



**Qatar Insurance**  
Financial Results (FY 2025)

Gross Written Premiums (GWP)

9%   
QAR 9.9B

Net Profit

19%   
QAR 874M

Net Profit

9%   
QAR 791M

Earnings Per Share:

10%   
QAR 0.188

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# GULF TIMES



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## BUSINESS | Page 1

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## Amir greets Kuwaiti Amir

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani and His Highness the Deputy Amir Sheikh Abdullah bin Hamad al-Thani sent yesterday cables of congratulations to Kuwait's Amir Sheikh Meshal al-Ahmad al-Jaber al-Sabah on his country's National Day. HE Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani also sent a similar cable of congratulations to the Kuwaiti Amir. (QNA)



## Amir hosts heads, senior officers of defence, interior ministries

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani hosted an Iftar banquet to coincide with the holy month of Ramadan for Their Excellencies commanders and senior officers of the Ministry of Defence, the Ministry of Interior, and the state's security agencies, at Lusail Palace yesterday. The banquet was attended by His Highness the Personal Representative of the Amir Sheikh Jassim bin Hamad al-Thani, along with a number of Their Excellencies sheikhs, ministers, and senior officials. (QNA) Page 12



**RAMADAN THOUGHT**

Whatever of good reaches you, is from Allah, but whatever of evil befalls you, is from yourself. And We have sent you (O Muhammad) as a Messenger to mankind, and Allah is Sufficient as a Witness. (Qur'an 4: 79)

**Prayer times**  
Fajr...4:43; Zuhr...11:47; Asr...3:06; Maghrib...5:37; Isha...7:07

**Fasting times**  
Iftar today .....5:37pm  
Imsak tomorrow.....4:33am

## Amir, Pak PM hold talks

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani met yesterday at his office in Lusail Palace with Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, who is visiting the country. They discussed co-operation between the two countries and ways to support and develop it across various fields, particularly in the areas of defence, economy, trade, investment and energy to strengthen the existing partnership and open up broader horizons for joint co-operation. They also exchanged views on a number of issues of common interest, especially the latest regional and international developments, and the efforts made to enhance security and stability in the region. The two sides stressed the importance of continuing co-

ordination and consultation on various issues to support peace and enhance constructive co-operation at the bilateral and international levels. The meeting was attended by HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani, HE the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Defence Affairs Sheikh Saud bin Abdulrahman bin Hassan al-Thani, HE the Chief of the Amiri Diwan Abdullah bin Mohammed al-Khulaifi, along with a number of senior officials. On Pakistan's side, the meeting was attended by Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Mohammad Ishaq Dar, Chief of Army Staff Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, along with a number of senior officials. (QNA)

## Qatar draws global tech giants into venture orbit

By Peter Alagos  
Business Editor

Global companies at the forefront of innovation are increasingly engaging with Qatar's venture ecosystem, with introductions facilitated by an international venture capital firm that has brought a diverse set of enterprises to Doha in recent months. Earlier this month, Builders VC,

a partner of the Qatar Investment Authority's (QIA) Fund of Funds, brought six new portfolio companies to Doha, marking a significant milestone in their ongoing efforts. Over the past year, Builders VC has introduced a total of 16 firms, which collectively represent more than \$15bn in enterprise value, thereby highlighting the increasing scale and quality of global innovation engaging with Qatar's venture ecosystem.

The six companies, Augment, Gradient, Ashbrook Technologies, Pathos, Navier, and Breaking, were part of Builders' delegation that participated in the Web Summit Qatar 2026. Their presence during the event, according to a statement from Builders VC, "underscores the firm's growing role in connecting frontier technology innovators with Qatar's long-term economic and innovation agenda." To Page 6



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## Shura Council's panel reviews owners' association draft law



The Legal and Legislative Affairs Committee of the Shura Council held a meeting yesterday, chaired by HE Speaker of Shura Council Hassan bin Abdullah al-Ghanim, to discuss a draft law regarding owners' association, in light of the council's decision to return the draft to the committee for further study. Their Excellencies members of the Shura Council made observations during the discussion of the committee's report on the draft, alongside discussions of the related legal and regulatory aspects. At the conclusion of the meeting, the committee decided to continue its study of the mentioned subject in a future meeting. (QNA)

## Amir sends cable of congratulations to Estonia president

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani sent yesterday a cable of congratulations to President of Estonia Alar Karis on the anniversary of his country's Independence Day. HE Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani sent a similar cable of congratulations to Prime Minister of Estonia Kristen Michal on the occasion. (QNA)

# Qatar attends high-level UN rights council session

Qatar participated in the high-level segment of the 61st session of the UN Human Rights Council (HRC), currently convening in Geneva.

Qatar was represented at the event by HE Minister of State for International Co-operation Maryam bint Ali bin Nasser al-Misnad.

In her address, HE the Minister of State for International Co-operation noted that the HRC establishment nearly 20 years ago has contributed to the promotion and protection of human rights through collective multilateral action grounded in the principles of freedom, justice, equality, and mutual respect.

Her Excellency reaffirmed Qatar's steadfast support for the Council and its mandate, underscoring that the protection of human rights constitutes a fundamental pillar of Qatar's foreign policy and a national priority, based on an integrated constitutional, legislative, and institutional framework that guarantees the safeguarding of rights and freedoms and strengthens the rule of law.

She stated that over the past two decades, Qatar has assumed the role of a neutral and trusted mediator in regional and international conflicts, contributing to ceasefire agreements, facilitating prisoner exchanges, restoring diplomatic relations, and supporting peace accords, thereby enhancing stability in several regions.

HE al-Misnad highlighted that women, children, patients, and the elderly in Gaza are in urgent need of humanitarian assistance, including medicine, food, education, and a safe environment that enables them to live in peace.

She stressed that the stability of the Gaza Strip and its population



is the cornerstone of any development plans.

She called for full adherence to the ceasefire agreement and the implementation of all its provisions, including ensuring the unimpeded flow of humanitarian aid and the sustainable opening of all crossings.

Her Excellency reiterated Qatar's welcoming of the ceasefire agreement and the full integration between the Syrian government and the Syrian Democratic Forces as an important step toward strengthening civil peace and consolidating security and stability, while preserving Syria's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

She affirmed that Qatar has consistently stood alongside the brotherly Syrian people.

She further welcomed the engagement of the Syrian government with UN mechanisms, including the establishment of national committees concerned with transitional justice and missing persons, in a manner that enhances accountability, justice, and supports national reconciliation.

HE the Minister of State for International Co-operation ex-

pressed Qatar's deep concern over the continued fighting in Sudan, which claims hundreds of lives daily and has exacerbated suffering and the humanitarian crisis to unprecedented levels, alongside grave violations of human rights and international humanitarian law.

She renewed Qatar's call for all parties to prioritise national interests, end the war, and build sustainable peace that preserves Sudan's unity, institutions, independence, and territorial sovereignty, and fulfills the aspirations of its brotherly people for security, stability, and development.

Her Excellency also referred to Qatar's support for women in Sudan who have been subjected to severe humanitarian violations, through the provision of

US\$10mm to support their rehabilitation and enable access to psychological, social, and economic assistance.

She affirmed that Qatar will continue to support mediation efforts and international co-operation aimed at achieving peace, safeguarding human rights, and upholding human dignity. (QNA)

## Al-Misnad meets UN high commissioner for refugees and Rwanda's minister

HE Minister of State for International Co-operation Dr Maryam bint Ali bin Nasser al-Misnad met on Monday with the UN High Commissioner for Refugees Dr Barham Salih, on the sidelines of the High-Level Segment of the 61st session of the Human Rights Council in Geneva.

During the meeting, the two sides reviewed co-operation between Qatar and the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and discussed ways to further strengthen their partnership in support of humanitarian response efforts in crisis-affected areas. HE the minister affirmed Qatar's unwavering commitment to supporting the UNHCR's efforts to protect the rights of refugees and provide urgent humanitarian assistance, based on its firm belief in multilateral action to alleviate human suffering. (QNA)



HE Minister of State for International Co-operation Dr Maryam bint Ali bin Nasser al-Misnad met on Monday with Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Co-operation of Rwanda Olivier Nduhungirehe, on the sidelines of the High-Level Segment of the 61st session of the Human Rights Council in Geneva. During the meeting, they discussed co-operation between the countries and ways to support and develop them, particularly in the areas of development and international co-operation. (QNA)

# Qatar attends Cairo preparatory meeting to support Lebanese army

QNA  
Cairo

HE Minister of State at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Dr Mohammed bin Abdulaziz bin Saleh al-Khulaifi participated yesterday in Cairo in a high-level preparatory meeting held within the framework of preparations for the upcoming international conference to support the Lebanese Army and Internal Security Forces of Lebanon, scheduled to take place in Paris.

During the meeting, international positions were co-ordinated and the necessary outcomes were arranged in a manner that contributes to strengthening the capacity of Lebanese security institutions to carry out their duties in maintaining security and stability.

In his remarks, HE the Minister of State at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs reaffirmed Qatar's firm and supportive stance towards Lebanon and its brotherly people, underscoring its commitment to supporting state institutions, foremost among



them the Lebanese Army and Internal Security Forces, in a way that enhances stability, preserves Lebanon's sovereignty and unity, and contributes to creating conducive conditions for economic recovery and the consolidation of security.

His Excellency reiterated that Lebanon's stability constitutes a fundamental pillar for the stability of the entire region.

In this context, he noted that Qatar has consistently supported the Lebanese Army as a pivotal national institution,

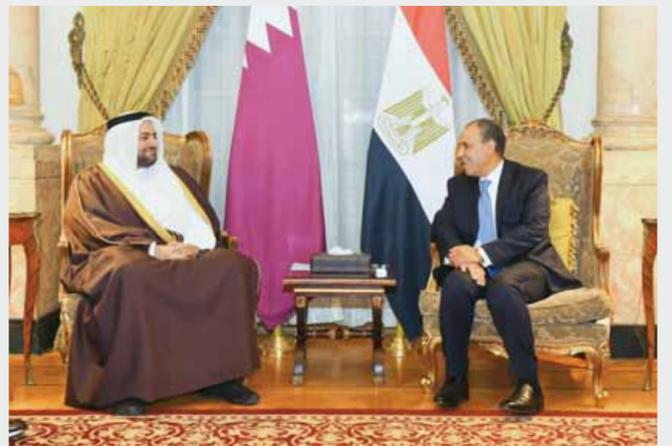
including by supporting the salaries of its personnel over the past four years, providing fuel over the past three years, and extending other contributions aimed at enhancing its capabilities and enabling it to fulfill its national duties.

He further stressed the importance of concerted international and regional efforts to support Lebanon during this critical phase, in alignment with the aspirations of the brotherly Lebanese people for stability, development, and prosperity.

## Al-Khulaifi meets Egyptian FM

HE the Minister of State at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Dr Mohammed bin Abdulaziz bin Saleh al-Khulaifi met with Minister of Foreign Affairs, Immigration and Expatriates of Egypt Dr Badr Abdelatty. During the meeting, they discussed bilateral co-operation and ways to support and enhance it. They

also addressed the latest developments in the region, particularly in the Gaza Strip, the occupied Palestinian territories, and Lebanon, as well as efforts to de-escalate regional tensions, in addition to a number of issues of common interest. (QNA)



# Endowments directorate extends partnership with HMC's Heart Hospital via Nabd Waqf

The General Directorate of Endowments at the Ministry of Endowments and Islamic Affairs has announced the continuation of its institutional partnership with the Heart Hospital at Hamad Medical Corp under the Nabd Waqf for heart patients, affiliated with the Healthcare Endowment Fund.

The initiative aims to strengthen the role of endowments in supporting specialised healthcare for heart patients unable to afford treatment costs.

In a statement issued yesterday, the ministry said the efforts fall within the directorate's strategy to develop healthcare endowments and expand co-operation with Hamad Medical Corp, reflecting its commitment to building a sustainable institutional endowment model that contributes to safeguarding lives and enhancing the quality of healthcare services in the country.

Commenting on the partnership, Eng. Hassan bin Abdullah al-Marzouqi, director-general of the General Directorate of Endowments, said the collaboration, launched in 2021, represents "a practical model of national integration in serving patients." He noted that since its

establishment, the Nabd Waqf has contributed to the treatment of heart patients by providing financial support for critical surgeries, the implantation of advanced medical devices, and covering treatment and hospitalisation costs for eligible cases.

He added that the initiative underscores the impact of healthcare endowments as a sustainable instrument for supporting the national medical system, expressing appreciation to donors, whose contributions constitute an ongoing charitable reward.

Al-Marzouqi further highlighted that the directorate's vision is based on investing endowment assets and channelling their returns to vital sectors, foremost among them healthcare, through the Healthcare Endowment Fund, which operates under clear governance standards to ensure equitable distribution and sustainable impact.

Dr Abdulwahid al-Mulla, senior consultant and head of the cardiothoracic surgery department at Heart Hospital, Hamad Medical Corp, said the support provided through the Nabd Waqf has become a key pillar of the Patient Care Fund. It has enabled the performance of complex car-

diac surgeries and the implantation of high-cost medical devices for patients unable to bear treatment expenses.

