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### BUSINESS | Page 1

Lesha Bank records QR200mn net profit in 2025; suggests 6% dividend



### Amir's message for Korean president

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani has sent a written message to Korean President Lee Jae-myung on strengthening bilateral relations. The message was delivered in Seoul by HE the Minister of State at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Dr Mohammed bin Abdulaziz bin Saleh al-Khulaifi, who conveyed HH the Amir's greetings and well wishes to the president, his government and the Korean people. The Korean president, in turn, asked the visiting minister to convey his greetings to HH the Amir, wishing His Highness continued success and Qatar further progress and prosperity. **Page 2**

### PM discusses developments with Iran FM, SNSC official

HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani, held a telephone call with Iranian Minister of Foreign Affairs Abbas Araghchi. They reviewed co-operation between the two countries and ways to support and strengthen it, as well as latest developments in the region and a number of issues of mutual interest. The PM reaffirmed Qatar's support for all efforts aimed at reducing escalation and peaceful solutions that enhance security and stability in the region. The PM also held a phone call with Secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council Ali Larijani. They discussed relations between the two countries and ways to support and enhance them. They also discussed the latest developments in the region in addition to several topics of mutual interest. The PM reiterated Qatar's support for all efforts aimed at reducing escalation and peaceful solutions in the interest of stability in the region. **(QNA)**

### PM, French presidential envoy hold talks



**H**e Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani met yesterday with French President's Envoy to Lebanon Jean-Yves Le Drian, who is visiting the country.

They discussed bilateral co-operation between the two countries and ways to support and strengthen it. They explored the latest developments in Lebanon, in addition to sev-

eral issues of common concern.

The prime minister stressed that Lebanon's stability is a fundamental pillar of regional stability, and underlined the need for all parties to abide by United Nations Security Council Resolution 1701 and to fully respect Lebanon's sovereignty.

He also reaffirmed Qatar's condemnation of the Israeli attacks on Lebanese territory, emphasising the need for the Security Council to assume its responsi-

bilities to stop these violations and to preserve Lebanon's stability.

The PM further highlighted the pivotal role of the Quintet Group in supporting Lebanon, noting in this context that Qatar will continue to work closely with its partners to ensure co-ordinated efforts aimed at safeguarding Lebanon's sovereignty and territorial integrity, and supporting its recovery and development paths. **(QNA)**

### Trump, Iran locked in war of words

Iran's foreign minister warned yesterday its forces would respond immediately and forcefully to any US military operation after President Donald Trump declared time was running out to avoid one, but did not rule out a new deal on Tehran's nuclear programme.

The Islamic republic's top diplomat Abbas Araghchi warned its forces have their "fingers on the trigger" to "powerfully respond" to any US strikes, but also used language strikingly similar to Trump's to describe a possible agreement to defuse the stand-off through a new nuclear deal.

"Iran has always welcomed a mutually beneficial, fair and

equitable NUCLEAR DEAL – on equal footing, and free from coercion, threats, and intimidation – which ensures Iran's rights to PEACEFUL nuclear technology, and guarantees NO NUCLEAR WEAPONS," Araghchi posted on X. "Such weapons have no place in our security calculations and we have NEVER sought to acquire them," he added, restating Tehran's long-standing insistence – dismissed by sceptical Western capitals – that its nuclear programme is focused only on research and civilian energy development.

Earlier, before Trump's latest declaration, Araghchi had said "conducting diplomacy through

military threat cannot be effective or useful".

But if some saw his shift in tone as an opening, Ali Shamkani, an adviser to Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, posted more stark language warning of conflict and strikes on US ally Israel.

"A limited strike is an illusion," he posted on X.

"Any military action, from America from any origin and at any level, will be considered the start of war, and its response will be immediate, all-out and unprecedented, targeting the heart of Tel Aviv and all supporters of the aggressor." **(AFP)**

### QU reaches for the stars with launch of first nanosatellite

By A Staff Reporter  
Doha

**Q**atar University (QU) has officially entered the space age with the successful launch of its first nanosatellite, QUBeSat1, a milestone that underscores the institution's growing role in advancing space science, innovation, and hands-on education.

The university said yesterday that the launch represents the culmination of more than a decade of student-driven research and infrastructure development. The nanosatellite project began as a self-funded educational initiative in 2012, later receiving major backing from the Qatar Research, Development and Innovation Council (QRDI) between 2020 and 2025, along with financial and technical support from Es'hailSat for the manufacturing, testing, and launch phases completed through 2025 and 2026.

Designed and built by a multidisciplinary team of Qatar University students, researchers, and academics, QUBeSat1 aims to give young engineers firsthand experience in spacecraft design, operation, and Earth observation. The satellite carries an imaging payload for capturing low-resolution photos of Earth, supported by an Attitude Determination and Control System for in-orbit stability and orientation.



Dr Tamer Khattab, the project's technical lead, said the nanosatellite initiative exemplifies the value of collaboration between students, faculty, and national partners. "This kind of project relies on rigorous planning and co-ordination," he explained, adding that partnerships across Qatar have been key to its success. **To Page 7**

### Building on QR807mn success, Qatar eyes Web Summit 2026

By A Staff Reporter  
Doha

**W**eb Summit Qatar 2025 delivered an estimated QR807mn in economic returns, according to new figures released by global consulting firm Silverlorde.

The report highlights the event's growing role in driving Qatar's economic diversification and positioning the country as a leading global hub for innovation – in line with Qatar National Vision 2030.

Visitor spending alone surpassed QR303mn, with attendees spending an average of QR2,294 per day during six-day stays in Doha. The summit also generated 66,000 hotel nights and more than 19,000 booked flights, providing significant windfalls for the hospitality, aviation, and services sectors.

Building on the success, Web Summit Qatar 2026 – scheduled for February 1-4 – is expected to draw over 30,000 participants from 124 countries, further strengthening Qatar's profile as a regional and global hub for entrepreneurship and investment. **To Page 7**



### Dialogue with a dean









# HMC's Heart Hospital receives Planetree certification for excellence in care

**H**amad Medical Corporation (HMC)'s Heart Hospital has made history as the world's first specialist cardiology hospital to earn Planetree Certification for Excellence in Person-Centred Care.

This certification, at silver level, recognises Heart Hospital's achievement and innovation in the delivery of person-centred care. Heart Hospital is one of 40 organisations worldwide to be Certified for Excellence in Person-Centred Care at the silver level.

Heart Hospital's successful certification follows previous Planetree certification achieved by multiple HMC hospitals and services: the Ambulatory Care Center, Communicable Disease Center, Women's Wellness and Research Center, Home Healthcare Service, Enaya and Daam Specialised Care Centers, and the Private Nursing Service.

Heart Hospital is the only tertiary cardiac centre in Qatar offering comprehensive cardiology and cardiothoracic surgery care. The hospital provides a unique range

of cardiology services including interventional cardiology, non-invasive cardiology, heart failure management, cardiac intensive care, emergency cardiac care, cardiac ambulatory care and cardiac rehabilitation.

In 2025, the cardiothoracic surgery department successfully completed the first heart transplant surgery in Qatar.

The silver certification for Heart Hospital reinforces HMC's mission to deliver person-centred care that honours the needs, values and choices of patients, families and staff, ensuring that every patient experience is compassionate, meaningful and empowering.

The certification criteria addressed components of a person-centred healthcare experience, including the quality of patient-provider interactions, access to information, family involvement and the physical environment of care. Importantly, the criteria also focuses on how the organisation supports staff, opportunities for staff, patients and families to have a voice in the way care is delivered,

and the ways that Heart Hospital is reaching beyond its walls to care for its community.

The certification process included a site visit assessment by representatives from Planetree during which they held discussions with patients, families and current staff, validating that specific person-centred policies are in place.

The process also included a review of the organisation's performance on patient experience and quality of care measures, and how measurement of these indicators improves organisational outcomes.

Planetree is a not-for-profit healthcare organisation that sets the global benchmark for person-centred excellence across the full continuum of care. Planetree works with partners to deliver a leading, evidence-based framework that helps co-design a clear roadmap for stronger patient and family engagement, improved clinical outcomes, enhanced staff retention, recruitment and higher-value care. (QNA)

## Geadah named regional MD at Memac Ogilvy Mena

**M**emac Ogilvy Mena has announced the promotion of Antoine Geadah to Regional Managing Director for Qatar and Jordan, alongside his newly appointed role as Chief Growth Officer for Mena, effective immediately.

Geadah has been part of the Ogilvy network for more than six years and brings over 20 years of experience in strategic communications and business leadership across the Middle East and globally, with a strong track record in driving agency growth, client transformation, and cross-market collaboration. During his tenure, he has played a key role in advancing the growth and performance of the Qatar business, leading the



Antoine Geadah

office to record-breaking results and strengthening its po-

sition as one of the network's high-performing markets. In his expanded remit, Geadah will oversee growth strategy across the Mena region, working closely with regional leadership and country managing directors to accelerate business development, strengthen client partnerships, and identify new opportunities across both established and emerging markets. His additional responsibility for Jordan is expected to further enhance cross-market collaboration and operational synergies.

The appointment forms part of Memac Ogilvy Mena's broader strategy to reinforce its growth capabilities and support clients' evolving business needs across the region.

## MoEHE reveals schedule for education vouchers for students with disabilities

**T**he Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MoEHE), represented by the Department of Special Needs Education and Inclusive Education, and in co-ordination with the Department of Licences for Private Schools, announced the closing and opening dates of the application system for the educational vouchers service for students with disabilities, for the current and next academic year.

In a statement, the ministry called on parents to complete the application procedures and end the pending applications for the academic year 2025-2026 to ensure that students receive their dues before the closing date of the system, scheduled at

11:00 am on March 26, 2026, stressing that the system will not receive any new applications for this year after this date.

In preparation for the next academic year 2026-2027, the ministry explained that the application system will be reopened to receive new applications from 8:00am on Sunday, April 12, 2026.

