

termining the cause of the crash. "The train tipped to one side... then everything went dark, and all I heard was screams," said Ana Garcia Aranda, 26, who was travelling back to Madrid and was being treated at a Red Cross centre in Adamuz. Limping and wrapped in a blanket, her face covered with plasters, she described how fellow passengers dragged her out of the train covered in blood. Firefighters rescued her pregnant sister from the wreckage and an ambulance took them both to hospital.

"There were people who were fine and others who were very, very badly injured. You had them

right in front of you and you knew they were going to die, and you couldn't do anything," she said.

The collision occurred in a hilly, olive-growing region which could only be accessed by a single-track road, making it difficult for ambulances to enter and exit, Inigo Vila, national emergency director at the Spanish Red Cross, said.

Emergency teams were struggling to bring in heavy machinery that could lift the wreckage to get access to more of the dead, the Andalusia region's President Juan Manuel Moreno said.

Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez cancelled his trip to the

World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, and Transport Minister Oscar Puente visited the crash site yesterday.

Police drone footage showed how the trains came to a standstill 500 metres apart. One train's carriage was split in two, and the locomotive was crushed like a tin can.

Experts studying the crash site found a broken joint on the rails, which created a gap between the rail sections that widened as trains continued to travel on the track, according to a source briefed on initial investigations into the disaster.

13 schoolchildren
killed in S Africa
minibus collision

A minibus carrying students to school collided with a truck south of Johannesburg yesterday, killing 13 pupils, South African police said. It was the latest in a string of deadly crashes in a country whose modern road network is undermined by rampant speeding, reckless driving and poorly maintained vehicles. The crash happened near the industrial city of Vanderbijlpark, about 60kms south of Johannesburg. Police said the driver of the minibus appeared to have lost control while attempting to overtake other vehicles. The toll rose to 13 after an injured child died of injuries, the provincial education department said in a statement. Several children were also badly hurt. Authorities did not immediately release the ages of the children but provincial education minister Matome Chiloane said they were from primary schools, where pupils are aged from six years.

Ice blocks clog up Germany's Elbe river



People in northern Germany flocked to the Elbe river yesterday to marvel at giant Arctic-style ice floes that have clogged up a stretch of the waterway, creating a headache for shipping but delighting visitors. The ice formed upstream in recent weeks during a cold snap that saw temperatures plummet to -15C. Icebreakers have since smashed through the ice, sending the floes downstream where they accumulated at a barrage at Geesthacht, near the river-port of Hamburg, said Tilman Treber from the federal navigation authority (WSV).

Explosion at Chinese
restaurant in Kabul kills 7

AFP
Kabul

A blast at a Chinese restaurant in central Kabul yesterday killed at least seven people and wounded more than a dozen others, emergency services said.

An AFP journalist saw police vehicles and an ambulance at the scene following the explosion on a street known for its flower sellers in the Shahr-e-Naw area.

Kabul police spokesman Khalid Zadran said the explosion occurred at the Chinese Noodle restaurant, which he said mainly served Chinese Muslims.

"A Chinese Muslim, Ayub, and six Afghans were killed, and several others were wounded. The blast occurred near the kitchen," Zadran said in a statement.

The police spokesman, who said the cause was under investigation, had earlier said the blast hit a hotel.

Italian NGO EMERGENCY said its hospital nearby had received "seven people dead on arrival", with 13 others admitted to the surgical department.

"Among the wounded are four women and a child," Dejan Panic, the NGO's country director, said in a statement.

The owner of a flower shop, requesting anonymity for security reasons, said the blast happened at around 3.30pm (1100GMT) at the other end of the street from his business.

He said he heard the "strong sound" of a blast in the crowded area.

"It was an emergency situation. Everybody feared for his own life," he said. "I could see at least five wounded."

60 still missing after massive Karachi mall fire

Reuters
Karachi

Pakistani firefighters began pulling bodies from the smouldering remains of a sprawling Karachi shopping mall yesterday where more than 60 people were still missing after a massive fire that killed at least 21.

The city's biggest fire in over a decade started late on Saturday at Gul Plaza, which houses 1,200 shops in a multi-storey complex spread across an area larger than a football field. The blaze in Karachi's historic centre raged for more than 24 hours before it was mostly extinguished.