He noted that the funding has helped cover surgical preparations, medications, medical devices, and hospital stays, ensuring patients receive timely treatment without delay. The support has also assisted many beneficiaries in regaining their ability to work and continue supporting their families both inside and outside Qatar, directly contributing to their social and family stability.

The Healthcare Endowment Fund is one of the endowment funds affiliated with the General Directorate of Endowments. It specialises in channelling endowment revenues towards medical and therapeutic services for eligible beneficiaries through strategic partnerships with national healthcare institutions.

The Nabd Waqf falls within this framework as a specialised initiative supporting heart patients. It operates under rigorous evaluation mechanisms, in coordination with Hamad Medical Corp, to determine funding priorities and ensure resources are directed to the most urgent cases. (QNA)



## PM meets Pakistani counterpart



HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani, met yesterday with visiting Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif. They discussed bilateral relations and ways to support and strengthen them, in addition to a number of regional and international issues of common interest. HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs affirmed Qatar's full support for all efforts aimed at enhancing security and stability at the regional and international levels. (QNA)



## Pakistan PM leaves Doha

Pakistan PM Shehbaz Sharif left Doha yesterday, following a working visit to the country. The prime minister and his accompanying delegation were seen off upon departure from Doha International Airport by HE Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Sultan bin Saad al-Muraikhi and ambassador of Pakistan to Qatar Muhammad Aamer. (QNA)



## Pakistan PM meets minister of state for foreign trade

Pakistan's PM Shehbaz Sharif met yesterday with HE Minister of State for Foreign Trade Affairs Dr Ahmed bin Mohammed al-Sayed. The meeting dealt with discussing trade and investment co-operation between the countries, along with ways to support and develop them. It also discussed a number of topics of common interest. (QNA)



# MoPH's 'Young Inspector' initiative promotes food safety among students

The Ministry of Public Health (MoPH), in co-operation with the Ministry of Education and Higher Education, recently launched the 'Young Inspector' initiative as part of joint efforts to embed a culture of food safety within the community and among school students.

The initiative aims to strengthen students' understanding of food safety concepts in schools by implementing an integrated awareness plan that includes a range of educational activities tailored to different age groups and educational levels. The initiative includes implementing field-based awareness activities, notably educational inspection visits to selected students at food factories.

These visits aim to reinforce food safety principles, highlight the role of health inspections in monitoring food establishments, and to explain methods for preventing food contamination before it occurs. They also introduce students to the mechanisms for applying food safety requirements in a real industrial environment, thereby demonstrating the importance of adhering to sound hygienic practices to protect consumer and community health. The initiative also comprised four awareness workshops conducted in primary schools. These workshops included simplified lectures on the basics of food safety, with a focus on interactive activities for children and on involving students in the inspection of school canteens. This contributes to enhancing their awareness of correct practices that help prevent foodborne diseases, instilling healthy behaviours from an early age, and strengthening their role in maintaining food safety at school and at home.



As part of the scientific component of the initiative, the Food Safety Department organised educational visits to the Ministry of Public Health's food safety laboratories, enabling students to learn about laboratory testing of food, identify key food-related risks, and understand the importance of laboratory analyses in the early detection of contaminants and in ensuring food safety.

MoPH affirmed that this initiative forms part of its strategy to raise health awareness among students and to build a knowledgeable generation that is aware of its responsibilities towards food safety, by linking theoretical knowledge with practical application, under the direct supervision of specialists in health inspection and food safety.

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## WCM-Q students shadow physicians at affiliate hospitals

A total of 31 students from Weill Cornell Medicine-Qatar (WCM-Q) spent two weeks of their winter break shadowing physicians at affiliate hospitals as part of the Step into Medicine Observership Programme's winter 2025-2026 session.

The programme introduces foundation and pre-medical students early in their educational journey to Qatar's healthcare system and familiarises them with the daily practices and challenges medical professionals face. It also encourages early career exploration and helps students begin building their professional identity as future physicians. The students shadowed physicians at affiliate hospitals, Hamad Medical Corporation (HMC) and Sidra Medicine, during their daily rounds in various clinics, including obstetrics and gynaecology, paediatrics, surgery, internal medicine, cardiology, neurology, endocrinology, emergency and trauma, and other specialties. They also observed doctor-patient interactions and discussions of cases, diagnoses and treatment plans. Student Sara Hassan said: "My observership at HMC transformed medicine from an abstract ambition into a lived, human



experience. Rotating through all specialties allowed me to see how the same goal can take remarkably different forms. More importantly, it allowed me to reflect on where I might belong within this vast field." Fellow student Jassim al-Hail said: "This observership experience opened my eyes to the challenges doctors face, not only in treating patients but in dealing with patients who take away time from urgent cases. This is especially a problem with patients who present themselves to the ER with the basic flu, diverging time away from doctors who could be attending to stroke patients instead." Student Maryam al-Thani added: "Overall, this observership taught me that medicine is deeply human. Whether it was through

conversations with residents or observing patient care, I saw how important communication, empathy and teamwork are in every specialty. This experience made me more confident in my interest in medicine and motivated me to keep working toward a future in healthcare." Dr Rachid Bendriss, associate dean for foundation, student outreach and educational development programmes, added: "As an institution, we are committed to offering our students an opportunity to gain firsthand experience with what practicing physicians face daily. This helps them set realistic expectations for a medical career and provides clarity about their own areas of interest. I sincerely thank our affiliates for making these valuable educational experiences possible."

## Dukhan Bank's personal finance campaign offers best profit rate in Qatar at 2.99% annually

Dukhan Bank has launched its new personal finance campaign, offering customers the best profit rate in Qatar at 2.99% annually and a cash bonus of up to 1%.

The campaign aligns with the bank's ongoing commitment to delivering accessible, Shariah-compliant financial solutions tailored to customers' evolving needs.

Running until May 31, 2026, the campaign is inviting customers to transfer their salaries and existing financial obligations to Dukhan Bank to unlock Qatar's most competitive profit rates.

Eligible participants will benefit from a cash bonus of up to 1% on the amount transferred from another bank (excluding the new loan principal), alongside a grace period of up to three months. The offer is designed to enhance financial flexibility, empowering our customers to navigate their present and future with absolute confidence.

Tailored to meet the aspirations of both Qatari citizens and residents, the campaign offers a comprehensive suite of benefits, including a complimentary credit card featuring exclusive rewards and privileges for the first year.

The streamlined application process ensures expedited approvals, complemented by Takaful life insurance covering the total financing value. With financing starting at QR100,000, the campaign offers flexible repayment tenures starting from four years or more.

For more information about this personal finance

campaign and other personal banking products and services offered by Dukhan Bank, customers can contact the call centre at 8008555, the Dukhan Bank website, mobile app, or WhatsApp at 44100888.

## Qatar Charity, Snoonu launch innovative Ramadan initiative

In a creative effort to strengthen meaningful community partnerships during the holy month of Ramadan, Qatar Charity, in collaboration with the Snoonu app, has launched an innovative initiative that transforms delivery bikes into eye-catching visual platforms.

Qatar Charity noted that such a move is designed to engage the public in an interactive humanitarian experience that reflects the impact of charity and the spirit of giving.

As part of the initiative, transparent boxes are mounted on delivery bikes, each containing a model depicting a tree transforming from dryness to full bloom, a symbolic illustration of how donations help revive hope and improve the lives of people in need. Through this artistic approach, everyday street scenes turn into inspiring humanitarian messages.

The initiative encourages the public to photograph the installations and share them on social media, creating natural, user-generated exposure.

Participating businesses also contribute by donating QR1 for every order placed through the dedicated banner in the Snoonu app, turning daily consumer activity into an accessible and innovative form of charitable participation.

This joint effort aligns with Qatar Charity's Ramadan campaign, "Good Starts with You," and Snoonu's corporate social responsibility campaign, "Helping You Do Good." Together, the two organisations turn good intentions into tangible impact that reaches beneficiaries inside and



outside Qatar. The initiative includes deploying 50 delivery bikes across the country, each carrying an interactive model, in addition to launching an in app donation feature that enables users to contribute QR1 with every purchase.

The project is being executed in three main phases: Teaser phase, Launch phase, and Engagement phase.

Ali Gharib, director of Donor Relations at Qatar Charity, stated that the project reflects Qatar Charity's ongoing efforts to innovate in community engagement and to bring humanitarian messages into daily life in a simple and inspiring way.

He urged the public to interact with the initiative and support the projects displayed in the transparent boxes, so that "the tree of goodness remains green and fruit-

ful," and expressed appreciation for Snoonu's continuous partnership.

Abdulrahman al-Qahtani, director of Corporate Business at Snoonu, emphasised that the initiative is an effective model of collaboration between the private sector and humanitarian organisations. He noted that the QR1 donation per order reflects Snoonu's and its partners' commitment to fostering everyday social responsibility and turning commercial activity into sustained opportunities for positive impact during Ramadan.

Waleed Ihjajen, director of Public Relations and Corporate Social Responsibility at Snoonu, said: "This collaboration reflects the harmony between Qatar Charity's campaign Good Starts with You and Snoonu's Helping You Do Good, enabling the community to participate in giving through a simple, inspiring experience that reaches everyone."



# Skippping first cigarette after fasting first step towards quitting smoking

**QNA**  
Doha

Ramadan is seen as a suitable opportunity for smokers in their efforts to quit smoking, due to the religious and social factors that this month provides that help in overcoming this scourge, as fasting for several hours forces the smoker to reduce nicotine, which trains the body to gradually give up this habit.

Head of Wellness for Community Interventions at Primary Health Care Corporation (PHCC) Dr Abdulhameed al-Khenji told Qatar News Agency (QNA) that many smoking cessation initiatives have been implemented during Ramadan around the world. He noted that several studies have shown the effectiveness of Ramadan in resetting habits, including smoking.

He added that fasting trains a person daily to abstain from smoking for long hours, and this in itself is a strong step towards quitting, stressing the importance of investing the fasting hours as a starting point for quitting smoking, and Ramadan can be considered a practical exercise for quit-

ting. Dr al-Khenji advised smokers to change their lifestyle routine during Ramadan, especially after Iftar to quit smoking permanently, as they can avoid sitting in places associated with smoking, such as cafes or shisha lounges.

### First hour

He also warned of the first hour after breaking the fast, during which one should refrain from smoking to accustom the body to quitting nicotine. To do this, one can start breaking the fast with dates and water, then perform the Maghrib prayer, then have a light meal, and then walk for 10 to 15 minutes. He pointed out that all these steps are known as postponing the "first cigarette after fasting," and therefore every delay reduces the strength of the association between breaking the fast and smoking, until you discover that you no longer need a cigarette.

Dr Abdulhameed al-Khenji also advised waiting ten minutes when the urge to smoke arises, and distracting oneself by exercising and reading the Qur'an, as tranquility reduces the need for smoking, and every moment of serenity brings

one closer to a healthy, smoke-free life. He pointed out an important and crucial factor in quitting smoking, which is support from family, friends, or smoking cessation clinics to obtain appropriate advice or treatment if necessary, while making the decision to stop this scourge stem from sincere intention and confidence in the ability to do so.

He reiterated that Ramadan should not be considered a month of temporary abstinence from smoking, but rather a permanent turning point, as the ability to abstain for 14 to 16 hours a day indicates the full ability to continue after Ramadan. Head of Wellness for Community Interventions at PHCC Dr Abdulhameed al-Khenji said that the Community Wellness Department is implementing a number of campaigns and incentive programmes to support smokers in quitting smoking during Ramadan.

These include launching awareness campaigns through the media via radio interviews, with the aim of explaining how to take advantage of the atmosphere of the holy month to reduce dependence on tobacco and make the decision to

quit. Field awareness campaigns are also being implemented within primary health centers, targeting patients and visitors, to raise awareness of the importance of investing Ramadan in modifying and improving a healthy lifestyle, highlighting the opportunity to quit smoking, in addition to introducing the services available in the primary health care institution to support those wishing to quit this harmful habit.

### Great expansion

He indicated that the smoking cessation clinics in the PHCC have achieved tangible accomplishments during the past five years, represented in the great expansion in the number of centers located in it, to reach currently 19 health centers, with an increase in the number of clinics to 22 clinics that provide smoking cessation services in the morning and evening periods.

He revealed the intention to open 4 clinics in 4 other health centers during the first half of 2026, which will enable easier and wider access for those wishing to quit smoking. He pointed out that the smoking cessation clinics at the PHCC have witnessed

**Advice for quitting smoking in Ramadan:**

- Investing the fasting hours as a starting point for quitting smoking, and Ramadan can be considered a practical exercise
- Avoid sitting in places associated with smoking, such as cafes or shisha lounges
- Importance of support from family, friends, or smoking cessation clinics
- Efforts of the Community Wellness Department:**
  - Implementing campaigns and incentive programs to support smokers in quitting smoking during Ramadan
  - Launching awareness campaigns through the media, explaining how to take advantage of the atmosphere of the holy month
  - Field awareness campaigns within primary health centers, targeting patients and visitors

**Expansion in the number of centers located in it, to reach:**

- 22 clinics
- 19 health centers
- 4 clinics in 4 other health centers during the first half of 2026

an increasing turnout of patients annually, with the provision of integrated services that include behavioral counseling, periodic follow-up, and drug treatment when needed, in addition to measuring carbon monoxide to support the motivation of patients.