MoEHE stressed that this measure comes within the framework of its keenness to support students with disabilities, ensure the stability of their educational career, and the continuity of their access to educational services without delay, calling on parents to adhere to the announced deadlines and complete applications on time. (QNA)

## Ministry marks International Day of Education

**T**he Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MoEHE), in collaboration with the Qatar National Commission for Education, Culture and Science alongside the Unesco Regional Office in Doha, celebrated the International Day of Education.

The day was proclaimed by the UN General Assembly on Jan 24, 2018, as an annual occasion to spotlight the role of education in achieving sustainable development.

This year's celebration was held under the theme "The Power of Youth in Building the Future of Education" and featured a panel discussion titled "Youth, Education, and Digital Transformation Toward Building a Sustainable Future".

The panel was moderated by HE the Head of the Unesco Section at the Qatar National Commission for Education, Culture and Science, Sheikha Aisha bint Mubarak al-Thani, with the participation of Deputy Director of the Unesco Regional Office in Doha, Farida Abou Dan, and with Assistant Undersecretary for Special Education at MoEHE, Omar bin Abdalaziz al-Naama, in attendance.

Al-Naama stated that the 2026 celebration underscores the importance of education as the cornerstone in building



societies, as well as the driving force for digital transformation and innovation. He pointed out that the motto embodies the youth's instrumental role in charting the future of education.

This orientation aligns with Qatar National Vision 2030, which places education at the centre of its priorities and focuses on building human capital capable of supporting the sustainable development pathway, al-Naama underlined.

He noted that MoEHE considers technology and artificial intelligence as enabling tools that broaden wider apertures to achieve justice and sustainability, asserting that the objective is to develop creative young people as change leaders, as well as strengthen their critical thinking skills.

The ministry is committed to providing an innovation-motivating educational environment that qualifies students to integrate into the labour market and enables them to surmount global environmental and social challenges, al-Naama underscored.

Al-Naama further emphasised that the combined efforts among educational enterprises, as well as teachers and parents, represent a core pillar to build a bright future for Qatar that is based on science, innovation, and social responsibility.

The global partnerships with educational enterprises are valuable as long as these partnerships play a role in sharing expertise and best practices to ensure education in the nation keeps up with state-of-the-art global developments,

## NU-Q to showcase innovation at Web Summit Qatar 2026

**N**orthwestern University in Qatar (NU-Q) will return to Web Summit Qatar 2026 with a stronger presence, richer programming, and deeper engagement opportunities, reinforcing its role as a thought partner and innovator in the global ecosystem of technology, media, and communication.

Programming throughout the summit will explore the intersections of technology, artificial intelligence, digital culture, media, and communication. This includes special programmes led by the Institute for Advanced Study in the Global South at Northwestern Qatar (#IAS\_NUQ), the Artificial Intelligence and Media (AIM) Lab, the Media Majlis Museum, and the Executive Education Programme, as well as faculty, students, researchers, fellows, and Northwestern faculty from Evanston.

"Our return to Web Summit heralds NU-Q's broader engagement at the cutting edge of digital transformation. It reflects our commitment to deepen the impact of our expertise globally," said Marwan M Kraidy, dean and CEO NU-Q. "It's exciting to see research, teaching, and creative practice come together in ways that actually connect with real-world challenges. I'm proud of the talent and ideas our community is bringing to the table."

This year, NU-Q will lead with a larger, two-story booth



designed as an interactive hub for learning, dialogue, and collaboration. The space includes presentation areas, engagement platforms, and a dedicated podcast studio, enabling multiple modes of interaction with visitors. Throughout the Summit, faculty, students, and researchers will deliver concise, high-impact presentations that translate academic research into insights for public and professional audiences.

The booth will also host a special series edition of the Northwestern Qatar podcast recorded live from the booth. The series will feature conversations between community members and leaders from industry and academia, offering perspectives on emerging technologies, me-

dia ethics, innovation, and the evolving role of communication in society.

Another key component is "Media Futures: Memes, Machines & New Realities", a special, three-zone interactive exhibition and learning experience led by the Media Majlis Museum, offering visitors the opportunity to examine how media, technology, and storytelling are reshaping contemporary culture and public life.

Complementing the exhibition, the museum will also host a series of micro-workshops and short-format learning sessions ranging from media literacy and public storytelling to AI ethics and digital creation that extend the exhibition's themes into participatory experiences.

## 'Qatar Pavilion' puts spotlight on capabilities at Kuwait Marine Show

**O**ld Doha Port announced yesterday its participation in the first edition of the Kuwait Marine Show 2026, taking place from January 28-31, 2026, in Al Khoran, Kuwait, through a dedicated pavilion titled "Qatar Pavilion".

Their participation marks a major milestone in its regional engagement within the maritime industry, reflecting its continued efforts to strengthen Qatar's presence on the regional maritime map.

The Kuwait Marine Show is the largest event of its kind in Kuwait dedicated to showcasing diverse marine activities. The exhibition brings together marine brands, industry professionals, and enthusiasts on a comprehensive platform that showcases the latest boats, marine technologies, and equipment, while highlighting the region's growing marine and waterfront lifestyle sector.

As part of its participation, Old Doha Port is hosting a pavilion under the name "Qatar Pavilion" a national platform that brings together leading Qatari marine manufacturers, including Balhambar Boats Factory, Halul Boat, Doha Craft Marine, and Tornot Boats.

Through this collective presence, the pavilion showcases Qatar's advancing marine manufacturing capabilities while supporting national companies in



Old Doha Port is taking part in Kuwait Marine Show.

expanding their visibility across key regional markets.

Designed as a contemporary majlis-style space, the "Qatar Pavilion" serves as a dedicated setting for meetings, dialogue, and networking, while introducing participating Qatari companies and showcasing their products and services within a unified national narrative.

Commenting on the participation, Engineer Mohammed Abdulla al-Mulla, CEO of Old Doha Port, said: "Our participation in the Kuwait Marine Show 2026 through Qatar Pavilion reinforces Old Doha Port's role as a national platform for advancing Qatari marine industries across the region. By uniting leading manufacturers under one pavilion,

we are presenting the strength of Qatar's maritime capabilities, driving industry engagement, and opening the door to long-term partnerships that extend beyond this exhibition, including future editions of the Qatar Boat Show."

Through its participation at the Kuwait Marine Show 2026, Old Doha Port continues to deepen its regional engagement, broaden its maritime network, and to elevate the international profile of Qatari marine manufacturers.

These efforts support Qatar National Vision 2030 by advancing economic diversification, strengthening private-sector participation, and positioning Qatari industries within regional competitive markets. (QNA)

## Ministry recalls Mercedes-Benz A Class, CLA and GLA Class 2021-23 models

**T**he Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MoCI), in co-operation with Nasser Bin Khaled and Sons Automobiles, Qatar's Mercedes-Benz dealership, has announced the recall of Mercedes-Benz A Class, CLA, and GLA Class 2021-2023 models.

The recall is due to engine control unit software not conforming to factory specifications, which activates the engine warning light. The ministry said the recall campaign comes within the framework of its ongoing efforts to protect consumers and to ensure that car dealers follow up on vehicle defects and repairs.

The ministry said it will co-ordinate with the dealer to follow up on the maintenance and repair works and will communicate with customers to ensure that the necessary repairs are carried out.

The ministry has urged all customers to report any violations to its Consumer Protection and Anti-Commercial Fraud Department, which processes complaints, inquiries and suggestions through the following channels: Call Centre: 16001, e-mail: info@moci.gov.qa, ministry's accounts on social media: @mociqatar, ministry's Mobile App: MOCIQATAR (available on iOS and Android devices).

## HBKU partners with ministries, global stakeholders to drive capacity-building

Positioning disability and health at the centre of inclusive policy and sustainable development, Hamad Bin Khalifa University (HBKU) and the Ministry of Social Development and Family (MSDF), in collaboration with the Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) and World Health Organisation (WHO), convened a capacity-building workshop titled Foundations of the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF).

The session reflects HBKU's role in translating research and policy expertise into national efforts to strengthen how disability and health are understood, measured, and addressed. Developed by the WHO, the ICF is a framework for describing and organising information on functioning and disability. The training is positioned at a pivotal moment in Qatar's disability reform, supporting the



Participants at the capacity-building workshop.

National Disability Classification Project led by the MSDF in partnership with key sectors, as mentioned in the opening remarks by Maha al-Mansouri, CEO of Mada Centre and national lead of these projects. The reform aims to establish a unified, fair, and transparent national system for disability assessment and eligibility across all services. It adopts a function-

focused, rights-based framework informed by the ICF and adapted to Qatar's legal and policy context. The project's success depends on strong inter-sectoral co-ordination, shared accountability, and consistent professional application of the framework. Al-Mansouri stated: "The objective of this reform is clear: to move toward a single, coherent national system that ensures fairness,

consistency, and transparency across all sectors serving persons with disabilities."

The opening session was also honoured by Sheikh Dr Mohamed bin Hamad al-Thani, director of the Non-Communicable Diseases Prevention Programme, MoPH, who affirmed the importance of cross-sectoral collaboration in addressing autism within a broader disability

and health framework, noting that understanding autism necessitates a multifaceted approach that highlights the need for collaboration between different ministries and all stakeholders involved in autism care.

Dr Rayana Bou Haka, WHO Representative to Qatar, noted that the determinants and policy domains related to disability

intersect, and reaffirmed that success will depend on joint action and co-ordinated responsibilities. The workshops were led by experts from the WHO Eastern Mediterranean Regional Office and the Disability Policy and Implementation Research unit at Swiss Paraplegic Research. By bringing together policymakers, practitioners, and experts, the workshop combined expert instruction with applied, case-based exercises to establish a shared, WHO-aligned foundation for future system development. Dr Hira Amin, assistant professor, HBKU's College of Public Policy, stated: "By promoting inclusivity across policy, planning, and institutional frameworks, the university embodies the role of academia in fostering collaborative environments where persons with disabilities can fully exercise their social and economic rights."

## Ashghal, Swiss Business Council organise seminar



**QNA**  
Doha

The Public Works Authority (Ashghal) held a seminar entitled "Shaping the Future of Development: Insights from Switzerland's Approach to Digitalisation, Sustainability & Productivity" in co-operation with the Swiss Business Council, and in the presence of President of Ashghal, Engineer Mohammed bin Abdulaziz al-Meer; the ambassador of the Swiss Confederation to Qatar, Florence Tinguely Mattli; and with the participation of a number of contracting companies, in addition to senior officials in the Authority, within the framework of enhancing joint co-operation between the two parties.