Videos showed flames ripping through the building as firefighters laboured through the night to put out the blaze. Yesterday, they began cooling the structure and clearing twisted metal and debris strewn across the street, along with fallen air-conditioning units and shop signboards.

Most of the building had crumbled by yesterday afternoon; cranes demolished the remaining structure amid fears it might collapse.

Qasir Khan said his wife, daughter-in-law and her mother had gone to the mall on Saturday evening and were among those still missing.

"The bodies will come out in pieces from here. No one will be

able to recognise them," Khan said, blaming the rescue effort for not being swift enough. "They could have saved a lot of people."

Hundreds of people surrounded the building as rescue teams searched for survivors, including shopowners whose life's work was reduced to ash overnight.

"We've been left high and dry, reduced to zero; 20 years of hard work, all gone," said shopowner Yasmeen Bano.

Rescue workers were bringing human remains out in sacks before sending them for DNA testing. They stopped regularly to drink water after enduring intense heat from the debris.

Mohammed Ameen, who was running operations at the site for the Edhi emergency services non-profit, said 21 people had died in the fire, including a child.

Murad Ali Shah, the chief minister of the southern Sindh province that includes Karachi, had earlier put the death toll at 15, including a firefighter, with 65 people missing. He said that 80 people were injured in the blaze with 22 already released from hospital.

Anger was bubbling when Karachi's mayor Murtaza Wahab visited the site on Sunday night, with people chanting anti-government slogans and protesting about the response time from the fire department, local media reported.

Kosar Bano said six of her family had gone to the mall to shop for a wedding. The last time she heard from them, they said they would be home in 15 minutes.

According to rescue services, authorities received the first emergency call at 10.38pm (1738 GMT) on Saturday, reporting that ground-floor shops were on fire. By the time firefighters arrived, the flames had already spread to the upper floors, engulfing much of the building.

Images of the mall's interior revealed the charred remains of stores and a bright orange glow as flames continued to rise throughout the building.

Firefighters said Gul Plaza's lack of ventilation caused thick smoke to fill the building and slowed efforts to reach people trapped inside.

"I'm admitting that there are faults. I can't say whose fault this is. An inquiry will be conducted and heads will roll," Shah said.

Provincial police chief Javed Alam Odho earlier said the fire was caused by an electrical fault, but Shah said the reason was still unknown.

The blaze could be Karachi's biggest since an industrial site went up in flames in 2012, killing more than 260 people. A court ruled in 2020 that the disaster involved arson.

Amir tours Dimdex 2026, views defence equipment showcased by participating companies



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani patronised the opening of the ninth edition of the Doha International Maritime Defence Exhibition and Conference (Dimdex 2026) at the Qatar National Convention Center (QNCC) yesterday. His Highness the Amir toured the exhibition, where he viewed the latest technologies and equipment in the maritime defence and security sector, showcased by local and international companies. The exhibits include advanced systems and solutions related to naval shipbuilding, communications, radar, missiles, sea mines, cybersecurity, counter-piracy operations, artificial intelligence, and other specialised maritime industries and services within the military defence domain. (QNA)



MoEHE fetes private schools for partaking in community project

The Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MoEHE) held a ceremony to honour private schools and kindergartens that contributed to the Community Responsibility Project. The ceremony was attended by HE the Minister of Education and Higher Education, Lolwah bint Rashid AlKhater and HE Undersecretary of MoEHE, Dr Ibrahim bin Saleh al-Nuaimi, along with Members of the Shura Council, representatives of embassies and diplomatic missions, investors, school licence holders, principals of private schools and kindergartens, in addition to an educational delegation from the United Arab Emirates. The event was held to recognise private schools and kindergartens for their qualitative



initiatives in providing scores of students with tuition-free and subsidised study opportunities, thus, promoting solidarity and building a strategic partnership between the national education system's public and private wings. (QNA)

The quiet economy of gratitude: How tips sustain service workers in Qatar

By Joey Aguilar
Doha

In Qatar, tipping is rarely discussed openly, yet it plays a quiet role in the daily lives of thousands of service workers, from barbers and attendants to coffee shop baristas and riders. Across cafés, restaurants, hotels, salons, and delivery routes, it is learnt that tips function as an informal support system, unregulated, inconsistent, but often crucial.