The data also showed the achievement of encouraging success rates in maintaining abstinence from smoking for continuous periods, which reflects the effectiveness of the advanced programmes and the specialized professional support provided by the PHCC.

## QU opens applications for conditional, early admission for Fall 2026

**QNA**  
Doha

Qatar University announced the opening of online applications for conditional and early admission for the Fall 2026 semester from March 1 to 25. The application period is open to Qatari nationals, children of Qatari women, holders of Qatari documents, and wives of Qatari citizens who meet the required criteria, whether they are current high school students or graduates.

The university stated that students accepted under the conditional and early admission system will receive several benefits, including admission to their first-choice college, early course registration for Fall 2026, and a 50% reduction in placement test fees for colleges requiring the Foundation Program. Conditional and early admission is temporary and subject to successfully completing the final year of high school.

The system is available to all colleges except the College of Medicine, which has additional admission requirements. Students who do not meet the minimum early admission criteria may still be considered upon submitting their final official results.

Applicants from the British curriculum and International Baccalaureate systems must submit predicted grades using the university's form, along with original certificates and required identification documents. All applicants must submit officially certified high school transcripts before the specified deadline at the Student Affairs Building (I11).

The Admissions Department clarified that applicants who submit final high school certificates and meet all requirements will receive final admission, while those submitting mid-year Grade 12 results will receive conditional admission pending successful completion of high school and fulfillment of all requirements.

## QFF General Assembly discusses future programmes

The Qatar Fencing Federation (QFF) held its Ordinary General Assembly meeting for 2026, discussing key agenda items, including the federation's activities and international participations during the sports season. The meeting was chaired by QFF President Abdullah Ali al-Ghanem, who highlighted major achievements from the past period and discussed future plans and programmes. He stressed the importance of continuing efforts to develop fencing in Qatar and strengthen its presence regionally and internationally. The assembly addressed the national teams' participation in international and continental championships and their positive results, reflecting the progress of both male and female athletes. (QNA)

## ARPM Tender Committee announces the following Tender

Tender No.	(Tender Title) Scope of work	Tender Fee	Tender Bond	Opening Date	Closing Date
ARPM/243/2026/TEN/DOH	Insurance Policy Renewal-Marine Yacht Insurance and Boat Passengers Protection & Indemnity Insurance for Banana Island Resort	1000	10,000	25-Feb-26	15-Mar-26
ARPM/244/2026/TEN/DOH	Tender for Non-Comprehensive Maintenance of Reverse Osmosis Unit (ROU) & Sewage Water Treatment Plant (STP) at Banana Island Resort - 2 Year Term	1000	10,000	25-Feb-26	15-Mar-26
ARPM/245/2026/TEN/DOH	Tender for Upgrade of CCTV & KPOI System at Retaj Salwa Resort, Including MOI-SSD Approval	1000	10,000	25-Feb-26	15-Mar-26

- Interested parties can collect copies of the tender documents from ARPM Purchasing Department, via email to [m.asefi@arpm.com.qa](mailto:m.asefi@arpm.com.qa) and [j.castillo@arpm.com.qa](mailto:j.castillo@arpm.com.qa) during working hours 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. (Fri & Sat Closed)
  - A payment of a non-refundable document's fees should be deposited in cash to:
    - Beneficiary Name:** Al-Rayyan Projects Management (ARPM)
    - Account No.** 0013-022375-004 (Qatar National Bank)
    - IBAN No.** QA86QNBAA000000000013022375004
- And the original deposit receipt should be submitted upon receiving of the terms and conditions.
- A tender bond (as stated above), issued by a bank operating in the State of Qatar and valid for 180 days from the closing date should accompany tenders. **The executed tender bond should be included with the technical offer.**
  - All tenderers MUST collect their original bonds from ARPM – Purchasing department upon expiry of the Tender Bond, unless alternative instructions are issued by ARPM.
  - Proposal to be submitted in sealed envelopes as per the RFP requirements in both HARD COPY & SOFT COPY on CD or USB.
  - Copies of valid **Company Commercial Registration, Computer Card & Authorization Letter** must be submitted in order to collect the tender documents.
  - The successful tenderer is required to submit a performance bond issued by a bank operating in the State of Qatar equivalent to 10% of the total contract sum and shall be valid for a period expiring 180 days after contract expiry.
  - Offers should be valid for 180 days commencing from the closing date (as stated above).
  - ARPM has the right to increase or decrease the scope of services by 20% with the same terms and conditions.
  - ARPM is not bound to accept the lowest tender or any other tender and is under no obligation to show any reasons thereof.
  - Bids should be submitted not later than 12:00 noon on the closing date and must be deposited into the Box, provided in the ARPM Purchasing office, located at the 9<sup>th</sup> Floor, ARPM, Head office and should be in sealed envelopes addressed to the Chairman - Tender Committee, quoting the Tender Number and Subject.
  - Deadline for accepting requests and inquiries, 7 days prior to closing date.
  - Offers arriving thereafter may not be considered.

**CHAIRMAN – TENDER COMMITTEE**  
TEL: 40341804

## QAFCO ANNOUNCES THE FOLLOWING TENDER

TENDER NO.	DESCRIPTION OF WORKS	TENDER FEE (QAR)	TENDER BOND (QAR)	TENDER FEE RECEIPT SUBMISSION DATES	TENDER CLOSING DATE
RFQ - 6000004951	Supply of Packaged Air Conditioning Units on Rental Basis	500/- (Non-refundable)	33,540/- (thirty-three thousand five hundred forty Qatari R)	25.02.2026 26.02.2026 01.03.2026 02.03.2026 03.03.2026 04.03.2026	17.03.2026

**GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS**

- During the period this tender is offered, the interested bidders shall first deposit appropriate Tender Fee amount in cash (Cheque will not be accepted) into Company's following Account at any QNB branch:
  - Account Name : **QATAR FERTILISER COMPANY (QAFCO)**
  - Account Number : **0013-025828-058**
  - IBAN : **QA51QNBA000000000013025828058**
  - Bank Name : **QATAR NATIONAL BANK**
- The interested Bidders shall mention their company's name and Tender Number on the payment receipt provided by the bank and submit it as Tender Fee receipt.
- Besides the Tender fee receipt (which should have the Tender Number and bidder's name clearly mentioned on it), interested bidders shall also submit a copy of the valid Commercial Registration, an authorization letter from their company with the name, telephone, fax and e-mail ID of the focal point for this tender (**Very Important**), during the submission of Tender Fee Receipt for ensuring electronic receipt of the Tender Document.
- Tender Fee Receipt along with the specified documents shall be submitted to [purchase@qafco.com.qa](mailto:purchase@qafco.com.qa) on the dates indicated above, after payment of Tender Fee (nonrefundable).
- After submission of the above documents to the above email, Tender Document will be provided through an electronic platform separately.
- For any queries related to non-receipt of the tender documents after the submission Tender Fee receipt at the QAFCO Housing Section, you may contact at 'purchase@qafco.com.qa' or on 44227795
- Technical & Commercial details and Submission Procedures will be specified in the Tender Documents.
- The Company will not consider any offer without the enclosure of Tender Bond.
- Bids shall be submitted at QAFCO Tender Office, between 0930 – 1100 hours during the Holy month of Ramadan and 0930 – 1130 hours and 1230 – 1400 hours, of any working day of the Company, on/before the "Tender Closing Date".

## Invites qualified bidders to participate in the following tender:

Effective from 01<sup>st</sup> July 2023, Bids from Local Suppliers and Contractors (companies established under the Law of State of Qatar) who are not in possession of an ICV score in the ICV portal (<https://icv.qa/en-US>) by Tender closing date (or commercial bid submission date if separately mentioned / notified) will not be accepted. Local companies that have been established for less than 2 years are exempted from this requirement. For further details, please visit ICV portal (<https://icv.qa/en-US>).

Sl No.	Tender Reference and Description	(i) Deadline for Submission of Information & Interest for Bidding	(ii) Tender fee (non-refundable); Date	(iii) Tender Publication on ARIBA	(iv) Tender Bond	Bid Closing Date
1	RFQ: P06-01-252 5 Years Contract for Provision of Freight Forwarding Services	26 <sup>th</sup> February 2026	QAR 1000.00 26 February 2026	01 March 2026	QAR 500,000.00	31 March 2026, 12:00 Noon

- Interested bidders to communicate their willingness to bid and contact details to QAPCO Procurement ([procurement@qapco.com.qa](mailto:procurement@qapco.com.qa)) indicating company name, address, telephone, official E-mail, etc. latest by the deadline for Submission of Information & Interest for Bidding indicated above. Reference Number and Description of the tender must be mentioned in the email.
- Non-refundable tender fee as indicated above is payable to QAPCO through QNB account # 0013-001688-060 only at any QNB branch latest by 26 February 2026. (Tender Number, Subject and bidder name are to be stated in the payment receipt)
- Tender link will be sent via email notification from ARIBA system to the confirmed bidders. Tender Document will be accessible only after attaching the evidence of the tender fee payment in ARIBA by the bidder followed by Qapco approval. QAPCO shall reply with the access to "ARIBA eSourcing RFP event" along with necessary instructions and guidelines for the bid submission. ARIBA Registration: Bidders who are not registered in QAPCO are requested to complete the registration process during the tendering period (Details on ARIBA registration can be accessed via QAPCO website [www.qapco.com](http://www.qapco.com))
- Tender Bond (Bank Guarantee):** Original tender bond must be submitted by hand to the following address latest by the Bid closing date & time:  
Qatar Petrochemical Company (QAPCO) P.O. J.S.C.  
QAPCO HEADQUARTERS, P.O. Box 756,  
Building: 12, Zone No. 92, Street No. 556, Muathier Leafaiwayat Steet  
Mesaieed, Qatar  
Tel: 4033 8109  
Attention: Procurement Group Manager

Bidder to attach copy of tender bond to the offer in ARIBA. **Offer without Tender Bond will not be considered.**

Tender Clarifications: Please send your queries with tender reference and description to email [procurement@qapco.com.qa](mailto:procurement@qapco.com.qa)

**Notes:**

- ARIBA Registration: Bidders who are not registered in QAPCO are requested to complete the registration process during the tendering period (Details on ARIBA registration can be accessed via QAPCO website [www.qapco.com](http://www.qapco.com))

**For more information about QAPCO, please visit our website: [www.qapco.com](http://www.qapco.com)**

## The Transport Company MOWASALAT (KARWA)

**Mowasalat (Karwa) announces the following tender:**

Tender Ref. No.	Tender Title	Tender Fee	Electronic Tender Fee Payment Dates	Tender Bond	Bid Closing Date
TC-008-MTS-2026	Supply of Accessible Vans with Three Wheelchairs Space	QAR 1,000	25 February to 4 March 2026	QAR 40,000	25 March 2026

**CONDITIONS:**

- Interested bidder shall pay the tender fee to Mowasalat Bank Account details as shown:
- Bidder must submit proof of tender fee payment (Bank Deposit Slip + a Signed & Stamped Expression of Interest (indicating Tender Ref. No. and Title / Company Name and details of nominated contact person i.e., Tel. No., Fax No., and Email address) + Copy of valid Commercial Registration to Mowasalat Secretary - Tender Committee at email: [tenders@mowasalat.com](mailto:tenders@mowasalat.com)
- Tender documents will be released via email on the next working day after the tender fee payment date to all bidders who have submitted the bank deposit slip and other documents requested (i.e., 5 March 2026)
- Bonds: Tender Bond & Performance Bond:** Bids must be accompanied by Bonds issued by a local bank operating in the State of Qatar as per the Qatar Central Bank template. Further details of bonds can be found in the tender documents. **Bids without Tender Bond shall not be considered.**
- Tender validity:** Bid validity period shall be 180 days from the bid closing date.
- Tender documents submission:** Bids must be submitted in 3 separate sealed (IN RED WAX) envelopes addressed to **Secretary - Tender Committee** clearly highlighting the Tender Ref. No. & Tender Title:
  - Envelope 1# must** include the Technical Bid submission (1 Original + 1 non-Editable copy in a USB)
  - Envelope 2# must** include Commercial Bid submission (1 Original + 1 Editable MS Excel spreadsheet copied in a USB)
  - Envelope 3# must** include the Tender Bond (1 Original) + 3 years Audited Financial Statements.
- Bid Closing Date:** Bid submission deadline is **12.00 noon Doha Local Time** as on the Bid closing date shown above. The 3 envelopes must be handed over to the Office of The Secretary - Tender Committee, located at Mowasalat Head Office, Industrial Area, Any tender submitted after the deadline will not be considered.

Supplier Registration | Mowasalat Location

Tel.: 4458 8724 | Fax: 4458 8850

## Sidra Medicine, QatarEnergy sign Memorandum of Understanding



Sidra Medicine and QatarEnergy officials at the MoU signing.

Sidra Medicine and QatarEnergy have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to set a framework for mutual collaboration across healthcare services, professional development opportunities, and the exchange of expertise.

The MoU reflects both organisations' commitment to contribute to the ongoing development of Qatar's healthcare ecosystem and support the needs of patients, healthcare professionals, and the wider community.