The seminar covered a number of topics and themes to discuss and research solutions for low-emission construction materials, green roof technologies, and the circular economy, in addition to digital platforms to increase productivity, control quality, and smart buildings.

Opportunities for co-operation

in exchanging experiences and adopting advanced technical solutions were showcased, which contribute to developing projects and achieving the highest standards of quality and efficiency.

On this occasion, Mohammed bin Abdulaziz al-Meer praised the strength of the relations between Qatar and the Swiss Confederation, stressing that such meetings reflect the common keenness to enhance co-operation in the fields of advanced technology, transfer of qualitative expertise, and build effective strategic partnerships that support the development of the infrastructure sector.

He stressed that Ashghal adopts a comprehensive strategy that is consistent with Qatar National Vision 2030, and focuses on developing a smart, sustainable and flexible infrastructure capable of meeting the requirements of the present and anticipating the challenges of the future, noting that digital transformation, localising automation, applying smart building concepts, and integrating sustainability standards into all stages of planning, design and implementation are among the Authority's main priorities.

The ambassador of the Swiss Confederation to Qatar, Florence Tinguely Mattli, said: "Swiss industries strive to achieve quality and accuracy by focusing on innovation, digitisation, energy-saving technologies or advanced materials to provide exceptional services and long-lasting, high-value products."

President of the Swiss Business Council in Qatar, Dr Fariborz Samadian, said: "This seminar reflects Switzerland's commitment to providing proven, high-quality solutions that enhance sustainability, efficiency and productivity in Qatar's construction and infrastructure sector."

At the end of the seminar, the two parties stressed the importance of continuing co-operation between Ashghal and the Swiss Business Council, which opens new horizons for future partnerships in the fields of digital transformation, sustainability, and raising production efficiency in infrastructure projects, and in a way that supports the adoption of global best practices and enhances innovation in the construction sector in Qatar. (QNA)

## Ooredoo Qatar returns as Diamond Sponsor of Web Summit Qatar 2026

Ooredoo will return as Diamond Sponsor of Web Summit Qatar 2026, taking place from February 1-4, 2026, at the Doha Exhibition and Convention Centre (DECC), building on the success and strong momentum of previous editions.

Aligned with the event, Ooredoo will showcase its vision under the theme 'Empowering Tomorrow: AI, Connectivity & Startup Innovation', highlighting how advanced connectivity and digital solutions are enabling innovation, accelerating business growth, and supporting Qatar's transition towards a knowledge-based economy.

Hassan Ismael al-Emadi, Chief Business Officer at Ooredoo Qatar, said: "Connectivity today is more than infrastructure – it is an engine for innovation, collaboration, and sustainable growth. Through



this global platform, we are proud to showcase how Ooredoo is enabling businesses, startups, and institutions to turn ideas into impact, in line with Qatar's National Digital Strategy 2030."

## First male student in QU's physiotherapy programme breaks barriers

Qatar University (QU) has spotlighted the inspiring academic journey of Omar Muwafi, the first male student enrolled in the university's Physiotherapy Programme, whose experience reflects determination, purpose, and a commitment to advancing healthcare in Qatar.

Muwafi's interest in physiotherapy emerged from personal experience with sports-related injuries, through which he witnessed the vital role of rehabilitation in recovery and improving quality of life. Reflecting on his motivation, he said: "In our culture, many male patients prefer to receive care from male physiotherapists. I saw this as an opportunity to make a meaningful impact and encourage more men to pursue careers in healthcare."

Initially enrolled in the environmental sciences programme at QU, Omar made the decisive choice to transition to physiotherapy – a move that



extended his academic journey by one year but ultimately clarified his professional direction. He credits the strong support of his family, peers, and faculty for helping him navigate this transition. "The faculty at QU were incredibly supportive, and collaboration with my classmates played a key role in overcoming challenges," he noted. Omar's academic experience has evolved into a broader mission to address the growing demand for physiotherapy services in Qatar. He emphasises the importance of encouraging more students, particularly men, to enter the field in order to reduce patient wait times and improve access to timely care. "The need is real," he said. "Many patients wait too long for appointments. Expanding the number of qualified physiotherapists is essential to improving healthcare outcomes." Among the most influential moments in his training was a visit to Hamad Medical Corporation

## Hilton Salwa unveils a season of Ramadan escapes, dining experiences, and family fun for 2026

Hilton Salwa Beach Resort & Villas invites guests to embrace the spirit of Ramadan 2026 with a curated collection of stay, dining, wellness, and leisure experiences set along Qatar's southern coast. From tranquil seaside escapes to festive evenings under the stars, the resort blends reflection, togetherness, and indulgence throughout the holy month. The Ramadan Coastal Escape offers a peaceful staycation by the sea, with rooms starting from QR999 and villas from QR3,499. Guests can enjoy thoughtfully prepared Suhoor and Iftar, complimentary access to Desert Falls Waterpark, and the calming atmosphere of Salwa's pristine beachfront. Wellness takes centre stage

at eforea spa with a special Ramadan Retreat. Guests who book any spa treatment of 60 minutes or more receive QR200 in spa credit to be used on a future visit. The experience is crafted to rejuvenate the body and mind, offering a moment of serenity during the holy month, valid for the same Ramadan period. Evenings come alive with a variety of dining experiences. Moonlight Suhoor at Levantine runs nightly from 9pm-3am, where Levantine flavours, Arabic-style tapas, handcrafted mocktails, Tanoura performances, and a live graffiti art showcase create a vibrant late-night atmosphere under the stars.

For Iftar, Souk Kitchen transforms into a bustling Arabian marketplace, serving an extensive buffet of Arabic and international dishes in a family-friendly setting. Priced at QR198 per person, the experience includes a

dedicated kids' area and Ramadan Nights storytelling, available daily from 5.30pm-10.30pm. A highlight of the season is "Ramadan Under the Stars at Salwa," a one-night beachfront celebration on February 26 at Nesma Courtyard. Guests can enjoy sunset Iftar followed by Ghabga, live oud music, and a luxurious majlis-style outdoor setting for QR250 per person. Beyond Ramadan, Desert Falls Sea Caves Waterpark reopens with the Splash Pack offer, priced at QR500 for four people and valid from February 7-March 18. The popular Birthday Splash also returns, granting free entry to birthday celebrants throughout their birthday month from February 8-May 8, 2026. For reservations and details across all experiences, guests may contact Hilton Salwa Beach Resort & Villas directly via phone or e-mail.

## FREE VEHICLE RECALL

وزارة التجارـة والصناعـة  
Ministry of Commerce and Industry  
State of Qatar • جـمهـوريـة قـطـار



## Mercedes Benz A Class, CLA, GLA Class

Manufacturing Year

2021 - 2023



The engine control unit software does not conform to factory specifications, which activates the engine warning light.



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# Shura deputy Speaker highlights Qatar's support for women in conflict zones

QNA  
Abu Dhabi

The Shura Council participated in the Second Women Parliamentary Forum of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean (PAM), hosted by the Federal National Council (FNC) of the United Arab Emirates in Abu Dhabi.

HE Deputy Speaker of the Shura Council, Dr Hamda bint Hassan al-Sulaiti, and member of the Council, Amina bint Youssef al-Jaidah, represented the Shura Council at the forum.

The forum broadly addressed four main pillars: advancing the empowerment of women in economic and political spheres, enhancing women's and girls' access to health, education, and environmental justice, the role of women in countering terrorism and preventing violent extremism, and addressing terrorism-related violence.

Addressing the forum, Dr Hamda emphasised that Qatar approaches women's issues from the firm conviction that addressing the root causes of violent extremism represents the most effective entry point for its prevention. She highlighted the nation's com-

mitment to supporting women in conflict-affected areas through education, capacity-building, and skills development, by dint of promoting a culture of peace, justice, and the protection of vulnerable groups.

Dr Hamda noted the Shura Council's participation in organising the Global Women Parliamentary Forum in Doha in 2024, in collaboration with the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism, which drilled down on the role of women parliamentarians in developing, implementing, and monitoring legislation and policies related to counter-terrorism and the prevention of violent extremism.

She pointed out that the forum's recommendations emphasised enhancing women parliamentarians' engagement in policymaking and strengthening international parliamentary co-operation in this field.

The deputy Speaker stressed that women's empowerment constitutes a foundational pillar for building cohesive and inclusive societies capable of achieving development and stability from the Gulf to the Mediterranean.

She underscored that women's empowerment is no longer solely a social issue, but a central factor



in supporting political stability, societal prosperity, and mitigating the drivers of conflict and violence.

She noted that women continue to bear the brunt of wars, conflicts, and the spread of violence and terrorism, particularly Palestinian women in Gaza and the occupied Palestinian territories, who face severe humanitarian hardships and deprivation of basic rights.

Dr Hamda further referenced international treaties and Security Council resolutions on women's political rights, highlighting the importance of women's participation in public life, decision-making, and peace processes, while cautioning that a significant gap remains between global commitments and their practical implementation.

She further stressed the need to

develop clear co-ordination pathways under the UN Counter-Terrorism Co-ordination Mechanism for parliamentary assemblies, enhancing co-operation with humanitarian agencies, civil society organisations, government entities, and affected communities, and supporting efforts to ensure effective protection for women and girls in conflict and fragile settings.

Having participated in a session on the importance of supporting women in education, health, and environmental sustainability, Dr Hamda presented Qatar's experience in women's empowerment, drawing on Qatar National Vision 2030 and successive development strategies.

She emphasised that education, health, and environmental development form interlinked pillars in building society, and that Qatar has prioritised these areas strategically, thereby enhancing human, social, economic, and environmental development, while cementing women as active partners in sustainable development.

She also highlighted the current state of women's empowerment in education, health, and environmental sustainability, noting the high participation of Qatari women in general and higher education,

the growing engagement in STEM disciplines, and the development of curricula aligned with digital transformation and future skills, in addition to international educational initiatives led by Qatar.