While not mandatory and rarely expected, they have become an understated form of “subsidy” helping workers manage daily expenses amid rising living costs and family responsibilities back home. For CT Bernardo, a long-time Filipino barista at a popular coffee chain in Qatar, tipping is closely tied to customer experience rather than obligation. “The amount of tip, as everyone in the service industry knows, depends on the customer,” he said. “Often, if the service is good and the customer is happy, he offers a generous one.”

At his workplace, tips collected through card payments are centralised and distributed monthly among staff. Beyond this system, some regular customers give tips directly to baristas. “Some customers know us already. They give tips personally, and that is understood,” Bernardo told *Gulf Times*. Whether in cash or via card, he said, these tips play a practical role in daily life. He noted that tips added to allowances are mainly used for transportation and essential groceries, such as rice and bread. The biggest tip he has received from a single customer was QR100, while his average monthly tips amount to around QR200. “It is really a big help,” he said.

In restaurants, tipping practices vary widely. Ryzen M, a waiter at a renowned restaurant chain in Doha, said their establishment does not impose a service charge. Tips are not pooled; each staff member handles their own tables, but a portion is shared with back-of-house staff, including cooks and kitchen aides.

“Tipping really depends. Some nationalities used to give 10%, but that was before. Nowadays, they rarely do,” he said. Still, he believes consistency in service matters more than customer background.



“I’m rarely zeroed on tips as long as you take good care of them and always smile. If you win them over, especially families, they will definitely give,” Ryzen added. He noted that some customers request discounts or additional freebies in exchange for minimal or no tip. “But that is fine. Tips are a big help because they give me daily spending money. Some days, the amount is small.”

In the hospitality sector, tips provide brief financial relief for workers who send most of their earnings home. A room attendant at a five-star hotel said her average monthly tips of around QR200 act as a “subsidy” for everyday expenses. “Most of my salary goes to my family,” she said. She recalled the largest tip she had received – QR500 from a family staying at the hotel. Regular monthly guests often give around QR100, while short-term guests usually leave QR10 to QR20, though not consistently. “I’m thankful for whatever I receive,” she said. “As long as it is given wholeheartedly.”

From the customers’ perspective, tipping in Qatar is often seen as a personal gesture rather than a social expectation. An Asian expatriate in Doha said she does not feel pressured to tip. “If the service is good and I requested a lot of things from them, why not?” she said. “Sometimes we forget, not intentionally. Tipping is a way of saying ‘thank you’ in my own little way.”

For delivery riders, many of whom spend long hours navigating traffic and heat, tips can make a noticeable difference. A group of riders from Uganda, Ghana, and Nepal said that, with rising commodity prices, tips are helpful regardless of the amount.

Pablo, one of the riders, said he earns between QR180 and QR220 a month from tips received through mobile applications and cash. He



Across cafés, restaurants, hotels, salons, and delivery routes, tips function as an informal support system, unregulated, inconsistent, but often crucial. **PICTURES:** Shaji Kayamkulam

uses the money for food and petrol. “It’s more than enough to buy a sandwich and a karak for lunch, and groceries for several days,” he said, adding that extended working hours often result in higher tips.

“Without any tip, I think it would be a bit difficult to cope. We have families back home. Some of our children are growing up and going to school,” he said.

He recalled being surprised when a customer tipped him QR100 for delivering a cup of cappuccino. “It was my first time receiving a huge tip. I immediately went to the supermarket and bought groceries. I also try to save some from these tips.”

Some business owners acknowledge the quiet role tips play in staff morale. A restaurant owner in Msheireb said he ensures that all tips collected are fairly divided and distributed to employees on the 15th and 30th of each month.

“It helps motivate them,” he said, while stressing that customers are never expected to tip.

Barbers are among the service workers who also benefit significantly. A barber in Matar Qadeem said tipping depends largely on skill and customer satisfaction. While a haircut typically costs QR20, some customers leave QR50 without asking for change. “That usually means they were happy with the service,” said the Bangladeshi barber, noting higher demand on weekends.

For him, tips have had a life-changing impact. “Through tips, I was able to send my two sons to university,” he said. “They are almost graduating. Without tips, I am not sure I could have done that. Being a barber is a blessing.”