Mohammed Khalid al-Mana, acting CEO and member of the Board of Governors at Sidra Medicine, said: "This Memorandum of Understanding with QatarEnergy reflects our commitment

to working closely with national partners to support access to high-quality healthcare services, and invest in professional development. Our collaboration and shared expertise will help strengthen and support Qatar's healthcare systems in the long term."

Nabeel Mohammed al-Buainain, executive VP, HSE & Business Services at QatarEnergy, noted: "This Memorandum of Understanding with Sidra Medicine reflects QatarEnergy's commitment to supporting the health

and well-being of our workforce through access to high-quality, specialised healthcare services. By collaborating with a leading healthcare institution, we aim to

enhance healthcare pathways, invest in professional development, and contribute to the continued advancement of Qatar's healthcare ecosystem."

The MoU framework covers commercial healthcare solutions, including insurance pathways and tailored maternity and corporate healthcare packages. It also includes education and training initiatives such as continuing medical education, professional development, and health education programmes. Additional services include the coordination of clinical services such as outpatient support, referral pathways, and access to specialised care for QatarEnergy employees.

## Let us resolve to shape our lifetime and eternity

The best thing about the month of Ramadan is that it is a time of purification. It is a time of abstinence from our everyday luxuries. But it is not only food and drink that we are referring to.

Free from the daily distractions we have a hope of focusing our attention on the only thing that matters: becoming mindful of the Almighty and drawing closer to Him. We watch our language and carefully guard our speech to avoid backbiting or lying. We frequent the masjid and those of us who would otherwise miss prayer become more heedful.

Our Prophet Muhammad, sallallahu 'alaihi wa sallam, told that when Ramadan comes the gates of Paradise are opened and the devils are chained. We are told to fast for the sole purpose of gaining Taqwa (consciousness of Allah). Allah says in the Qur'an (what means): "O you who believe, fasting has been prescribed upon you as it has been prescribed upon those before you, so that you may attain Taqwa." [Qur'an, 2:183] Ramadan is the month when our sins are forgiven, our prayers answered, our good deeds multiplied. One would be a fool not to take advantage of it.

Ramadan is undoubtedly a special month. We are motivated to do good deeds during this period more than any other time of the year.

We must continue our gracious struggle towards Taqwa throughout the year. Indeed, throughout our lives. As Muslims, we practise our religion in every aspect of our existence, at every moment we live. Islam is not simply a religion we adopt once a week, or once a year. It is a constant effort to gain greater faith through all of our actions, day and night, Ramadan or not.

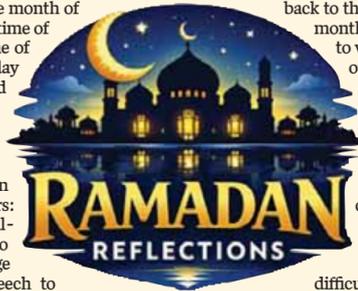
We ask our fellow brothers and sisters not to go

back to the prohibited things after a long month of fast. We should continue to watch our tongues, and observe our prayer. It will be a struggle, no doubt, but Allah promises help those who strive for His sake saying (what means): "As those who strive in Our cause, We will surely guide them in Our paths. And indeed, Allah is with the doers of good." [Qur'an, 29:69]

A mission even as simple as "doing good" is extremely difficult at first, with Satan's whispers deafening our ears and the worldly life's pleasures blinding our eyes. But according to Allah's promise, if we patiently persevere, Allah will guide us, thus making our paths easier. So as difficult as it may sound now, giving up the things that take us away from Allah will get easier every day, until it becomes natural. It is in man's innate nature to seek Allah, so it cannot be so hard after all. Allah says in a Hadith Qudsi: "And if he (My Slave) draws near to Me a hand's span, I draw near to him an arm's length; and if he draws near to Me an arm's length, I draw near to him a fathom's length. And if he comes to Me walking, I go to him at speed." [Al-Bukhari and Muslim]

If we continue to make an effort to reach Allah, He will make our sacrifices easier and reward us thereafter. Let us make our Ramadan resolutions last a lifetime. Let us have the intention of transformation. Let us struggle for the sake of Allah day after day. Let us chain Satan and work hard to keep our gates to Paradise wide open even after Ramadan. Let us give the fruits of our fasting a true chance to last more than a month, a chance of influence our everyday lives, and eventually our Hereafter.

Let us resolve to shape our lifetime and our eternity. Article source: <http://www.islamweb.net/mainpage/>



## QBRI opens applications for annual summer research programme

Qatar Biomedical Research Institute (QBRI) at Hamad Bin Khalifa University has opened applications for its 10th Summer Research Programme (SRP), offering undergraduate students the opportunity to engage in cutting-edge, faculty-led research.

To take place from May 31 to July 16, the seven-week programme will bring together students from institutions across Qatar to exchange ideas while actively contributing to research that addresses national priorities covering precision medicine, disease prevention, and improved healthcare outcomes.

Participants will benefit from QBRI's faculty mentorship and access to state-of-the-art facilities. Additionally, applicants can align their research interests to topics across QBRI's Diabetes Research Centre, Translational Oncology Research Centre, or Neurological Disorders Research Centre.



The programme will bolster professional development by offering seminars and workshops that target critical skills needed for successful careers in scientific research. Participants will also have the chance to engage with the wider QBRI community and absorb insights in a diverse range of biomedical fields.

Throughout the programme, activities will cover key areas including autism, cancer, and diabetes, conditions of significant relevance to Qatar and the wider region. By combining intensive

mentorship, real-world contributions, and strong institutional support, the SRP strengthens national research capacity by preparing and empowering the next generation of biomedical research leaders.

Dr Vladimir Katanaev, acting executive director and scientific director of Translational Oncology Research Centre, QBRI, stated: "Over the past decade, the Summer Research Program has helped cultivate a vibrant research community by giving students early exposure to rigorous, hands-on scientific inquiry. Initiatives like this are critical to opening pathways for research-focused careers, building the state's capacity in this field and preparing the next generation of biomedical research leaders to drive innovation and scientific excellence."

SRP applicants must be enrolled in an undergraduate programme in a biological or medical-related science and hold a minimum GPA of 3.0.

## Qatar ambassador presents credentials

Sri Lanka President Anura Kumara Disسانayake, received the credentials of Hamad bin Mohammed al-Dosari as ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary of Qatar to Sri Lanka. The ambassador conveyed His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani's greetings to the President and wishes of abundant health and happiness to the president, and to the government and people of Sri Lanka, enduring progress and prosperity. For his part, the president entrusted the ambassador with his greetings to the Amir, wishing His Highness abundant health and happiness and the State of Qatar further progress and growth. (QNA)



## Kia Qatar multiplies benefits this Ramadan

Al-Attiya Motors and Trading Co., official dealer of Kia in Qatar, pays it forward with a unique additional discount benefit for eligible customers through referrals.

Customers purchasing through Cash will get free periodic lube Services for 3-years/60,000km. (whichever comes first), free comprehensive Insurance and Registration on the 1st year.

Customers purchasing through In-House Finance will get a limited-time ZERO Down Payment option, free periodic lube Services for 2-years/40,000km. (whichever comes first), free comprehensive Insurance and Registration on the 1st year. On top of that, In-House Interest Rate will be set at 4.99%.



Al-Attiya Motors and Trading Co. (AMTC), the official dealer of Kia in Qatar, has launched its promotional campaign for Ramadan, crafted to provide tangible benefits for retail customers across a wide range of vehicles.

The offer is valid for individual customers buying through either cash or in-house finance across all available models. Cash deals will net customers free periodic lube Services for 3-years/60,000km. (whichever comes first), free comprehensive Insurance and Registration on the 1st year.

Eligible customers purchasing through in-house finance (IHF) are not left out, as they will be able to avail of a special Interest Rate of 4.99%, free comprehensive Insurance on the 1st year, free periodic lube Services for 2-years/40,000 km. and free Registration on the 1st year as well as a limited-time Zero Down Payment option.

To multiply the benefits, retail customers can receive additional discount by referring a friend or family to the dealer. Maximum discount is at QAR 10,000 for cash customers of the EV range and equally rewarding discounts are available for the reliable and spacious SUV and practical sedan lineups as well.



As the offer is valid for all models, the Kia Qatar team has also adjusted pricing to ensure exception competitiveness while maintaining superior quality and dependability. In fact, customers can also trade-in their old models, even if other brands, aid their transaction.

"Ramadan is a time for reflection, gratitude, and giving. This year, we wanted to truly pay it forward by making vehicle ownership more accessible and rewarding for our customers," as mentioned by AMTC in a statement.

With a comprehensive Ramadan program in tow this year, Kia cars will be available for viewing in Place Vendome throughout the promotion, displaying in-demand models such as the Sportage L, Seltos and Telluride.

Assuch, Kia Qatar looks forward to meaningful Ramadan ahead for its wide range of customers in both its Kia City (Industrial Area) and recently renovated Al Sadd showrooms. Reflecting the multi-awarded 'Opposites United' concept, the conveniently located showroom in Al Rayyan Road offers not only accessibility and comfort but also the trademark AMTC customer-centric approach in catering to its clientele.

Interested parties can visit Kia Qatar's website, [www.kiaqatar.com](http://www.kiaqatar.com), to know more about the wide range and award-winning cars that are available to choose from. More details on cars and promotions are found in the website and through the Sales Consultants at both the Al Sadd and Kia City showrooms.

## QU announces details of 13th Cultural Village



The 13th edition of the Cultural Village will be held under the theme "Heritage Worn with Pride".

Qatar University's (QU) Student Activities Department has announced the 13th edition of the Cultural Village, themed "Heritage Worn with Pride," scheduled for March 30-31 at the Student Affairs Building (I11) for female students and April 1-2 for male students.

The initiative underscores QU's commitment to fostering an inclusive campus that celebrates cultural diversity and promotes dialogue and openness, in line with Qatar National Vision 2030, particularly its Human Development and Social Development pillars.

Organisers said the Cultural Village serves as an annual platform that brings together students from diverse nationalities to showcase their heritage and cultural identities. Participants will present informational booths, artistic performances, traditional attire, national cuisines, and handicrafts, highlighting the richness of the university's multicultural community.

Abdullah al-Mulla, director of the Student Activities Department, said the event reflects the spirit of diversity that defines QU. "We are pleased to renew our annual gathering through the Cultural Village, which embodies the cultural diversity of our university. It is more than a celebration; it is a dynamic platform for dialogue and mutual understanding, and an opportunity for students to proudly represent their heritage and identity.

"These interactive experiences strengthen mutual respect and enrich campus life. We invite everyone to take part in this forum that builds bridges of communication."

Meera al-Kuwari, head of the Campus Events and Programmes Section, described the Cultural Village as a key fixture in the student activities calendar and a platform that highlights the heritage, customs, and traditions of different nations.

"This year's theme carries a profound message: culture is not confined to history books or mu-

seum displays, but a lived identity embraced with pride. Traditional attire is not merely fabric; it tells the story of a homeland. Likewise, crafts, arts, and cuisines are living expressions of identity and belonging," she said.

Al-Kuwari noted that 25 countries have confirmed participation so far, reflecting the breadth of nationalities represented at QU. She added that such diversity strengthens intercultural understanding and mutual respect - core objectives of the Cultural Village.

The event aligns with QU's broader strategy to empower students through active engagement in extracurricular activities that develop leadership and social skills while enriching their academic journey.

By promoting coexistence and cultural awareness, the Cultural Village prepares graduates with a strong sense of social responsibility and supports the development of a cohesive, multicultural society in line with Qatar National Vision 2030.

## QF makes students go extra mile in learning about health and well-being

For medical students at Qatar Foundation (QF)'s Education City, a typical day isn't limited to the classroom and the lecture theatre. It takes them into hospitals and research labs, and to sports facilities and community spaces.

Haya al-Kuwari, a senior student at QF partner university Weill Cornell Medicine - Qatar, is among the learners whose academic journey and understanding of caring for others, have been expanded by this unique landscape of knowledge and opportunity.

"My path into health and wellness has been shaped by both personal and academic experiences," she says. "From an early stage, I was drawn to medicine not just as a profession, but to understand people during some of their most vulnerable moments. Seeing illness up close within my own family made health feel very real to me - it wasn't abstract or theoretical."

That early exposure to the importance of healthcare gradually evolved into a broader perspective on wellbeing. "Over time, that curiosity became a deeper interest in prevention, long-term wellbeing, and how science, compassion, and lifestyle all intersect to shape health out-



Haya al-Kuwari

comes," al-Kuwari explains.

Access to real-world healthcare institutions - which QF's integrated ecosystem of education, research, and community development allows - has played a defining role. At QF's women's and children's hospital and medical research centre Sidra Medicine, she witnessed medicine in action.

"During my sub-internship, I saw first-hand how science, innovation, and patient-centred care come together," she recalls. "Multidisciplinary teams, family involvement, and prevention-focused approaches weren't just concepts, they were shap-

ing long-term outcomes for real patients."

Some of al-Kuwari's most impactful learning moments happened far from traditional clinical settings. Volunteering at a medical outreach camp serving refugee communities in Jordan brought her studies into sharp focus.

"Being in a resource-limited setting made public health, prevention, health equity, and social determinants of health very real," she says. "I saw how displacement, limited access to care, and environmental exposures shape health outcomes far beyond what we see in hospitals."