The deputy Speaker addressed health policies supporting women's well-being, encompassing an integrated network of specialised services, centres, prevention, care, and psychosocial support programmes, alongside women's engagement in environmental sustainability initiatives and community engagement in national programmes.

She concluded by linking this path to the humanitarian realities of women in Gaza, stressing that discussions on women's rights to education, health, and dignified living are incomplete insofar as practical measures addressing the suffering of Palestinian women, including urgent action to halt aggression, ensure delivery of aid, and provide basic living conditions, are not implemented, recognising these as indivisible human rights.

Al-Jaidah, in the same session, noted that Qatar pursues a comprehensive approach to counter-terrorism and violent extremism prevention, based on early community-based prevention, building intellectual awareness,

promoting social cohesion, and reinforcing values of moderation and dialogue.

She stressed that addressing extremism extends beyond security measures, beginning with education, upbringing, culture, and human development, with active participation of Qatari women in awareness programmes across schools, universities, and cultural centres, contributing to protecting future generations and promoting a culture of peace and co-existence.

Al-Jaidah further explained that the Shura Council plays a supportive role in national policies related to family cohesion and social solidarity, through reviewing plans and reports submitted by relevant authorities, enhancing the role of family, education, and cultural identity in preventing violent extremism, and contributing to international dialogue and knowledge exchange through forums, conferences, and cultural platforms.

She concluded by noting that including women in policymaking and legislation related to countering terrorism-linked violence is essential for more inclusive and sustainable responses, thereby strengthening community security and societal stability. (QNA)

## QRCS distributes winter clothes to Yemeni children

As part of 'In Safe Hands Warm Winter Campaign 2025-2026', the representation office of Qatar Red Crescent Society (QRCS) in Yemen has completed the distribution of winter clothing bags to 3,900 children in many orphanages, health associations, and the most vulnerable communities in Sanaa and Abyan, for \$150,000.

In a statement, Jamil al-Khayyati, director-general of Yemen Society for Thalassemia and Genetic Blood Disorders, lauded this initiative as reflecting a spirit of partnership and co-operation. He said: "I would like to thank QRCS for providing winter clothing bags to the patients, which helps alleviate their suffering and bring joy to their lives. We look forward to further support and call upon all humanitarians and charities to pay attention to genetic blood disorders and contribute to treatment, care, and awareness programmes."

Thanking the donors, Dr Nadia Yahya Hajar, chairperson of Jood Alrahman Care and Rehabilitation Foundation, said the foundation was established in 2016 to shelter orphaned girls and provide comprehensive care (food, medical care, education, and rehabilitation), despite limited funding and a lack of basic resources.

"This would have a profound impact, making them feel that they are not alone and that the benevolent donors are there to lend a helping hand amidst harsh conditions. Such contributions give hope and alleviate suffering. I hope this support would not stop," she said.

Wathiq al-Qurashi, executive director of Al-Shafaqa Foundation for Kidney Failure and



Cancer Care, said: "This support significantly helped protect the children of patients against the bitterly cold weather. Each child received a bag containing a jacket, a wool sweater, trousers, shoes, and socks, which brought smiles to their faces."

Ammar al-Ruqaihi, head of the Orphan Care and Empowerment Department at the Orphans' Development Foundation, commended the aid provided for orphans, saying: "This humanitarian initiative helped make 500 orphans live better during the cold winter. I appeal to all donors to continue supporting the foundation, to empower the orphans and their mothers."

At the distribution point in

Abyan Governorate, Mohsen Abu Bakr, chairman of the Planning Committee in Jayshan District, said: "This generous gesture brought joy to the hearts of 1,280 children. Such initiatives play a significant role in making them suffer less, as they are most prone to cold-related illnesses."

Jayshan is a remote and underserved district, located up to 17 hours of walking from the governorate's centre, with its rugged terrain and difficult topography. That is why humanitarian organisations cannot reach out. This campaign embodies Qatar's well-known spirit of benevolence and unwavering support for the Yemeni people with charitable campaigns," he added.

Jadal summit 2026 will reinforce Al-Mujadilah's mission and vision by enhancing knowledge, building community, and fostering meaningful dialogue. The summit will be held under the theme "Muslim Women Navigating Theology, Ethics, and Society", exploring core areas such as contemporary challenges and solutions, and how classical Islamic concepts can be understood and applied today.

The theme also explores normative foundations,

including how Islamic tradition has conceptualised women's roles; in addition to historical perspectives, analysing how political, social, and economic transformations have shaped theology, ethics, and Muslim societies, particularly in relation to women. "Within Al-Mujadilah's vision, Jadal mirrors the role of the mosque in the Islamic vision of society. It grounds our programmes and services in rigorous scholarship and faith while guiding our response to the needs and

## VCUarts Qatar to host launch of Dr Abdulla bin Ali al-Thani's book

Virginia Commonwealth University School of the Arts in Qatar (VCUarts Qatar), a Qatar Foundation partner university, will host the upcoming launch of the book *Contemporary Art from Qatar: The Abdulla bin Ali Al Thani Collection* on campus on February 1.

The launch is a preview event of the inaugural Art Basel Qatar, which runs from February 5-7. This landmark publication celebrates three decades of dedicated collecting by HE Sheikh Dr Abdulla bin Ali Al Thani, a visionary patron and champion of Qatar's creative ambitions and vibrant cultural landscape. The book traces the remarkable evolution of Qatari art – from heritage-based traditions and traditional motifs to innovative, globally engaged contemporary practices – offering an insightful narrative on the development of the nation's artistic identity and rapid transformation.

"I am deeply honoured to join His Excellency Sheikh Abdulla

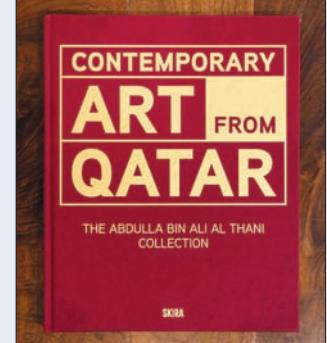
in conversation at the launch of *Contemporary Art from Qatar: The Abdulla bin Ali Al Thani Collection*," said Amir Berbic, dean of VCUarts Qatar.

"This publication and the accompanying exhibition, Pulse of Place, beautifully capture



HE Sheikh Dr Abdulla bin Ali al-Thani

three decades of visionary collecting that have helped shape Qatar's distinctive voice in the global art world: from rooted heritage traditions to bold, internationally resonant contemporary expressions." "I am so pleased to launch this book at VCUarts Qatar. Educational institutions are close to my heart, and this university campus has played an important role over nearly three decades in shaping many aspects of the creative scene in Qatar," said Sheikh Dr Abulla. "I thank the dean for this initiative and for VCUarts for hosting me. It will be a pleasure to share this occasion with so many talented artists, students and faculty who have contributed so much to our nation's thriving cultural landscape."



The book launch will be held in conjunction with the official opening of the exhibition 'Pulse of Place: Selected Works from the Abdulla bin Ali Al Thani Collection' at VCUarts Qatar (running January 25-March 7). This exhibition features works by 11 talented Qatari artists and designers – alumni of VCUarts Qatar – who are also represented in the book, highlighting the enduring impact of local talent nurtured through education and patronage.

## Visit Qatar presents John Legend performance on April 17

Visit Qatar presents the multi-award-winning global icon John Legend live in Doha on April 17 at the Qatar National Convention Centre's Halls 3 and 4.

This one-night-only performance, John Legend – An Evening of Songs & Stories, will feature intimate renditions of Legend's greatest hits and fan favourites from throughout his 13-time Grammy-winning body of work built over 20 years - woven together with fascinating and

unexpected stories from his life and career, delivered through world-class production in a refined indoor setting.

As Qatar continues to welcome visitors from across the region and internationally, the John Legend concert underscores Visit Qatar's commitment to presenting outstanding entertainment experiences that further enhance the country's appeal as a leading global tourism destination.



## Al-Mujadilah Center & Mosque for Women announces second Jadal summit



challenges we encounter in our community," said Dr Najah Nadi, research manager at Al-Mujadilah. "At Al-Mujadilah, we are committed to producing meaningful and authentic research that connects Islamic normative foundations with lived realities, drawing on classical and contemporary methodologies, which contribute to the contemporary religious dialogue."

"This commitment shapes the theme of Jadal 2026 –

women's research in theology, ethics, and society. In this context, theology provides the epistemological and normative foundations for engaging with contemporary social realities, while ethics articulates the principles and values through which societies flourish."

This edition of Jadal features an enhanced programme through "Jadal Talks", presented in a TEDx-inspired format, bringing together leading voices that shape public thought and community life. It also introduces Majlis Al-Mujadilah, a space rooted in local traditions where dialogue, social connection, and conversation serve as central modes of knowledge exchange.

In addition, there will also be interactive workshops on Qur'an recitation and reflection offer participants opportunities for deeper engagement. Together, these programme elements bridge global perspectives with local lived experiences, amplify the voices and narratives of Muslim women across diverse fields, and invite members of the Jadal community to share insights and reflections. "Jadal responds to a long-standing mismatch between Muslim women as producers of knowledge and the frameworks through which that knowledge is recognised," added Dr Maryam al-Sada, post-doctorate-academic fellow at Al-Mujadilah.

## ANNOUNCEMENT

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Dana Alfardan, the Qatari composer who has spent the last decade absorbing the tropes of Middle Eastern music, debuted on the Sardinian stage to close out 2025.



## A Qatari ode to Sardinia

There is a specific, bracing frequency to Cagliari in the winter. As the coastal capital of the Italian island of Sardinia, the city sits perched on the edge of the Mediterranean, its historic stone facades channelling the salt air and the sharp island light. This past New Year's Eve, however, the atmosphere within the Teatro Lirico di Cagliari – the city's prestigious opera house and a sanctuary of high Italian culture – held a concert titled 'Il Canto di Due Mari' (The Song of the Two Seas) celebrating the sounds of both Sardinia and Qatar. Dana Alfardan, the Qatari composer who has spent the last decade absorbing the tropes of Middle Eastern music, debuted on the Sardinian stage to close out 2025. Led by maestro Giovanni Pasini – Sardinian by origin (born in Cagliari) and widely recognised by Qatari audiences for his extensive artistic activity in the country, the evening served as the sophisticated launch of a new cultural bridge uniting Sardinian and Qatari artistic traditions.