Basketball part of QF’s Creating Pathways programme

Qatar Foundation (QF) launched basketball as the fourth elite sport in its Creating Pathways programme, with the new addition beginning with an intensive one-week selection camp, during which 79 girls participated, and 20 were selected to join. The programme, launched as part of QF’s FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 legacy, now includes fencing, track and field, volleyball, and basketball. It promotes physical activity and overall well-being among girls and young athletes in Qatar, reflecting QF’s long-term commitment to creating sustainable pathways for the future of women’s sport in the country. Head basketball coach Aleksandra Radulovic said: “I am proud to be here, because I see huge potential in this system that QF has built in Creating Pathways. This is a national programme that offers a safe, supportive environment exclusively for girls – and it’s completely free. “We provide everything necessary for young athletes to grow into strong sportswomen, including professional staff, qualified coaches, excellent facilities, and full logistical support. Our goal is to identify, develop, and guide basketball players from the grassroots level all the way to high-performance stages.” Training takes place five times a week at QF’s Recreation Centre, with the team preparing for a tournament later in the year. The programme is open to selected players in Under-10, Under-12, and Under-14 age groups, providing young female athletes with the opportunity to develop their skills and compete at higher levels. Radulovic explained that the



selection process considered more than just technical ability, saying: “Of course, talent for basketball matters. But so do attitude, love of the game, and team spirit. These are all important qualities. “And some of the values we hope to instil in our players – on and off the court – include respect, commitment, and the importance of being a good person and a good sportswoman.” Sara Tareq Alsharshani, an 11-year-old Qatari participant who has been playing basketball for three years and represents Qatar at the national level, said: “I enjoyed learning new skills and making new friends. I also improved my shooting form, dribbling, and defence, and was able to learn from my mistakes.” Speaking about her future goals, she added: “One day I want to play in the WNBA while wearing a hijab.”



Hana Ehab Mohamed Zineldin, an 11-year-old Egyptian who has been playing basketball since she was seven and also plays for the Qatar national team, was among those participating in the one-week camp. “I liked how the coaches taught us to stretch before practice and introduced us to different techniques. I learned to improve my ball handling, especially behind the back, as well as my shooting and layups,” she said. “My favourite part about basketball is playing matches, which teaches me about sportsmanship and helps me apply what we have learned. One goal I have is to have great shooting aim and reach a very professional level representing Qatar.”

Doha Debates reflects on landmark year of global dialogue, youth engagement

In 2025, Qatar Foundation’s Doha Debates strengthened its role as a global platform for truth-seeking dialogue, bringing students and leading thinkers together to explore ideas shaping today’s most urgent questions – from freedom and justice to identity and belonging. Its reach continued to grow, surpassing 13.8mn video views and engaging nearly 7mn followers across social platforms, including more than 1mn YouTube subscribers. A major milestone came with season four of The Negotiators, which earned international recognition, winning the Folio Award for Historical Reporting

and the Shorty Award for News & Politics Podcast. Alongside its live programming, Doha Debates released a new season of its flagship debates online, reaching global audiences with Majlis-style conversations on freedom, justice, identity and belonging. Throughout the year, Doha Debates convened a series of international town halls that brought students into direct conversation with leading global thinkers. A sold-out event at the Bradford Literature Festival explored national identity and belonging, moderated by Malika Bilal and featuring Dr Wael B Hallaq, Dr



Shashi Tharoor and Dr David Engels. The dialogue then expanded to Latin America with the organisation’s first regional town hall in Buenos Aires, presented in partnership with Years of Culture, where students from

Qatar, Argentina, and Chile debated the future of cities, alongside Guadalupe Granero Realini, Akel Ismail Kahera and Nicholas Boys Smith. Doha Debates later returned to Doha, convening students with

Dr Omar Suleiman, Dr Gregg Caruso and Prof Jeremy Koons to examine how science, faith and philosophy shape justice and moral responsibility. The year concluded at the Doha Forum with a live episode of The Negotiators, in

partnership with Foreign Policy and the International Peace Institute, featuring Prince Zeid bin Ra’ad bin Zeid al-Hussein and Dr Robert Malley, offering rare public insight into diplomacy and peacebuilding. Youth engagement remained central throughout the year. Through town halls, Community of Practice training initiatives and the Doha Debates Ambassador Programme, more than 400 young people from over 80 nations participated annually in dialogue-driven leadership development. Participation has grown from 30 participants in the programme’s first year to a capacity of up to 200 ambassadors.