Rather than absorbing information passively, she has been encouraged to question it. "QF taught me to ask how knowledge can be applied, improved, and used to better serve communities," she says.

"As a medical student, I've learned that physical activity and wellbeing are essential to sustainable learning," she added. "QF's emphasis on wellness, through sports initiatives, facilities like the Sport Lab, and supportive environments reinforces that caring for your body and mental health is foundational to academic success."

## QRCS delivers Qatar's generosity to fasting communities worldwide

As part of Qatar Red Crescent Society (QRCS)'s Ramadan Campaign 1447 AH, themed "Keep Your Balance of Good Deeds Alive", the daily On-the-Go Ramadan Iftar initiative at Katara Cultural Village has been warmly received by visitors.

Now in its third consecutive year and sponsored by LuLu Hypermarket, the initiative is carried out by QRCS volunteers who distribute Iftar meals at the Ramadan Cannon area and to motorists at sunset. A total of 350 meals are distributed daily, totalling 10,150 throughout the campaign. Visitors have praised the initiative for reinforcing the spiritual values of Ramadan, particularly among children and youth.

Beyond Qatar, QRCS continues to extend support to vulnerable communities worldwide through Ramadan food assistance projects.

In Gaza, 17,833 food parcels are being distributed to displaced families at a total cost of \$1.85mn, helping strengthen their resilience and enabling them to observe the holy month with dignity.

In Afghanistan, QRCS has launched Ramadan food distributions for vulnerable families in the remote and mountainous provinces of Paktika and Zabul, in partnership with the Afghan Red Crescent Society and in coordination with local authorities and community leaders. Each parcel contains 94kg of essential food items, including flour, rice, sugar, beans, vegetable oil, dates, salt, and green tea.

So far, 400 parcels have been distributed in Nematabad District (Paktika) and 364 in Mezana District (Zabul). Distributions will continue in Chahar Baran and Gomal districts, with 200 parcels allocated to each, bringing the total to 1,164 parcels at a cost of QR700,000. Two QRCS teams conducted field assessments in advance to identify priority needs.

In Tanzania, QRCS concluded its Ramadan Iftar project in cooperation with the Tanzania Red Cross Society, distributing food parcels to 168 families - benefiting 1,176 individuals - across five districts in the Dar es Salaam region: Ilala, Kinondoni, Temeke, Ubungo, and Kigamboni. In Chad, QRCS partnered with Organisa-



tion Médicale Tchadienne and the Red Cross of Chad to distribute Ramadan parcels containing 45kg of rice, flour, sugar, and vegetable oil to 160 families, supporting 1,280 people.

Preparations are also under way in Albania, where 500 Ramadan food parcels will be distributed by the Albanian Red Cross to 2,000 vulnerable individuals across several counties.

In Somalia's Northeast State, and in the presence of the Minister of Humanitarian Affairs, 1,951 one-month food parcels were distributed in Laascaanood, benefiting 10,806 people. Each parcel contained 66.5kg of essential items, including flour, rice, sugar, vegetable oil, infant formula, and dates. The assistance, valued at \$184,931, also supported 210 patients with respiratory diseases and 690 persons with disabilities.

QRCS has invited donors to contribute to its Ramadan campaign through its website, mobile app, donor service hotline, home collection service, or via bank transfer to designated accounts.

## Qatar draws global tech giants into venture orbit

From Page 1

Builders VC "engaged in high-level discussions on pilot initiatives, research collaborations, and commercialisation strategies aligned with both Qatar National Vision 2030 and the Third National Development Strategy (NDS3), unlocking new prospects across fintech, climate technology, healthcare, and advanced industrial sectors," the statement pointed out.

While in Qatar, the six companies engaged with more than 30 Qatari entities the private and public sectors, spanning government, investment, healthcare, infrastructure, energy, tourism, and financial services, and explored localisation strategies, pilot deployment, and long-term collaboration aligned with national priorities.

The engagement coincided with a major milestone for Qatar's innovation agenda, according to the Builders VC statement, citing Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs HE Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani's announcement of the expansion of QIA's Fund of Funds programme by an additional \$2bn, bringing the total commitment to \$3bn.

As a partner in the programme, Builders VC views this expansion as a strong signal of Qatar's long-term commitment to building a globally competitive venture capital ecosystem that supports both the attraction of international innovation and the development of scalable companies emerging from Qatar.

Jim Kim, general partner and founder of Builders VC, stated: "Builders VC's presence in Doha reflects its commitment to enabling two-way innovation flow:



Tarik Sultan, general partner and head of MENA at Builders VC (2nd from right), with the fresh batch of startup founders eyeing to expand their footprint in Qatar during a visit to the Qatar Investment Authority booth at Web Summit Qatar 2026.

introducing scaled global portfolio companies to the Qatari market while supporting Qatar-based ventures in accessing global capital and international markets.

"For several companies, discussions progressed from initial exploration to clearly defined pilot programmes and structured market-entry pathways. This reflects a strong institutional appetite for companies that are committed to building locally, investing in long-term partnerships, and contributing meaningfully to Qatar's innovation ecosystem."

Builders VC's engagements in Doha mark continued progress in the company's regional strategy, focused on long-term partnerships that align global innovation with Qatar's economic diversification and knowledge-based development objectives.

Tarik Sultan, general partner and head of MENA at Builders VC, said: "Bringing portfolio companies to Qatar is not simply about market expansion; it is about embedding high-growth innovators

within a dynamic ecosystem that values partnership, local capability building, and shared long-term value creation. We see Qatar as a strategic gateway for scaling transformative technologies across the region."

In addition to the delegation of portfolio companies, Builders VC also signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Sidra Medicine at Web Summit Qatar 2026, aimed at strengthening collaboration in healthcare innovation, supporting the development of emerging medical technologies, and expanding partnership opportunities between medical research ecosystems and healthcare-focused venture investment.

Builders VC has also expanded its local team with the addition of Fernanda Braz, director of Portfolio Growth & Expansion, MENA, and Yousef Azzam, Venture analyst, as part of its growing presence in Qatar, strengthening its on-the-ground capabilities to support portfolio collaboration and institutional engagement.

## Aspetar's 'Healthy Ramadan' campaign brings trusted health and sports guidance

Aspetar has launched a series of initiatives under the 16th edition of its annual Ramadan campaign, "Healthy Ramadan", as part of the hospital's ongoing efforts to enhance health and fitness awareness throughout the holy month.

The annual campaign aims to provide the community with reliable, science-based information in an engaging, accessible manner. Aspetar is sharing a series of daily awareness posts and evidence-based tips from Aspetar experts across local media and social media platforms. These posts address important scientific questions in a simple and accessible style throughout the month.

Khalid al-Naama, director of Communications and Marketing at Aspetar, said: "This year's Ramadan campaign reflects Aspetar's unwavering commitment to serving the community by delivering credible, science-based content that's accessible to the public and athletes alike.

"We have diversified the campaign to

include an updated and user-friendly scientific guide, a Ramadan meal plan, and innovative educational content shared via media and social channels. This variety ensures that accurate information reaches all audiences - from the public to recreational and professional athletes - reaffirming Aspetar's leadership as a global source of trusted health and sports knowledge."

As part of this year's campaign, Aspetar unveiled an updated version of its evidence-based practical guide designed to support athletes and physically active adults during Ramadan. This updated and simplified guide helps the sports community maintain performance, recovery, and overall well-being throughout the fasting period, drawing on the latest scientific research.

The guide forms part of Aspetar's ongoing commitment to supporting the sporting community during the holy month and to promoting a culture of balanced, healthy performance. It covers four key



topics - nutrition, hydration, sleep, and training strategies for active adults - based on the latest scientific evidence. Aspetar researchers developed the guide, which was reviewed by leading international experts in Ramadan research to

ensure the highest standards of scientific accuracy. The full guide is available on the Aspetar website.

The guide emphasises the need for a balanced intake of essential nutrients during non-fasting hours to ensure adequate energy for training and recovery. It also underscores the importance of hydration as a crucial factor for performance, particularly for athletes.

Aspetar's guide explains that both pre- and post-iftar training offer benefits, though with different considerations. It also provides specific recommendations on sleep management, noting that athletes typically experience a 60- to 88-minute reduction in sleep per day during Ramadan - making proper sleep planning critical.

Additionally, the guide warns against what it calls the "Majlis trap" - social gatherings where people may overconsume fried foods, desserts, and sugary beverages.

Aspetar also announced the release of

a "free Ramadan meal plan", designed by the hospital's sports nutrition experts. The plan provides a practical nutritional guide from iftar to Suhoor, complete with scientifically grounded recommendations to optimise health and performance during fasting hours.

In addition, through its scientific journal, Aspetar highlights the special Ramadan collection of the Aspetar Sports Medicine Journal, featuring peer-reviewed articles on fasting and physical activity - available for free download and reading on the journal's website.

Throughout the holy month, Aspetar continues to deliver world-class medical and sports medicine services to major international sporting events hosted in Qatar, including global tennis tournaments and the CHI Al Shaqab - Longines international equestrian competition. The hospital will also provide comprehensive medical coverage for local community activities, such as the Ramadan tournaments of "Al Kass" Padel and Football.

### ANNOUNCEMENT

I, WILLIAMS AGYEMAN

holder of

GHANA Passport No. G3415996  
QID No. 29928800214

hereby change my name

from

WILLIAMS AGYEMAN

to

WILLIAMS AGYEMANG

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

## 186 players take part in Ashghal Ramadan Tournament 2026

The 13th edition of the Ashghal Ramadan Tournament kicked off, with approximately 186 players competing in seven games in a sporting atmosphere that reflects the spirit of camaraderie and cooperation among the Authority's employees during the holy month.

The Social Annex at the Assets Affairs Building of the Public Works Authority (Ashghal), located on Wholesale Market Street, hosts the "Ashghal Ramadan Individual Games Tournament 2026", with 132 employees competing in five games: padel, table tennis, football, billiards, and PlayStation.

On another front, Ashghal is also participating in the Ramadan Sports Festival 2026, organised by Aspire Zone Foundation, with two football teams and six basketball (3x3) teams competing in the team sports category.

Ashghal noted that the Ashghal Ramadan Tournament 2026 marks the 13th edition of this important annual event, which contributes to strengthening professional and human ties

among employees by fostering team spirit and enhancing institutional belonging - particularly as the strong turnout reflects employees' eagerness to engage in sports and social activities.

Ashghal looks forward to delivering a distinguished edition this year in terms of the level of competition and quality of organisation, and to achieving the tournament's sporting and social objectives during the holy month, in a manner that reflects Ashghal's spirit and institutional values.



# Gazans salvage ancient books in mosque library damaged by war

AFP  
Gaza City

Inside the dusty shell of one of the oldest libraries in the Palestinian territories, a group of Gazan volunteers work diligently to salvage what remains of their ancient cultural heritage.

The Great Omari Mosque library sustained terrible damage during the war in Gaza, which erupted in October 2023 and devastated swathes of the Palestinian territory, including cultural and religious sites.

The mosque -- in the old town of Gaza City -- now stands largely

ruined, with its library littered with rubble and dust.

"I was shocked and stunned when I saw the extent of the destruction in the library," Haneen al-Amsi said, saying the scenes of devastation had spurred her to help launch the restoration initiative.

Amsi, who heads the Eyes on Heritage Volunteer Foundation, said the western part of the library was burned when the mosque was hit, causing irreversible damage.

"The library was estimated to contain about 20,000 books, but currently we are left with fewer than 3,000 or 4,000," she explained.

Among the debris, volunteers hoping to restore the collection pored over charred fragments of manuscript and shards of yellowed paper.

"The library of the Great Omari Mosque is considered the third largest library in Palestine after the Al-Aqsa Mosque library and the Ahmed Pasha al-Jazzar library," Amsi said.

"It is an important historical library that contains original manuscripts and a diverse collection of books on jurisprudence, medicine, Islamic law, literature and various other subjects."

Gaza's history stretches back thousands of years, making the

tiny territory a treasure trove of archaeological artefacts from past civilisations including Canaanites, Egyptians, Persians and Greeks.

But more than two years of war between Israel and Hamas took a heavy toll on Gaza's heritage sites.

As of January 2026, the UN's cultural agency Unesco, had verified damage to 150 sites since the start of the war in October 2023 sparked by Hamas's storming of Israel.

These include 14 religious sites and 115 buildings of historical or artistic interest.

**'REPRESENT HISTORY'**  
Inside one of the library's old

stone rooms, one woman used a paintbrush to dust off an old tome, while other volunteers wearing facemasks and gloves crouched on the floor to leaf through piles of books.

"The condition of the rare and historical books is deplorable due to their being left for more than 700 to 800 days," Amsi said, talking of "immense damage and gunpowder residue" on the volumes.

An independent United Nations commission said in June 2025 that Israeli attacks on schools, religious and cultural sites in Gaza amounted to war crimes.

"Israel has obliterated Gaza's education system and destroyed

more than half of all religious and cultural sites in the Gaza Strip," the UN Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory said in a report.

Israel rejected the commission as "an inherently biased and politicised mechanism of the Human Rights Council" and said the report was "another attempt to promote its fictitious narrative of the Gaza war".

For Amsi, the importance of restoring the books lay in preserving crucial historic records.