# India to slash tariffs on high-end EU cars to 30%

Reuters  
New Delhi

India will immediately slash duties on high-end European cars to 30% from as high as 110% under its new trade deal with the EU, an official said, opening the tightly controlled market to luxury carmakers like BMW and Mercedes-Benz.

India and the European Union finalised a long-delayed deal on Tuesday that will cut tariffs on most goods and boost trade, at a time when governments worldwide are seeking to hedge against fickle US policy and manage growing trade tensions.

India is the third-largest car market globally by sales after the US and China. But its domestic auto industry has been among the

world's most protected, with the government levying tariffs of between 70% and 110% on imported cars.

While India agreed under the deal to reduce import tariffs on cars above an import price of 15,000 euros (\$17,963) to 10% over time, details of how the reductions will be implemented were not disclosed publicly.

A senior Indian government offi-

cial, however, said New Delhi agreed to immediately reduce import duties on 100,000 traditional internal combustion engine cars annually split between three price categories.

European cars with an import price of 15,000 euros to 35,000 euros will see tariffs reduced to 35%, with annual imports capped at 34,000 units, said the official, who asked not to be named as the deal still requires legal vetting.

Cars priced 35,000 euros to 50,000 euros will be charged a 30% duty, with imports limited to 33,000 units a year, the official said. And 33,000 cars priced over 50,000 euros will also be subject to a reduced tariff of 30%.

The two highest price categories will see the largest tariff reductions. And the cap for all three categories combined will be raised to 160,000 units over 10 years, the

official said. India's trade ministry did not immediately respond to a request for comment on the details of the agreement.

At a time when a growing number of Indians are developing a taste for opulence – from expensive homes to watches and even bathroom fittings – luxury cars made up less than 1% of the 4.4mn passenger vehicles sold in the country last year.

## Bessent says disappointed by EU-India deal

Reuters  
Washington

US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent yesterday said he was disappointed by Europe's decision to strike a major trade agreement with India, saying it showed Europe put trade ahead of the interests of the Ukrainian people.

Bessent told CNBC that Europe had been buying refined products made in India with sanctioned Russian oil supplies, and had been unwilling to match higher US tariffs on Indian goods because they were separately negotiating a trade agreement.

The European Union yesterday finalised a long-delayed trade deal with India that aims to boost two-way trade and reduce the bloc's reliance on the US amid growing global trade tensions.

The deal is expected to double EU exports to India by 2032 by eliminating or reducing tariffs on 96.6% of traded goods by value, and will lead to savings of 4bn euros (\$4.8bn) in duties for European companies, the EU said.

Asked whether this deal and others among countries excluding the US would threaten the US, Bessent said, "They should do what's best for themselves, but I will tell you, I found, I find the Europeans very disappointing."

He said the deal made it clear why Brussels had balked at joining Washington's decision to impose 25% tariffs on India last year as part of a push to reduce its purchases of Russian oil.

"The Europeans were unwilling to join us, and it turns out, because they wanted to do this trade deal," he said. "So every time you hear a European talk about the importance of the Ukrainian people, remember that they put trade ahead of the Ukrainian people."

Bessent last week had signalled the potential removal of the 25% additional US tariffs on India following a sharp reduction in Indian imports of Russian oil.

Bessent's disparaging comments about Europe came amid heightened tensions after President Donald Trump threatened to raise tariffs on imports from certain European countries over their opposition to his pursuit of Greenland. That tariff threat was later dropped, but it left many Europeans unsettled and anxious about the future of Transatlantic trade.

US officials remain frustrated that the EU has not enacted the tariff reductions it promised as part of a framework trade deal reached with Washington in July.

Those concerns were heightened this week when Trump raised duties on imports from South Korea to 25% from 15%, citing slow moves by the country's parliament to implement a framework trade agreement reached with Washington last year.

Bessent defended Trump's action, saying it was "helpful to get things moved along", adding that the South Korean parliament needed to ratify the trade deal.

Trump on Tuesday said he expected the US and South Korea to work out a solution, but he did not elaborate.

## Nipah virus fears trigger airport checks across Asia

Reuters  
New Delhi/Bangkok/Singapore

Two cases of the deadly Nipah virus in India have prompted authorities in Thailand, Singapore, Hong Kong and Malaysia to step up airport screening in an effort to prevent the infection from spreading.

The virus, which is carried by fruit bats and animals, can cause fever and brain inflammation and has a fatality rate of between 40% and 75%. Although it can spread from person to person, transmission is not easy and typically requires prolonged contact with an infected individual.

It more commonly spreads to humans from infected bats, or fruit contaminated by them.

The infections were confirmed in India in late December. Small-scale outbreaks are not unusual and virologists said the risk to the general population remained low. "While vigilance is warranted, there is no evidence to suggest a broader public health threat at this stage," said

Efstathios Giotis, lecturer in molecular virology at the University of Essex in Britain.

The two people infected in the eastern Indian state of West Bengal in late December were health workers and both are under treatment at a local hospital, a district health officer said.

Authorities have identified and traced 196 contacts linked to the two cases with none showing symptoms and all testing negative for the virus, the Indian health ministry said.

"Speculative and incorrect figures regarding Nipah virus disease cases are being circulated," the statement said. "Enhanced surveillance, laboratory testing, and field investigations were undertaken ... which ensured timely containment of the cases."

Reports of the infections put authorities on alert in neighbouring Southeast Asian nations as well as Nepal and Hong Kong.

Singapore's communicable diseases agency said yesterday it will set up temperature screening at its airport for flights arriving from areas affected by the infections in India.

A Hong Kong airport authority spokesperson said it was facilitating enhanced health screening measures enforced by the health department at Hong Kong International Airport, including temperature check at gates for passengers arriving from India.

Thailand earlier this week tightened airport screening measures, with neighbouring Malaysia following suit. Thailand has assigned designated parking bays for aircraft arriving from areas with Nipah infections, its health ministry said, while passengers must complete health declarations before clearing immigration.

Malaysia's health ministry said it was boosting preparedness through health screening at international ports of entry, particularly for arrivals from countries deemed at risk.

China's disease control authority said on Tuesday that no Nipah infections had been detected in the country but there were risks of imported cases, state broadcaster CCTV said.

Nepal, which shares a border with India, said had tightened screening for travellers.

### S Korea's ex-first lady jailed for 20 months

A South Korean judge handed former first lady Kim Keon-hee 20 months in jail yesterday for accepting lavish gifts from a cult-like church, but acquitted her of alleged stock manipulation and other charges. Controversy has long followed 53-year-old Kim, while accusations of graft, influence peddling and even academic fraud have dominated her husband Yoon Suk-yeol's time in office. Both are now in custody – Yoon for actions taken during his disastrous declaration of martial law in December 2024 and Kim for corruption. Judge Woo In-sung of the Seoul Central District Court yesterday found Kim guilty of corruption and sentenced her to 20 months in prison. She was found to have accepted lavish bribes from the Unification Church – including a Chanel bag and a Graff necklace. Prosecutors requested 15 years, but Kim was acquitted of stock manipulation and violations of campaign financing laws yesterday, and received a far lighter sentence.

### Maharashtra deputy chief minister among five killed in plane crash



The deputy chief minister of India's wealthiest state of Maharashtra, Ajit Pawar, died yesterday, along with four other people on board, when his charter aircraft went down in flames in Baramati, India. Pawar, who hailed from a top political family, was en route to his home region to canvass in local body elections, media said. Two of his staff and two crew were also aboard the VSR Ventures-operated Learjet 45 aircraft, the directorate general of civil aviation said.

### British prime minister Starmer arrives in China

Reuters  
Beijing

Keir Starmer yesterday began the first visit to China by a British prime minister since 2018, encouraging businesses to seize opportunities on a trip aimed at strengthening ties with Beijing as relations with the US become more volatile.

Starmer said that while court- ing the world's second-largest economy, Britain must also remain vigilant about potential security threats.

"They say that eight days is a long time in politics. Try eight years, because it's eight years since a British prime minister stepped on Chinese soil. So on this delegation you're making history," Starmer told more than 50 business leaders visiting with him. "You're part of the change

that we're bringing about ... Because everything you're doing here, everything I'm doing here is focused on how do we benefit people at home," he said before meeting President Xi Jinping and Premier Li Qiang today.

The visit could mark a shift in ties between Britain and China after years of deep acrimony over Beijing's crackdown on political freedoms in Hong Kong, China's support for Russia in the Ukraine war and allegations by British security services that China regularly spies on politicians and officials.

For China, the visit offers the country a chance to portray itself as a stable and reliable partner at a time of global disorder.

"It doesn't make sense to stick our head in the ground and bury it in the sand when it comes to China, it's in our interests to engage," Starmer told reporters earlier.

# Trump warns Minneapolis mayor over immigration

AFP  
Minneapolis, US

President Donald Trump yesterday warned the mayor of Minneapolis – where the brutal killings of two US protesters by immigration agents sparked nationwide outrage – that he is "playing with fire."

Trump told mayor Jacob Frey that his refusal to co-operate with federal authorities on rooting out suspected illegal immigrants was "a very serious violation of the law."

The statement on Trump's Truth Social platform contradicted the 79-year-old Republican president's

earlier statement that he wanted to "de-escalate."

A top hard-line White House official retreated late Tuesday on his initial attempt to justify the shooting of a protester on Saturday. And Trump shuffled the leadership of immigration agents deployed in Minneapolis, putting a less confrontational figure in charge.

But the Minnesota city remains the focal point for national tensions over the immigration crackdown.

While the White House insists that it is targeting hardened criminals, the use of masked, heavily armed men to snatch people from streets, homes and workplaces has caused widespread shock.

That turned to fury this month after immigration agents shot dead two Minneapolis protesters at point-blank range. The latest, intensive care unit nurse Alex Petti, was shot multiple times after being forced to the ground by camouflage officers.