"These books represent the history of the city and bear witness to historical events," she said.



Young displaced Palestinians make their way through a waterlogged street after heavy rain in Khan Yunis, in the southern Gaza Strip, yesterday.

## Palestinian Cabinet warns against delays in delivering aid to Gaza

QNA  
Ramallah

Palestinian Prime Minister Mohammad Mustafa warned of the continued fragility of the humanitarian situation in Gaza amid unjustified delays in the entry of humanitarian aid and basic necessities.

He said the delays are worsening the suffering of Palestinians, especially as heavy rains have flooded hundreds of tents and increased the impact of severe weather conditions.

Speaking during the week-

ly Cabinet session, Mustafa stressed that Palestinians in Gaza continue to endure the devastating consequences of the ongoing Israeli aggression despite the announcement of a ceasefire.

He emphasised the urgent need for the uninterrupted flow of humanitarian aid and essential supplies.

The government also affirmed its readiness to co-ordinate with the High Representative for Gaza to provide basic services and support relief, recovery, and reconstruction programmes during the transitional phase, in line with UN Security Council Reso-

lution 2803 and international legitimacy resolutions supporting the establishment of an independent Palestinian state.

The Cabinet further condemned the Israeli authorities' decision to seize 2,000 dunams of land in the towns of Sebastia and Burqa, north of Nablus, describing it as a move targeting the archaeological site in Sebastia and harming Palestinian historical heritage, alongside escalating demolition orders in various areas.

It called for a serious international stance to halt these violations.

## Various foreign ministers condemn Israel over West Bank moves

Reuters  
Istanbul

The foreign ministers of Brazil, France, Spain, Türkiye and various other states condemned Israeli decisions that they said introduce sweeping extensions to unlawful Israeli control over the West Bank.

"Changes are wide-ranging, reclassifying Palestinian land as so-called Israeli 'state land'; accelerating illegal settlement activity, and further entrenching Israeli administration," said the

joint statement, issued late on Monday by the Turkish Foreign Ministry.

Other countries to sign the statement included Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Qatar, as well as the heads of the Arab League and Organisation of Islamic Co-operation (OIC).

Israel's cabinet on February 15 approved further measures to tighten Israel's control over the occupied West Bank and make it easier for settlers to buy land, a move Palestinians called a "de-facto annexation".

The West Bank is among the territories that Palestinians

seek for a future independent state. Much of it is under Israeli military control, with limited Palestinian self-rule in some areas run by the Western-backed Palestinian Authority.

The joint statement said the settlements, and decisions designed to further them, are "a flagrant violation of international law" and a step towards "unacceptable de facto annexation".

It said they also undermine the ongoing efforts for peace and stability in the region and threaten any meaningful prospect of regional integration.

## Iran 'is ready for any necessary steps to reach deal with US'

Reuters  
Dubai

Iran is ready to take any necessary steps to reach a deal with the United States, Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Majid Takht-Ravanchi said yesterday, as the two countries prepare for a fresh round of talks.

The talks are set to take place tomorrow in Geneva, a senior US official said yesterday, with US envoys Steve Witkoff and Jared Kushner slated to meet with an Iranian delegation for the negotiations.

The two countries resumed negotiations earlier this month as the US builds up its military capability in the Middle East. Iran has threatened to strike US bases in the region if it is attacked.

"We are ready to reach an agreement as soon as possible. We will do whatever it takes to make this happen. We will enter the negotiating room in Geneva with complete honesty and good faith," Takht-Ravanchi said in comments carried by state media. White House Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt said yesterday that US President Donald Trump's first option was always diplomacy but that he was willing to use lethal force if necessary.

A senior Iranian official told Reuters on Sunday that Tehran would seriously consider a combination of sending half of its



A woman looks at a stall displaying dried fruits and nuts at Tehran's Grand Bazaar, yesterday.

most highly enriched uranium abroad, diluting the rest and taking part in creating a regional enrichment consortium - an idea periodically raised during years of Iran-linked diplomacy.

Iran would do this in return for US recognition of Iran's right to "peaceful nuclear enrichment" under a deal that would also include lifting economic sanctions, the official said.

"If there is an attack or aggression against Iran, we will respond according to our defence plans... A US attack on Iran is a real gamble," Takht-Ravanchi added. Indirect talks between

the two sides last year brought no agreement, primarily due to friction over a US demand that Iran forgo uranium enrichment on its soil, which Washington views as a pathway to a nuclear bomb. Iran has always denied seeking such weapons.

The US joined Israel in hitting Iranian nuclear sites last June, effectively curtailing Iran's uranium enrichment, with Trump saying its key nuclear sites

were "obliterated." But Iran is still believed to possess stockpiles enriched previously, which Washington wants it to relinquish.

## Deadly RSF attack on Sudan militia stronghold displaces hundreds

AFP  
Khartoum

An attack by Sudan's Rapid Support Forces on the Darfur stronghold of their former militia chief left dozens of casualties and hundreds displaced, local sources and the UN said yesterday.

Two eyewitnesses told AFP that 28 people were killed.

On Monday, the RSF attacked the town of Mustariha in North Darfur, home to tribal leader Musa Hilal, from whose Janjaweed militia the paramilitary group emerged. The UN said an estimated 2,690 people were displaced from the town between Monday and yester-

day "due to heightened insecurity". Since April 2023, the war between Mohamed Hamdan Daglo's RSF and Sudan's regular army has devastated the country, particularly in the vast western region of Darfur, where the RSF has consolidated control.

Hilal - who was sanctioned by the UN for ethnic atrocities in Darfur in the 2000s - has mostly stayed out of the war but recently voiced support for the army. A medical source at Kababiya Hospital, west of Mustariha, said they had received "39 injured people, all suffering from gunshot wounds or shrapnel injuries".

The assault on Mustariha came against a backdrop of rising tribal tension in Darfur, where a UN probe last week found the RSF has committed acts of genocide against non-Arab ethnic groups.

## Crisis-level hunger doubles in Somalia: experts

AFP  
Rome

The number of people in Somalia experiencing crisis-levels of food insecurity has nearly doubled in the past year to 6.5mn people, UN-backed experts warned yesterday.

The Horn of Africa country has been plagued by conflict and suffered two consecutive failed rainy seasons, as well as a drop in the amount of food aid available amid international funding cuts.

The population classified as being in a "crisis or worse" situation "has nearly doubled between February-March 2026 to a staggering 6.5mn people since early 2025", according to the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification Initiative (IPC), a UN-backed group that monitors hunger and malnutrition.

That includes more than 2mn people now in Phase 4, the



Internally displaced Somali children sit in front of their makeshift shelter after fleeing drought in the Lower Shabelle region to the camp in Mogadishu, Somalia.

"emergency" category, one step away from the "catastrophic" level, equal to famine, an IPC report said.

An estimated 1.84mn children under five are at risk of acute malnutrition in 2026, including 483,000 severe cases that require urgent treatment, the IPC said.

"This alarming deterioration is driven by worsening drought, rising food prices, and insecurity across central, southern, and parts of northern Somalia," the report added.

"The situation is compounded by declining humanitarian assistance." The UN's World Food

Programme (WFP) warned Friday it would have to stop humanitarian assistance in Somalia by April if it did not receive new funding.

The Rome-based agency said it had already been forced to reduce the number of people receiving emergency food assistance from 2.2mn in early 2025 to just over 600,000 today.

In January, the United States suspended aid to Somalia following the destruction of a US-funded WFP warehouse in the capital Mogadishu's port.

The US announced a resumption of WFP food distribution on January 29.

However, all UN agencies have warned of serious funding shortfalls since Washington began slashing aid following President Donald Trump's re-election last year.

Levels of acute malnutrition in Somalia have risen for two consecutive years, the IPC report said.

## First-ever chimp count in Uganda's Bwindi park shows 426 specimens

Reuters  
Kampala

There were 426 chimpanzees in Uganda's Bwindi Impenetrable National Park last year, according to the first-ever census of the endangered species there - a count that experts hope will help conservation efforts.

The state-run Uganda Wildlife Authority conducted the census with support from US-based conservation charity the Jane Goodall Institute in 2025 and announced its findings yesterday.

UWA Executive Director James Musinguzi said the effort had addressed the gap in documenting the status of the chimpanzees, confirming that "chimpanzees are not incidental occupants of the

forest but an integral and widely distributed component of Bwindi's great ape assemblage".

The census, aimed at establishing the population size, density, and distribution of the species in the conservation area, is a "major milestone in strengthening evidence-based conservation in one of Africa's most important protected landscapes," the UWA said in a statement. Musinguzi said the data would also help make better "conservation investments" in the park covered in dense tropical forest, to which the "impenetrable" in its name alludes. The 320 sqkm park is a Unesco World Heritage Site and one the East African country's prized tourist attractions. It is home to a range of animals including mountain gorillas, elephants, and antelopes.



## Ex-president Yoon appeals insurrection verdict

AFP  
Seoul

South Korea's former president Yoon Suk-yeol has filed an appeal against an insurrection conviction stemming from his 2024 martial law declaration, his lawyers said yesterday.

The Seoul Central District Court found Yoon guilty last week of leading an insurrection designed to "paralyse" the National Assembly, and sentenced him to life in prison.

Yoon initially branded the verdict "difficult to accept" but did not immediately indicate whether he would appeal.

His legal team said yesterday they would challenge the verdict.

"We believe we have a responsibility to clearly place on record the problems with this ruling — not only in the court's records, but also before the judgement of history in the future," Yoon's lawyers said in a statement.

They said they took issue with the prosecution's "excessive indictment" and would take action against "the contradictory judgement rendered... based on that premise, and the political context surrounding it".

Last week, presiding judge Ji Gwi-yeon said Yoon sent troops to the National Assembly building in an effort to silence political opponents who had frustrated his attempts to govern.

"The court finds that the intention was to paralyse the assembly for a considerable period," Ji said.

## US-Thailand annual military drill



US Commanding General of America's First Corps Matthew McFarlane, Thailand's Chief of Defence Forces General Ukris Boontanondha and US ambassador Sean K O'Neill attend the opening ceremony of Cobra Gold, Asia's largest annual multilateral military exercise, in Rayong province, Thailand, yesterday. (Reuters)

## N Korea ruling party promotes Kim Jong-un's younger sister

AFP  
Seoul

North Korea's ruling party has elevated leader Kim Jong-un's powerful younger sister to a top position, state media said yesterday, a sign of her far-reaching influence within the reclusive nation.

Thousands of party elites have packed the capital Pyongyang for a once-in-five-years summit of the ruling Workers' Party, a gathering that directs state efforts on everything from diplomacy to war planning.

Kim Yo Jong — long considered one of her brother's closest lieutenants — was promoted to department director within the party's apex central committee, the Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) said.

Although it was not clear which department she would lead, she has previously held a senior role within the party's propaganda unit.

Kim Yo Jong has in recent years emerged as one of the most powerful figures in North Korea, playing a highly visible role in diplomacy, nuclear negotiations and other matters of state.

"Kim Yo Jong is one of the very few people Kim Jong-un can trust and rely on," said Ahn Chan-il, a researcher originally from North Korea.

"She also served as a working-

level official for Kim's summits with Trump in Singapore and Hanoi. She is experienced and seasoned," he told AFP.

Kim Yo Jong burst on to the international scene in 2018, when she was dispatched to Seoul as North Korea's envoy for the Pyeongchang Winter Olympics.

With that trip, she became one of the first members of the ruling Kim dynasty to set foot in the South since the Korean War.

Since then she has gained a reputation for her vitriolic denunciations of Washington and Seoul.

She once derided the government of former South Korean president Yoon Suk-yeol as a "faithful dog" of the US.

Her tone has softened somewhat since South Korea's incumbent leader Lee Jae Myung — who has sought to mend ties with the North — took office last year.

Kim Yo Jong's latest advancement "amounts to promotion to ministerial rank," said Lim Eul-chul from the Institute for Far Eastern Studies at Kyungnam University.

Remarkably little is known about Kim Yo Jong given her prominent role in North Korea's dealings with the outside world.

Born in 1988, according to the South Korean government, she is one of three children born to Kim's father and predecessor, Kim Jong-il, and his third known partner, former dancer Ko Yong Hui.

She was educated in Switzerland alongside her brother and rose rapidly up the ranks once he inherited power after their father's death in 2011.

Pyeongyang has never officially disclosed any information about Kim Yo Jong's marital status or children.

Rare footage released by state media last year showed her attending an art show with two young children.

The Workers' Party congress offers a rare glimpse into the political workings of reclusive North Korea, and is widely seen as a forum for Kim to flex his grip on power.

It is just the ninth time the gathering has been called to order under North Korea's decades-spanning Kim dynasty.

There is keen interest in whether the congress might also promote leader Kim Jong-un's teenage daughter Kim Ju-ae.

Kim Ju-ae has emerged as a clear frontrunner to continue the family dynasty, according to South Korea's national intelligence service.

US President Donald Trump stepped up his courtship of Kim Jong-un during a tour of Asia last year, saying he was "100 percent" open to a meeting.

But the North Korean leader has so far largely shunned efforts to resume top-level diplomatic dialogue.

## Malaysia curbs non-AI data centres as power squeeze looms

AFP  
Kuala Lumpur

Malaysia has frozen the development of new data centres not used for artificial intelligence (AI) over power and water concerns, Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim said yesterday, as the country pivots to resource-hungry AI facilities.

The southeast Asian nation is emerging as a major regional IT infrastructure hub, but it faces growing challenges, including a sharp rise in electricity and water supply demands — both needed to keep the data centres running.

"For the past one and a half years, almost two years ago, we have limited the entry of new data centres that are not related to AI," Anwar told Malaysia's parliament during a question session.

"So all new applications that

were not related... have already been stopped," he said.

Data centres that offered high-technology benefits related to AI will still be approved, he added.

Anwar, who is also Malaysia's finance minister, stressed the country still had sufficient capacity to meet current energy supply needs, though he noted it would have to look further afield in the future.

This includes tapping electricity supply from the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) Power Grid, an ambitious plan connecting the 11-member bloc.

Future power supply could also come from Malaysia's Sarawak state, situated on Borneo island, which boasts an abundant supply of hydro and solar energy.

"Hopefully, it will fulfil these needs (in the future). But, for the next one or two years, it is suffi-

cient," Anwar said of the energy supply.

When resource constraints led Singapore to halt new data centre developments between 2019 and 2022, international tech companies began to build across the border in Malaysia, which has fast become a powerhouse for the sector.

Malaysia accounts for more than half of under-construction data centre capacity among five southeast Asian countries, also including Indonesia, Thailand, the Philippines and Vietnam, according to market intelligence firm DC Byte.

The building boom has been particularly rapid in the southern state of Johor, which neighbours Singapore and has imposed tighter requirements on water and power use for new data centres in order to stop them from straining local resources.

## 'Japan to deploy missile systems on island near Taiwan by 2031'

Japan's government plans to deploy surface-to-air missiles on one of its remote western islands near Taiwan by March 2031, the country's defence minister said yesterday.

It is the first time Japan has specified the timing of the deployment.

The ministry announced the plan in 2022 to ramp up its air defences on the island, which already hosts a Japanese military base.

Japan's defence minister Shinjiro Koizumi said at a regular press conference in Tokyo

that the deployment on Yonaguni island would take place in the 2030 fiscal year, which ends in March of the following calendar year.

The comments come during a months-long row between Japan and China, with Beijing yesterday announcing that it was imposing export restrictions on dozens of Japanese firms that it said were involved in building up the country's military.

Koizumi, who visited Yonaguni in November, said the ministry will hold a briefing for local residents next week on the

island, located roughly 110km (68 miles) east of Taiwan and 1,900km southwest of Tokyo.

Japan's conservative Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi suggested in November that Tokyo could intervene militarily in any attack on self-ruled Taiwan.

China views Taiwan as its territory and has not ruled out taking it by force.

Since Takaichi made the remark, Beijing has discouraged Chinese nationals from visiting Japan, which hit tourism, one of the pillars of the Japanese economy. (AFP)

## Australian PM evacuated after 'security incident'

Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese was forced to evacuate his official residence yesterday over a security threat, police said. Albanese was evacuated from The Lodge, his official residence in the capital Canberra. National broadcaster ABC reported the threat saw Albanese taken to a separate location for several

hours. In a statement, the Australian Federal Police said they had responded to "an alleged security incident" around 6pm (0700 GMT). A thorough search of a protection establishment was undertaken and nothing suspicious was located," they said, adding there was "no current threat to the community or public safety". (AFP)

AFP  
Tokyo

The plight of a baby monkey in Japan who has become an Internet sensation shows the cruelty of zoos, an animal rights group said, as sales of the plush IKEA orangutan the animal clings to boomed.

Punch, a baby macaque abandoned by its mother, shot to stardom after being pictured getting bullied by other monkeys and seeking comfort from the orangutan toy at Ichikawa City Zoo outside Tokyo.

"Zoos are not sanctuaries — they are places where animals are confined, deprived of autonomy, and denied the complex environments and social lives they would have in the wild," said People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA).

"What some are calling 'cute' is actually a glimpse into the trauma of a young, highly social primate coping with isolation and loss," the group's Asia director, Jason Baker, said in a statement.

"Until facilities stop treating

sentient beings as attractions, animals like Punch will continue to suffer in captivity," Baker said, calling for Punch to be moved to a "reputable sanctuary, where he could live in a more natural environment".

Spurned by its mother, Punch was raised in an artificial environment after being born in July, and began training to rejoin his troop last month.

Punch's predicament sparked huge interest online, spawning a devoted fanbase under the hashtag #HangInTherePunch, as large crowds thronged the zoo.

Meanwhile, Swedish interior furnishings giant IKEA, the maker of the orangutan soft toy, said it was seeing "unprecedented" interest and "significantly" higher sales than usual.

"As a result, the product is currently out of stock in some markets, including Japan and the US," Ingka Group, the holding company controlling most of IKEA's stores, told AFP by e-mail.

Over a long holiday weekend in Japan, fans queued for up to an hour to catch a glimpse of Punch, the Ichikawa zoo said in a post on

X, with more than 5,000 visitors recorded on Monday.

The zoo said it had set up a "restricted zone" around part of the monkey enclosure to reduce stress for the animals.

A large number of people have asked how they can donate cash or goods, it added.

In an update on Punch's plight on Sunday, the zoo said he "was meticulously groomed by two monkeys and is steadily fitting into the group".



A baby Japanese macaque named Punch sits next to a stuffed orangutan at Ichikawa City Zoo, in Ichikawa, Chiba Prefecture, Japan, on Thursday. (Reuters)

## Thailand, Cambodia dispute exchange of fire at border

AFP  
Bangkok

Thailand's military said its troops exchanged fire with Cambodian forces along their border yesterday, accusing its neighbour of violating a December truce, while Phnom Penh denied the use of "any weapons".

The southeast Asian nations' decades-long border dispute erupted into several rounds of clashes last year, killing dozens of people and displacing more than a million in July and December.

The countries signed a ceasefire

agreement in late December but tensions on the border remain, with both sides trading accusations of truce violations.

Thailand's military said Cambodian forces "fired a single 40 mm grenade round" near a Thai patrol in the border province of Sisaket yesterday, prompting return fire, according to a statement.

Thai army spokesman Winthai Suvarere accused Cambodia of violating their ceasefire deal, which ended three weeks of clashes.

Cambodia's Information Minister Neth Pheaktra said the allegation were "entirely false" and designed to "mislead public opin-

ion and provoke tension".

No Thai personnel were injured yesterday, the army said.

"Following the incident, Thai forces responded by firing an M79 (grenade launcher) in the direction from which the shot originated... as a warning and for self-defence," it added. The Thai army, citing a preliminary assessment, said the "incident may have resulted from a rotation of Cambodian troops, with new personnel lacking familiarity with regulations and command control".

Neth Pheaktra said the claims that its military fired on patrolling Thai troops were "fabricated and

grossly distort the facts".

The minister reiterated Cambodia's "unwavering commitment" to the December truce and an earlier short-lived ceasefire deal from October.

"Cambodia is deeply concerned that unilateral allegations made without joint verification, consultation or factual substantiation risk misrepresenting the situation on the ground and undermining mutual trust," he said.

Cambodia's defence ministry spokeswoman Maly Socheata said liaison teams from the Cambodian and Thai militaries promptly discussed the matter after "reports of

explosions and gunfire on the Thai side".

"Cambodian officials explicitly informed their Thai counterparts that Cambodian forces did not fire any weapons as alleged," Maly Socheata said in a statement.

Under the December truce, Cambodia and Thailand pledged to cease fire, freeze troop movements and cooperate on demining efforts along their border.

But last month, Thailand accused Cambodia of violating the truce, saying cross-border mortar fire wounded a soldier, while Phnom Penh said a "pile of garbage" exploded, injuring two of its

own troops.

Since the latest round of heavy fighting, Cambodia has said Thai forces captured several areas in border provinces — contrary to their agreements — and has demanded their withdrawal.

Bangkok has insisted it merely reclaimed land that was part of Thailand and had been occupied by Cambodians for years.

While the two nations agreed in December to stop fighting, they still need to resolve their century-old conflict, stemming from a dispute over the French colonial-era demarcation of their 800km (500-mile) frontier.

# UK unveils biggest sanctions package on Russia since start of full-scale invasion

AFP  
London

The UK government yesterday announced its "biggest sanctions package" against Russia since ones imposed straight after Moscow's invasion of Ukraine four years ago, targeting oil exports and military equipment suppliers.

Marking the anniversary of the invasion, London announced nearly 300 new sanctions as foreign minister Yvette Cooper visited Kyiv.

This took the total of companies and individuals targeted by Britain over the Ukraine war to more than 3,000.

New measures included an asset freeze on Russia's state controlled pipeline operator Transneft, citing the oil sector's "strategic significance to the government of Russia".

Transneft transports over 80% of Moscow's oil exports according to the British government. It has faced Western sanctions since Russia's 2014 annexation of Crimea.

Britain also moved against Russia's "dark web of illicit oil traders", cracking down on one of the largest shadow fleet operators shipping oil in contravention of international sanctions.

Britain said the new raft of sanctions sent the message that "Russian oil is off the market".

A report released by a Finnish think tank yesterday found Russia is exporting higher volumes of oil than before the invasion of Ukraine, however, sending most of its oil to China, India and Türkiye.

The British government also clamped down on companies supplying military equipment as well as Russia's civil nuclear energy programme and liquefied natural gas industry.

It singled out two television channels in the Caucasus country of Georgia for spreading pro-Russian disinformation.

Both the stations under new sanctions – Imedi TV and POSTV – are widely seen as government mouthpieces, promoting the ruling Georgian Dream party, which has faced accusations of drifting

toward Russia and derailing Georgia's bid to join the European Union. The channels regularly claim Ukraine is a "puppet" of the West and portray President Volodymyr Zelensky as illegitimate, Britain said.

Georgia was long seen as one of the most pro-Western states in the former Soviet Union, but relations have soured amid mass protests over controversial laws stifling political dissent, media and civil society.

Imedi TV was founded by businessman Badri Patarkatsishvili who opposed pro-Western president Mikheil Saakashvili and died in Britain in 2008.

The channel was until recently owned by a British firm which weeks ago announced its sale to a Georgian media company and to the channel's management. Both channels responded defiantly to the sanctions.

In a statement on Facebook, Imedi TV said the sanctions "have no value whatsoever" while state-owned channel POSTV gave its response on the platform as two smiley emojis.



Britain's Prime Minister Keir Starmer, delivers remarks at the top of the Cabinet meeting to mark the fourth anniversary of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, at Downing Street in London, yesterday.

## Queen Elizabeth Prizes for Education medal



One of the Queen Elizabeth Prizes for Education medals ahead of the presentation ceremony, at St James's Palace in London, yesterday.

## Netflix, Prime and Disney+ face Ofcom rules

AFP  
London

The UK government yesterday announced that US streaming sites Netflix, Disney+ and Amazon Prime Video will have to comply with broadcasting regulations aimed at protecting children and the vulnerable.

Along with British streaming sites, they will be required to follow content and accessibility

rules applied to traditional broadcasters, a statement said.

Any "video-on-demand" platform with more than 500,000 users will need to comply with rules overseen by UK broadcasting regulator Ofcom regarding "protections from harmful material" and increased availability of subtitled, signed and audio-described programming.

Britain's government headed by Prime Minister Keir Starmer said the move was a consequence of changing viewing habits.

"We know that the way audi-

ences watch TV has fundamentally changed," Culture Secretary Lisa Nandy said in yesterday's statement. "Millions now choose to watch content on video-on-demand platforms alongside or, in the case of many young people, instead of traditional TV."

The government said Ofcom would shortly begin a public consultation on the new streaming standards and accessibility codes, "which will be an opportunity for the public and providers to set out their views".

## UK confident its trade deal with US still stands despite latest Trump tariff move

Reuters  
London

British trade minister Peter Kyle said he was confident the trade deal Britain struck last year with the US would still stand despite US President Donald Trump's latest move to apply a 10% global import tariff.

The US began collecting the temporary new 10% tariff yesterday but the Trump administration was working to increase it to 15%, sowing confusion over US tariff policies in the wake of last week's Supreme Court defeat.

But Kyle said he was confident following engagement with the

US administration in recent days that a deal reached between the two countries last year would still stand.

"It was the best deal and it remains the best deal, and the fundamental terms that we had negotiated with the US remain in place," Kyle told a parliamentary committee.

Last year, Britain negotiated an 'Economic Prosperity Deal' that applied a basic 10% tariff, and preferential terms across a range of industries, including cars, planes and agriculture.

Some elements of that deal have yet to be fully negotiated and implemented.

Kyle said that while he would

like a fully comprehensive trade deal with the US that needed both parties to want to move forward at the same pace, and that only pursuing such an agreement could limit opportunities for other smaller deals.

"Let me be very clear again, that we believe that tariffs are a lose, lose... It is not good for American business, it is not good for British business, and is not good for the stability and predictability upon which you build a trading relationship," he added.

"However, in these moments, we have maintained relations, conversations with counterparts, and we are... seeking other opportunities to move forward at pace."