Top Trump aide Stephen Miller initially justified Petti's killing by branding him a "would-be assassin" – despite video evidence clearly showing the 37-year-old man posed no threat when he was gunned down. Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem, another key Trump loyalist, had claimed Petti committed "domestic terrorism."

Late Tuesday, Miller acknowled-

edged that the Customs and Border Patrol agents who killed Petti "may not have been following protocol."

Seeking to distance himself from the fallout, Trump also struck a more conciliatory tone on Tuesday.

However, Trump said there was no plan for a "pullback" and he has resisted calls to sack Noem.

The political battle could soon move to Congress where Democrats are threatening to hold up authorisation for swathes of US government funding if reforms are not made to rein in the sprawling military-style immigration agencies.

Trump's focus on Minnesota is linked to a probe into alleged corruption by Somali immigrants in

the state. Trump and his right-wing media supporters have heavily amplified the probe as an example of what they say is a fight against criminal immigrants around the country. The president has made a particular target of Somali-born congresswoman Ilhan Omar, whom he routinely insults in speeches and says should be sent back to Somalia.

In the latest sign of how the political climate is deteriorating, a man attacked Omar with an unidentified liquid while she was giving a speech late Tuesday, before being tackled by security.

"Here is the reality that people like this ugly man don't understand – we are Minnesota strong and we

will stay resilient in the face of whatever they might throw at us," Omar said to the meeting of constituents.

Frey, a Democrat, told Trump's new point man for Minnesota, Tom Homan, that he has no intention of using city resources to help federal authorities in the immigration crackdown. They "will not enforce federal immigration laws and...we will remain focused on keeping our neighbours and streets safe," Frey said on X.

"I shared with Homan the serious negative impacts this operation has had on Minneapolis and surrounding communities, as well as the strain it has placed on our local police officers," he wrote.

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**GULF TIMES**

## Did Trump make Davos great again?

US President Donald Trump stole the show at the World Economic Forum (WEF) in Davos, but he may have also made the annual gabfest of the global elite relevant again – at least for a week.

The relevance of the gathering of CEOs and political leaders in the Swiss Alps is regularly questioned by critics who deride it as an out-of-touch echo chamber where little gets done.

But all eyes were on this year's Davos as Trump barrelled into town with a geopolitical storm hanging over the picturesque ski resort, where he pressed his case to acquire Greenland.

Hundreds of people stood in huge lines to hear Trump deliver a speech that drew gasps and nervous laughs as he mocked allies but also praised the "brilliant" A-listers in the room – and ultimately ruled out using force to take Greenland.

"It's interesting that people were lining up to hear President Trump like they were not lining up to hear any other speaker. None has got such kind of interest," Latvian President Edgars Rinkevics said.

"I think that to some extent, Davos is back to what it was meant to be. To hear different perspectives, to argue, to discuss, to disagree sometimes, to agree, to somehow build bridges rather than to destroy them," he said.

Davos became the scene of intense diplomacy, culminating with Trump announcing a "framework of a future deal" on Greenland following talks with Nato secretary-general Mark Rutte.

A day later, Trump met Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky as part of his effort to end Russia's war in Ukraine, while also launching his "Board of Peace".

There was even a rare standing ovation this year – for Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney, who described a "rupture" in the global order in a speech that angered Trump.

It had been years since the WEF, founded in 1971, had been at the epicentre of such a momentous political episode.

**"I think that to some extent, Davos is back to what it was meant to be. To hear different perspectives, to argue, to discuss, to disagree sometimes, to agree, to somehow build bridges rather than to destroy them"**

a very clear point: globalisation has failed the West and the United States of America," US Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick said during a panel discussion.

"It's a failed policy. It is what the WEF has stood for," Lutnick said.

This year's meeting also comes at a turning point for the WEF after its founder, Klaus Schwab, stepped down as head of the forum amid allegations of wrongdoing, for which he was later cleared after an internal investigation.

The head of US investment giant BlackRock, Larry Fink, took over as interim co-chair and acknowledged in his opening remarks to the criticism that the WEF has faced.

"It's also obvious that the world now places far less trust in us to help shape what comes next. If the World Economic Forum is going to be useful, going forward, it has to regain that trust," Fink said.

The billionaire floated the idea of hosting WEF meetings in "places where the modern world is actually being built", such as Detroit or Dublin.

But the WEF is still a place where the rich and powerful come to network and do business first. Marc Benioff, the CEO of tech firm Salesforce, was in his element as he shook hands with other corporate titans in the corridors of the congress centre.

"I think for CEOs, still, the fundamental operation of their business, the implementation of AI, the transformation into this new world, that's number one," Benioff said after chatting with PepsiCo boss Ramon Laguarta.

"Obviously, there's a geopolitical situation going on, but I think for the vast majority of attendees, it's not impacting them," he said.

Benioff was among an A-list of CEOs that included Apple's Tim Cook and Nvidia's Jensen Huang, invited to meet Trump in Davos. "The people who matter are here and the conversations that are important are happening here," Benioff said. Davos, he said, "has never been more relevant". – AFP

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## Fearing China clash, Japan asks fishermen to avoid flashpoint islands

By Mariko Katsumura, Tim Kelly, Nobuhiro Kubo and John Geddie  
ISHIGAKI

**H**itoshi Nakama, 76, sees himself as a frontline defender of Japan's claims to disputed islands in the East China Sea, where he regularly evades Chinese coast guard ships to harvest the bountiful waters. But since late last year, some Japanese officials have been discreetly urging Nakama and his peers to steer clear of the remote outcrops – known as Senkaku in Japan and Diaoyu in China – to avoid escalating a diplomatic clash with Beijing, according to Nakama and three other people with knowledge of the requests.

The requests, reported for the first time by Reuters, signal an abrupt shift after years in which Tokyo tacitly accepted such trips, used by some fishermen as a way to assert Japan's control of the uninhabited islets and surrounding seas. The islands, administered by Japan but also claimed by China, have long been a flashpoint in relations between the two Asian powers. Ties have deteriorated since Japanese leader Sanae Takaichi angered China in November by commenting on how Tokyo might respond to a Chinese attack on Taiwan. US President Donald Trump later that month asked Takaichi, a staunch nationalist who became prime minister in October, not to further inflame the tensions. Reuters couldn't determine whether the pleas to the fishermen were ordered by Takaichi or linked to the appeal from the United States, Japan's security backer.

Takaichi's office and Japan's foreign ministry declined to address questions about the requests to fishermen. The foreign ministry said in a statement that the islands were an inherent part of Japan's territory and that it had repeatedly lodged diplomatic protests over Chinese incursions.

The warnings issued to fishermen illustrate a catch-22 for Tokyo: Fishing underlines Japan's control of the islands but risks triggering a more serious confrontation with Chinese coast guard vessels that could escalate rapidly, according to more than a dozen people interviewed by Reuters, including fishermen, Japanese officials and security analysts. Yet a pullback may lead China to more assertively press its claims, some of these people said.

China's foreign ministry told Reuters some right-wing Japanese had repeatedly entered the waters of the islands "in the name of 'fishing' to provoke and cause trouble", adding that maritime issues should be addressed through dialogue and consultation.

A Trump administration official declined to address questions about the president's November call with Takaichi but said the US opposed unilateral attempts to change the status quo in the East China Sea.

**SMALL INCIDENTS CAN 'LEAD TO WAR'**

As tensions with China flared in November, the pleas to fishermen began.

Hiroaki Hayashi, a businessman who chairs a nationalist group that helps fund Nakama's fishing trips, told Reuters he received a request from a Japanese coast guard official to stop Nakama from going on a planned voyage at the end of that month. Nakama reluctantly opted to steer clear, Hayashi said.

Another fisherman, Kazushi Kinjo, 53, said he had been planning to fish around the islands during a week-long voyage that started on November 26. But just before he set sail, and while at sea, he received calls from multiple officials urging him to avoid the Senkaku islands.

"They've never said anything like that to me before," he said, declining to identify the

- Tokyo and Beijing embroiled in major diplomatic dispute
- Japanese fishermen told to steer clear of remote outcrops also claimed by China
- Fishing demonstrates Japan's control of islands, nationalist groups say



A China Coast Guard vessel sails near a Japan Coast Guard vessel around a group of disputed islands called Senkaku Islands in Japan, also known in China as Diaoyu Islands.  
(REUTERS / File Photo)

officials. Kinjo said he briefly transited the waters around the islands on the way back to his home port but didn't stop to fish.

A few weeks later, Finance Minister Satsuki Katayama – previously an adviser to the Senkaku Islands Defence Association, the nationalist group that supports Nakama – hosted the fisherman in Tokyo on December 19.

During their 20-minute meeting, she asked about his previous visits to the islands and remarked that "small incidents can grow bigger and lead to war", Nakama said. He interpreted the message as a request to stay away, though she didn't say so directly, he said.

"What she was really saying was that she didn't want me to go," Nakama told Reuters as small waves rocked his boat in his home port of Ishigaki, where he serves as a local councillor.

Katayama's office declined to comment on the meeting. The Japan Coast Guard said it informs relevant parties about the security situation in waters surrounding the islands as necessary, but declined to discuss specifics.

Ishigaki Mayor Yoshitaka Nakayama said Japanese officials appeared concerned about the risk that fishermen could be detained or subjected to inspections by Chinese authorities during a period of heightened tensions with Beijing.

"If someone should actually be detained it would escalate into a much bigger international issue, so I think that is what the government wants to avoid," he told Reuters at his office. China in recent years has stepped up efforts to enforce its sweeping maritime claims, notably in repeated confrontations with Philippine vessels in which Chinese coast guard ships used water cannons.

The last major maritime dispute between China and Japan erupted in 2010, after Japan's coast guard detained the captain of a Chinese fishing boat that collided with Japanese vessels near the Senkaku/Diaoyu islands. Relations soured further in 2012 when Japan nationalised several of the then-privately owned islands.

Washington has committed to defending the islands under its security treaty with Japan, meaning any clash there risks drawing in the United States.

"It's kind of the touch paper for further deterioration between Japan and China, because China is really pushing its claims on the islands. It is phenomenally tense around there at the moment," said Robert Ward, Japan chair at the London-based International Institute for

**Strategic Studies (IISS).**

Chinese coast guard ships were spotted near the islands on a record 357 days last year, according to Japan's coast guard. The islands lie more than 300km from mainland China, about 150km from Japan's nearest inhabited territory, and about 170km from Taiwan, which also claims them.

**GOOD FISHING**

Fishing has long been associated with the islands.

After Japan first claimed them in the late 19th century, a skipjack tuna processing plant was established on the main Uotsuri Island until it was abandoned in the 1930s.

In 1977, before Beijing began more assertively pressing its claims and scaring off fishermen, there were at least 164 Japanese fishing trips to the islands, according to a Japanese government-commissioned research report.

Last year, there were only eight documented visits by Japanese fishing vessels, down from 18 in 2024, according to the Japan Coast Guard.

Nakama and his nationalist backers say they are determined to reverse the decline in fishing around the islands, arguing that such activity helps demonstrate Japan's control.

Paul Midford, a professor of international studies at Meiji Gakuin University in Yokohama, said while that argument has merit, it can lead to escalation as both sides try to outdo each other to demonstrate control.

Yet a complete lack of Japanese economic activity could invite China to flood the area with its own ships, said IISS's Ward. "The need for Japan to keep showing it has a pulse in the Senkaku Islands is really important," he said.

Kinjo said his motivation is money, not politics.

"I earn my income there... a substantial income," he said, describing the seas as a treasure trove of red snapper, a local delicacy.

While rough winter seas may help keep fishermen away for now, Kinjo and Nakama said they were determined to return soon, despite the risks.

"I'll go there for as long as I have this boat. I'll keep on going," Nakama said, as he sat on an ice box on the deck of his ship.

• Reporting by Mariko Katsumura in Ishigaki and Nobuhiro Kubo, Tim Kelly and John Geddie in Tokyo; additional reporting by Laurie Chen in Beijing and Trevor Hurnicutt in Washington; editing by David Crawshaw.

# Greenland dispute is 'wake-up call' for Europe, says Macron

AFP  
Paris

French President Emmanuel Macron said yesterday a standoff with the United States over Greenland was "a strategic wake-up call for all of Europe" as he hosted the leaders of Denmark and the Danish autonomous territory for talks.

European powers have sought to join forces after US President Donald Trump roiled the transatlantic alliance by threatening to seize strategically-located and mineral-rich Greenland.

Speaking alongside the prime ministers of Denmark and Greenland, Mette Frederiksen and Jens-Frederik Nielsen, Macron said the "awakening" must focus "on asserting our European sovereignty, on our contribution to Arctic security, on the fight against foreign interference and disinformation, and on the fight against global warming."

He reaffirmed to Frederiksen and Nielsen France's solidarity and "its commitment to your sovereignty and territorial integrity". "France will continue to defend these principles in accordance with the United Nations Charter," he added, expressing his support for increased Nato engagement in the Arctic.

"Greenland is not for sale, nor is it up for grabs. The Greenlanders will decide their own future," Macron said in the indigenous Greenlandic language.

He then switched to Danish, telling the prime minister that France would "be side-



French President Emmanuel Macron (centre) Denmark's Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen (right) and Greenland Prime Minister Jens-Frederik Nielsen addressing a press conference prior to a working lunch at the Elysee Palace in Paris yesterday. (AFP)

by-side" with the "Kingdom of Denmark".

In a gesture of solidarity, a modest number of military personnel were deployed to Greenland this month by a handful of European countries including France.

After European pushback, Trump backed down on the threat to take Greenland, which is located between the Arctic Ocean and the North Atlantic Ocean, by military force.

On Tuesday, the French navy flagship, the Charles de Gaulle aircraft carrier, set

course for the Atlantic for pre-planned military exercises. Sources familiar with the matter told AFP that the carrier was being deployed to the North Atlantic.

#### Greenland will never forget'

Frederiksen said that recent weeks had shown that Europe can stand up for itself.

"The world order as we have known it is under pressure, it's changing rapidly," she added. "Maybe it's gone."

Nielsen, 34, thanked Macron for "standing by us without hesitation."

"We will in Greenland never forget it," he said. He said cooperation with France was not only about Greenland.

"It goes beyond Greenland," Nielsen said. "For us, this is about the values in the world, our democracy."

Speaking earlier Wednesday, Frederiksen said that Europe needed to improve its defences "now" to become less reliant on the United States for military protection.

On Monday, Nato chief Mark Rutte told EU lawmakers to "keep on dreaming" if they thought Europe could defend itself without the United States. In response to Rutte's comments, Frederiksen conceded it would be "extremely difficult" for Europe to defend itself now.

"Because when you look at intelligence, nuclear weapons, and so on, we depend on the US," she said at Sciences Po university.

"But I think we're able to do more than what is being said publicly right now."

As for a 2035 target to ramp up spending on Nato, she said: "I'm sorry to say it would be too late."

"I think rearming ourselves now is the most important thing."

Nato members committed to raising defence and security spending last year to five percent of their economic output, following on from an earlier target of two percent by 2024, after pressure from the US government.

On Tuesday, German Chancellor Friedrich Merz hosted Frederiksen in Berlin and assured her of Germany's solidarity.

## Spain eyes full service on train tragedy line in 10 days

AFP  
Madrid

Spain aims to restart within 10 days full service on a key high-speed railway line where a collision between two trains killed 45 people, the transport minister said yesterday.

The January 18 disaster in the southern region of Andalusia - one of Europe's deadliest such accidents this century - partially shut the line linking Madrid and the city of Seville as investigators cleared the wreckage and collected evidence.

"Today we have received legal permission to proceed with the replacement of the infrastructure in the section of the accident," Transport Minister Oscar Puente wrote on X.

"Our aim is that it is completed in a timeframe of approximately 10 calendar days. After the replacement, the whole of the Madrid-Seville line will resume service," he added.

The line was Spain's first high-speed rail connection when it opened in 1992, with the network expanding to become the world's second-largest after China's and a source of national pride.

But the accident has raised doubts about the safety of rail travel in the country.

A preliminary report released last week suggested the track was cracked before a train run by private firm Iryo derailed and smashed into an oncoming service operated by state company Renfe.

## Probe launched into drug use at German defence academy

Germany's armed forces have launched an investigation into illicit drug use at a military academy, the defence ministry said yesterday, vowing "zero tolerance" on the issue.

"Drugs were not only allegedly consumed but also sold by students" at the German Armed Forces University in the northern city of Hamburg, the ministry said in a statement without specifying which drugs were involved.

A campus search was carried out in mid-January and disciplinary measures have been taken in the investigation targeting officer cadets, said ministry spokesman Kenneth Harms.

He added that law enforcement authorities are also involved.

"To be perfectly clear, drug use and drug possession

are incompatible with the values upheld in the German Armed Forces, and we maintain a strict zero-tolerance policy in this regard," he said.

The ministry said an investigation was also underway into "potentially humiliating initiation rituals" at the university.

The issue comes as the German armed forces steps up a recruitment drive, sending questionnaires to all young men turning 18.

The drive is part of Germany's broader effort to build up the military as Europe worries about Russia and the strength of US commitment to Nato. The ministry is already investigating a scandal centred on sexual misconduct and right-wing extremism at an elite paratrooper regiment based in the southwestern town of Zweibruecken. (AFP)

## CERN chief upbeat on funding for new particle collider

AFP  
Meyrin, Switzerland

Mark Thomson, the new head of Europe's physics laboratory CERN, voiced confidence on Tuesday about raising the billions of dollars needed to build by far the world's biggest particle accelerator.

CERN, the European Organisation for Nuclear Research, seeks to unravel what the universe is made of and how it works. The planned Future Circular Collider (FCC) would be an electron-positron collider ring with a circumference of 91 kilometres and an average depth of 200 metres. Scientists believe that ordinary matter - such as stars, gases, dust, planets and everything on them - accounts for just five percent of the universe. The FCC will try to reveal what makes up the other 95 percent, the so-called dark matter and dark energy that scientists have yet to observe directly.

"That project would start operation in the second half of the 2040s," Thomson told reporters.

The British particle physicist took over as CERN's director-general on January 1. He said the gigantic collider would cost around \$19.5bn. "About half of

that comes out of the existing ongoing budget, and we have to find the resources for the other half," he said.

"I'm very optimistic personally, but it's not going to be straightforward."

In December, in a first for the laboratory, private donors pledged \$1bn towards the construction of the FCC. "They're not expecting anything in return. This is really for the good of science," said Thomson.

Based on the outskirts of Geneva, CERN has 25 member states and its council is set to take a decision in 2028 on whether to go ahead with the FCC.

For now, CERN's Large Hadron Collider (LHC) is currently the world's biggest particle accelerator, whizzing particles into each other at phenomenal speeds. The 27-kilometre proton-smashing ring, running about 100 metres below France and Switzerland, has, among other things, been used to prove the existence of the Higgs boson. Dubbed "the God particle", its discovery in 2012 broadened science's understanding of how particles acquire mass and earned physicists Peter Higgs and Francois Englert the 2013 Nobel Prize for Physics. The LHC is expected to have fully run its course by around 2040. It is set to resume operations in February after a winter break, before shutting down again in June.

## US embassy angers Danish veterans by removing flags

AFP  
Copenhagen

Danish veterans yesterday criticised the US embassy in Copenhagen for removing national flags put up in front of the mission to honour Danish soldiers killed in Afghanistan.

The embassy later backtracked, and a US State Department spokesperson told AFP that "until an outlet reached out, we were unaware of why the flags were placed in planters outside the embassy", noting they had been put up without co-ordination with the embassy.

US President Donald Trump last week angered some allies by downplaying the role of non-US Nato troops in the Afghanistan war, saying in an interview that Nato troops "stayed a little back, a little off the front lines".

In response, 44 Danish flags, which carried the names of the 44 Danish soldiers killed in Afghanistan, were put up on Tuesday in flower beds outside the US embassy in Copenhagen.

A video published by Danish media showed embassy staff taking down the flags yesterday morning.

The embassy originally told Danish media that it had removed the flags because they had been put up without coordination with the embassy.

In its statement to AFP, it also noted that "flags, banners, signs, and other items are sometimes left near the embassy" following demonstrations, and while not prohibited they are usually cleaned up by guard staff at the end of their shift.

Maja Schlein Staal placed Danish flags in front of the US embassy in Copenhagen yesterday. The flags are being placed in response to US President Donald Trump saying in an interview that Nato soldiers in Afghanistan "stayed back a little, a little away from the front line". (AFP)

It said the flags placed there on Tuesday had been removed "in accordance with this policy".

But politicians and veterans' representatives condemned the move.

"This was an unnecessary action, which has been perceived as a provocation by many Danes," Carsten Rasmussen, chairman of the Danish Veteran Association, told AFP.

Many felt Trump's comments represented a "betrayal" of their brothers in arms, he added.

#### Completely unacceptable'

Jens-Kristian Lutken, a Copenhagen city official representing the Liberal Party (Venstre), called the embassy's move and the questioning of Danish efforts in Afghanistan "completely unacceptable".

"We have fought alongside the Americans in Afghanistan, Iraq and elsewhere, and we have

lost many soldiers in Afghanistan - per capita, as many as the Americans have lost," he told broadcaster TV2.

Following the news of the removal, new flags were put up on yesterday.

By Wednesday afternoon, hundreds of small Danish flags had been put up in the flower-beds, TV2 reported.

The embassy told AFP that "additional flags subsequently placed are currently in place and will remain so".

"If the American ambassador is fully aware of what is going on in Denmark, then they will know what this is all about," Rasmussen told AFP about the original move to take down the flags.

"They will know that it seems like a provocation."

The Danish Veteran Association is also planning a silent march towards the embassy on Saturday.

## Fear in Sicilian town as vast landslide risks widening

AFP  
Niscemi, Italy

Gaetano Ferrera had just a few minutes to grab belongings from his home, one of hundreds evacuated after a landslide in Sicily that experts warn could worsen due to heavy rainfall.

"Being left without anything is bad, it's bad. I've been here ever since I was a child," said Ferrera, visibly emotional as he locked the door behind him.

Ferrera and his family, including two 16-year-old daughters and elderly parents, have no idea whether they will ever be able to return.

The house sits in an area of Niscemi declared a "red zone" - and therefore off limits - after a four-kilometre (2.5-mile) long stretch of the hillside collapsed on Sunday, forcing the evacuation of some 1,500 people. The town, built on unstable terrain, was battered by a powerful storm which hit southern

Italy last week. Though there were no deaths or injuries, experts say the gulf could extend - and topple more houses - when it rains again.

Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni visited yesterday, flying by helicopter over the gashed hillside and deep fissures in fields below.

She promised quick help, pointing to long delays in compensation from a previous large landslide in the same town in 1997. Speaking to local officials after visiting the site, she said it still remained to be seen how many people would be permanently displaced because the landslide is still moving.

#### Landslide still active

"We need to wait for the rains to stop and for the soil moisture to decrease," Luigi D'Angelo, the Civil Protection Agency's head of emergency management, told AFP.

He said "heavy rain" was forecast in the coming days. Rubble from a few homes destroyed by the landslide could be seen at the bottom

of the cliff, "and there's a risk that another 20m or so could fall, impacting other homes," he said. The agency is using drones to monitor the red zone and satellite images to assess the speed of the landslide.

As locals watched a darkening sky, police patrolled streets empty of all but stray cats, while emergency services stood on standby on the edge of the red zone.

Niscemi, home to some 25,000 people and built on sandstone and clay, suffered a landslide in the same area nearly 30 years ago, and residents said this week's disaster had been long in the making.

Geologist Giuseppe Amato, head of water resources in Sicily for Legambiente, told AFP the landslide should serve as a warning as climate change leads to increasing weather extremes. "Niscemi is another alarm bell... we must respond by changing our habits" and "choosing not to build in certain ways and in certain places".

"In 2025 alone, Sicily has been hit

by 48 exceptional weather events", from wind and rain to extreme heat, showing the Mediterranean island is "a hot spot for climate change in all respects", he said.

According to Italy's Institute for Environmental Protection and Research (ISPRA), over one million Italians live in areas classed as "high or very high risk" for landslides.

Rosario Cona, 45, a farmhand, told AFP that on Sunday "the land simply dropped away".

"We watch houses falling, this is normality for us," he said.

Unlike 29 years ago, though, "we have to take responsibility", he said. "The time for sleepwalking is over."

As a mobile kitchen readied hot meals for evacuees, Cona said Niscemi's future was uncertain - but he for one would never leave.

His family may not return to their home, just one row back from the cliff edge, but Cona said he would build a new one if necessary.

"I was born here, and I will die here," he said.



Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni looks out the window as she flies over the Sicilian town of Niscemi, parts of which have been left standing on the edge of a cliff after a landslide triggered by a storm. (REUTERS)



## Kuwaiti justice ministry delegation reviews Qatar's judicial experience



A delegation from Kuwait's Ministry of Justice reviewed Qatar's legal and judicial experience, including mechanisms for delivering legal services and real estate registration and notarisation, during a visit to the Ministry of Justice on the sidelines of the Doha Legal Forum. The delegation attended presentations by Director of Real Estate Registration, Mohammed Hassan al-Rumaihi, and Director of the Documentation Department, Areej Mohns al-Shammari, on the ministry's legal services system, access procedures, and advances in digital transformation that have converted services to user-friendly electronic platforms. The delegation also toured the ministry's service centre at Rawdat Al Hammama Government Complex, where they learned about procedures at external branches, recent updates to the SAK program that have digitised most registration and notarisation services, and ongoing efforts to enhance efficiency and security through

digital channels. Director of the External Services Department, Ali al-Hajri, emphasised that the ministry's digital upgrades aim to improve efficiency and allow users to complete transactions securely through digital platforms. He said the ministry continues to strengthen its technical infrastructure in line with Qatar's broader push toward comprehensive digital transformation. At the conclusion of the visit, the Kuwaiti delegation praised Qatar's legal and judicial experience and the remarkable progress it has achieved across various fields, describing it as an advanced model for developing judicial services. They also expressed their aspiration to strengthen legal and judicial co-operation with Qatar and benefit from its advanced experience in this area, in a way that enhances the Gulf judicial experience and co-operation between the relevant departments in the justice ministries of GCC states. (QNA)

## Amiri Guard celebrates graduation



The Amiri Guard celebrated at Barzan Camp the graduation of Basic Officer Leader Course (BOLC) No 5 and Basic Sniper Course No 18. Attending the ceremony were HE the Commander of Amiri Guard, Major General Staff Mohammed bin Sultan al-Suwaidi; the Deputy Commander of the Amiri Guard; the Inspector General; assistants to the Commander of the Amiri Guard; and several high-ranking officers. Having reviewed the general reports of the two courses, Acting Commander of the Amiri Guard School, Capt Mohammad Khalifan al-Mansour, addressed the ceremony, highlighting that the BOLC course covered the various phases of war, the utilisation and employment of military skills on the battlefield, and the training of officers in combat planning operations. Regarding the Basic Sniper Course, Capt al-Mansour outlined that the course aims to train participants in a variety of marksmanship skills, including remaining undercover, conducting surveillance, and precisely monitoring targets, with the objective of strengthening their capabilities and elevating their skills to the highest levels. As the event concluded, HE the Commander of Amiri Guard honoured the highest-performing graduates of the two courses. (QNA)

## ISESCO for educational plans that integrate AI technologies

The Islamic World Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (ISESCO) called on the ministries of education in its member states to adopt educational plans that integrate artificial intelligence (AI) technologies into educational curricula, while also incorporating the principles of the Riyadh Charter and its ethical foundations.

This came in a statement by Director-General of ISESCO Dr Salem bin Mohammed al-Malik, during the International Conference on Capacity Building in Data and Artificial Intelligence (ICAN 2026), organised by the Saudi Data and Artificial Intelligence Authority (SDAIA) in partnership with King Saud University and the Human Capacity Development Program.

Dr al-Malik emphasised that artificial intelligence has become a new

platform for improving quality of life, expanding job opportunities, and strengthening the foundations of effective governance.

This will move societies from a stage of sufficiency to one of social innovation and enhance the sustainability of development. In this context, he pointed to the Riyadh Charter for Artificial Intelligence in the Islamic World, launched by ISESCO in partnership with SDAIA, as an ethical and strategic framework guiding the responsible development and use of AI and promoting its application to serve humanity and sustainable development.

Dr al-Malik also warned of the rapid transformations in the labour market, explaining that AI will lead to the decline of some traditional jobs and the emergence of new jobs with updated

titles and skills. This necessitates accelerating efforts in preparation and continuous training.

For his part, Director of the Center for Foresight and Artificial Intelligence at ISESCO Dr Qais al-Hamami, participated in a session at the conference on national data and AI strategies. He presented the ISESCO AI Index for the Islamic World, emphasising its role as a practical tool for assessing readiness, identifying gaps, and supporting policies in member states.

It is worth noting that the International Conference on Capacity Building in Data and Artificial Intelligence in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia includes experts and specialists from more than 50 local and international organisations, to discuss the future of humanity in education and work in the age of artificial intelligence. (QNA)



## WEEKEND DEALS

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Potato Pakistan 1 kg

**فراولة مصرى اكجم ١.٥٠ QR**  
Strawberry Egypt (Approx: 250 gm) 1 Box

**مجبوس دجاج ٦.٧٥ QR**  
Chicken Majboos 500 gm

**١٠.٠٠ QR**  
مانجستين (إندونيسيا ٥٠ جم) عبوة ٥٠ جم  
Mangsteen Indonesia (Approx: 500 gm) 1 pkt

**٧.٢٥ QR**  
Dragon Fruit Vietnam 1 kg

**٣.٢٥ QR**  
Banana Ecuador 1 kg

**٣٥.٠٠ QR WAS ٤٣.٠٠ QR**  
 Ariel Detergent Powder 2.5 kg Asrtd. x 2 pcs

**٥٥ INCHES**  
QLED TV

**١٢٩٩ WAS ٢٣٩٩ QR**  
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