## Duterte drew up 'death lists', boasted about murders: ICC prosecutor

AFP  
The Hague

Former Philippines president Rodrigo Duterte personally drew up "death lists" and boasted about murders committed during his "war on drugs", an International Criminal Court prosecutor alleged yesterday at a crimes against humanity hearing.

On day two of proceedings against Duterte, ICC prosecutor Edward Jeremy laid out searing testimony including allegations that children had their heads wrapped in packing tape and were strangled to death.

"As president, Duterte publicly named persons he alleged were involved in drugs, and many of those

would end up as victims in his so-called war on drugs," Jeremy said.

The "Duterte list" was "basically a death list", Jeremy cited a witness as saying, showing a video of Duterte himself saying: "I am the sole person responsible for it all."

Duterte faces three ICC counts of crimes against humanity, with prosecutors alleging his involvement in at least 76 murders between 2013 and 2018.

Prosecutors say this is a "mere fraction" of the thousands believed killed in his "war on drugs" as mayor of Davao City and then president.

"As witnesses stated, the poor were often targeted, because they were the ones least likely to file complaints against the police," said Jeremy.

Jeremy played a clip of Duterte joking about "extrajudicial killings" during a speech.

"And in this opulent, gilded, presentation room, the officials laugh along with their president while he boasts about his skills in extrajudicial killing," said Jeremy.

"And outside on the streets of the Philippines, the bodies pile up."

Jeremy alleged that almost 1,500 people had already been killed at the time of this video.

The prosecutor said that on two occasions, children aged around 14 or 15 were taken into custody.

"On each occasion, the police wrapped the child's head in packing tape. So no one could hear them scream. And then strangled the child to death with wire," said Jeremy.

## India's drug regulator inspected 90% of cough syrup makers, found lapses in some, official says

Reuters  
Mumbai

India's drug regulator has inspected nearly 90% of the country's cough syrup makers and found compliance lapses in some, its chief said on Monday, amid heightened scrutiny after India-made syrups were linked to the deaths of children in the country and abroad.

The inspections follow the discovery of a brand of cough syrup contaminated with diethylene glycol that was linked to the deaths of 24 children in October last year. The product, named Coldrif, was made by Sresan Pharmaceutical, based in Tamil Nadu.

"We took serious actions on serious non-compliances, and our belief is that the rot of cough syrup manufacturing will be removed," Drugs Controller General of India Rajeev Raghuvanshi said at the IPA 11th Global Pharmaceutical Quality Summit in Mumbai.

The regulator is looking to fix issues around cough syrup products, he said, without providing a timeline. The agency is under pressure



Drugs Controller General of India (DCGI) Rajeev Singh Raghuvanshi speaks at the 11th Global Pharmaceutical Quality Summit in Mumbai, India on Monday.

to tighten oversight of the \$42bn pharma industry, dominated by small manufacturers, after India-made cough syrups have been tied to the deaths of more than 140 children in Africa and Central Asia since 2022, denting its reputation

as the "pharmacy of the world".

About 90% of all cough syrup makers, around 1,100, had been inspected, Raghuvanshi said, and pointed to breaches of good manufacturing practices, failure to test incoming raw materials and use of

invalid methods or processes. He did not share the number of companies found non-compliant or name them. The regulator has also inspected an additional 1,250 drug manufacturing units protectively to evaluate risks, a practice begun in 2022, he said, but declined to say how many had compliance issues or were forced to halt operations temporarily.

India's drug regulator aims to bring its operations on par with the US Food and Drug Administration by addressing staffing shortages, speeding up approvals, and boosting resources, Raghuvanshi said.

The agency plans to create 1,500 positions, with about 40% of them flexible, contract roles, and may bring in global industry experts as advisers. It is also piloting the use of artificial intelligence to review applications, according to Raghuvanshi.

Separately, the regulator has streamlined export clearances by removing the need for so-called no-objection certificates for drugs shipped to the US, Europe, Australia, Japan, the UK and Canada, a move he said will save time and resources.

## 7 killed in India medical plane crash



Police and security personnel work at the site where the Beechcraft air ambulance crashed, killing all seven people on board, in Chatra, Jharkhand, India, yesterday.

Seven people were killed when a chartered air ambulance crashed in the eastern Indian state of Jharkhand, officials said yesterday. The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) said the Beechcraft C90 operating a "medical evacuation (Air Ambulance) flight" crashed Monday in the Kasaria area of the eastern state of Jharkhand. Rescue and medical teams rushed to the site of the crash, which local media said was deep inside a difficult-to-access forest. "The team of doctors found them, and declared them dead," local administrative

official Keerthishree G told reporters, adding that two of the seven people killed were crew members. The DGCA said late Monday night that the aircraft, operated by Redbird Airways, had "requested for deviation due to weather" and lost contact with air traffic radar after 23 minutes. India's aircraft accident investigation bureau had also been sent to the site. In January, a state leader from the western Maharashtra state and four others were killed when their chartered aircraft crashed while landing at the city of Baramati. (AFP)

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**GULF TIMES**

## Big Tech faces social media addiction trial amid global backlash

Across the world, an estimated 95% of teens use social media and the United Nations has emphasised that tech companies must prioritise safety over profits, calling for stronger regulation and digital literacy. Currently, governments across the world are increasingly implementing or proposing legal curbs on social media for minors to combat rising rates of anxiety, depression, and online harassment.

Now, two of the world's largest social media platforms are facing a jury trial in the US over allegations that they intentionally designed their products to be addictive to young people, drawing comparisons to Big Tobacco's reckoning with consumer addiction three decades ago. The trial in Los Angeles, the first of its kind, centers on a 20-year-old woman who says her nonstop use for more than a decade of sites including Meta Platforms' Instagram and Google's YouTube caused her to suffer anxiety, depression and body dysmorphia.

The companies are exposed to potentially billions of dollars in damages and the possibility that they could be forced to overhaul core features of their platforms.

Thousands of similar cases brought against the two companies as well as Snap and TikTok parent ByteDance are pending in court. The Los Angeles trial is the first of several planned for this year. More than 3,000 cases brought by children, adolescents and young adults – sometimes via their parents, siblings or other family members – based on claims of psychological distress, physical impairment and death have been filed across the US.

### A growing number of European countries are weighing bans on social media services for minors and setting the stage for a new showdown with some of the biggest US companies

Dozens of state attorneys general are also suing the companies. Additionally, public school districts have brought more than 1,200 complaints on behalf of students. The first trial among the school cases is scheduled to be held in Oakland, California in June. The plaintiffs say that Meta, Google, TikTok and Snap design their services to hook children, an audience that academic and medical studies show is particularly vulnerable to addiction because their bodies and minds are still developing.

Addictive use of social media results in an array of psychological disorders, and in extreme cases self-harm and suicide, according to the lawsuits. Such addictive use delivers the most valuable prize for the Big Tech: troves of data about young users' preferences, habits and behaviours that are used to target them with ads.

The companies maintain that their products were not built to hook kids, and that they have settings and safeguards in place to protect young users.

A lawyer for Meta argued at the start of the Los Angeles trial that social media actually helps young people connect with friends and family. European countries are currently taking their broadest swipe yet at social media, with a growing number weighing bans of the services for minors and setting the stage for a new showdown with some of the biggest US companies.

The policy was first implemented in Australia, encompassing Instagram and Facebook, Snap, Elon Musk's X, TikTok and Google's YouTube. Spain became the latest country to propose a ban on services. At least 10 other countries – France, the UK, Portugal, Denmark, Greece, Norway, Poland, Austria, Ireland and the Netherlands – and the EU are weighing similar limits.

The UN, through agencies like Unicef and Unesco, has highlighted that while social media offers opportunities, it presents severe risks to minors, including cyberbullying, mental health issues, sexual exploitation, and exposure to harmful content. While acknowledging the "genuine concerns" of governments across the world the Unicef has also said "age restrictions must be part of a broader approach that protects children from harm, respects their rights to privacy and participation, and avoids pushing them into unregulated, less safe spaces."

Regulation should not be a substitute for platforms investing in child safety and laws introducing age restrictions are not an alternative to companies improving platform design and content moderation," according to the Unicef.



## Amid major achievements, Kuwait to celebrate 65th National Day today

QNA  
Doha

Kuwait will celebrate today its 65th National Day, which coincides with its 35th Liberation Day. These two occasions are milestones in Kuwait's history, which features major challenges overcome thanks to the country's wise leadership, the solidarity of its people, and the support of sisterly and friendly nations.

On this occasion, Kuwaitis recall with pride their belonging to a homeland that draws strength from its glorious past while striving to join the ranks of nations aspiring to build an honourable present and a bright future.

The anniversary reminds successive generations of Kuwaitis of their forefathers' great efforts in laying the foundations of a state that has earned the appreciation and respect of the international community through its achievements, positive roles, and outstanding relations with all countries, as well as regional and international organizations.

The Qatari people share in the joy and celebrations of their brothers and sisters in the State of Kuwait on this occasion, reflecting sincere bonds of brotherhood, affection, appreciation, and pride, which stem from both countries' deep-rooted ties on all levels. Strong and profound, Qatari-Kuwaiti relations go far back to even before the establishment of formal diplomatic relations between the two states in the 1970s, as both peoples are bound by many decades of strong ties shaped by kinship, a sense of brotherhood, a shared history and destiny, and a common purpose.

Qatari-Kuwaiti ties are built on mutual trust and deep understanding, solidified by close co-operation in various fields, including the political, economic, and cultural, in the service of both countries and peoples' interests. Doha and Kuwait City continue to move steadily towards further progress and prosperity, thanks to the care and attention shown by the two countries' wise leadership, and their ongoing efforts to expand co-operation and consolidate integration in a manner that reflects their close ties and one that keeps pace with future aspirations, with determination and confidence.

To that end, the Qatari-Kuwaiti Joint Higher Committee for Cooperation held its 7th session in Kuwait on February 8, co-chaired by HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman

bin Jassim al-Thani and Kuwaiti Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Jarrah Jaber al-Ahmad al-Sabah.

**Bilateral integration**

The session reviewed ways to deepen co-operation and achieve greater bilateral integration across sectors, alongside an exchange of views on issues of mutual interest. During the meeting, HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs highlighted the close fraternal ties between Qatar and Kuwait, stressing the shared commitment to further strengthening relations in the interests of both peoples.

The 7th session of the Joint Higher Committee for Cooperation concluded with both sides signing the session's minutes, in addition to several agreements and Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs). These included a co-operation and news-exchange agreement between the Qatar News Agency and the Kuwait News Agency, MoUs on consumer protection and competition protection, along with an MoU to enhance the two governments' cooperation on cybersecurity.

Back in January 2020, Kuwait signed a long-term agreement with the State of Qatar to import Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) for 15 years, (2022-2036). Under the agreement, Qatar supplies Kuwait with 5mn tonnes of LNG annually via Kuwait's LNG complex at Mina Al Zour. Kuwait is a strategic trade partner of the State of Qatar, with bilateral trade witnessing steady growth. The direct maritime shipping line launched between Hamad Port and Kuwait's Shuwaik Port in August 2017 has played a pivotal role in doubling trade volume between the two countries, providing an efficient and regular channel for the movement of goods to and from Qatar.

Underscoring the depth and distinctiveness of Qatari-Kuwaiti relations, and within the framework of the strong ties between the two brotherly countries, and under the directives of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani, the corridor road project was named "Sabah Al-Ahmad Corridor" in honour of the late Amir of Kuwait, Sheikh Sabah al-Ahmad al-Jaber al-Sabah.

The corridor represents a vital new artery in Qatar's road network and stands as an expression of Qatar's appreciation and affection for a distinguished Arab leader renowned for his honourable positions in

support of his homeland, the Arab nation and the Islamic world. The inauguration of the road reflected the high esteem the late Amir received in Qatar, at the leadership, government and popular levels, and coincided with Qatar's participation in Kuwait's celebrations marking the 58th National Day and the 28th anniversary of Liberation.

**National celebrations**

Kuwait is marking its national celebrations under the wise leadership of Amir of Kuwait, Sheikh Meshal al-Ahmad al-Jaber al-Sabah. Since independence, it has made steady strides in comprehensive development, achieving notable progress across global and regional competitiveness indicators. In 2025, Kuwait reached a historic milestone, ranking first globally in 10 key indicators, including financial and political stability, innovation, technological advancement, and the quality of education and healthcare, underscoring its transition from an oil-based economy to a diversified and sustainable economic power.

Kuwait has also continued to advance on the international competitiveness map, ranking 49th globally in the Social Progress Index, while recording strong performance in infrastructure and societal security indicators compared to other countries, placing it ahead of major economies. Projections for 2026 indicate continued upward momentum, with Kuwait expected to maintain its position among the top five regionally in 10 new strategic indicators.

Since gaining independence, Kuwait has pursued a moderate and balanced foreign policy grounded in openness and communication, guided by a belief in friendship and peace, and focused on human development and economic prosperity for its people. Within a framework of co-operation with regional and international organizations, Kuwait has supported efforts aimed at enhancing global security and stability.

Through its pioneering policies, it has built solid relations with sisterly and friendly nations, played a distinguished role in advancing the Gulf Cooperation Council's process, supported international efforts to promote peace and security. Kuwait is committed to international legitimacy law and regional and international cooperation through the United Nations and Arab and regional organizations, and has become a global leader in humanitarian aid.



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## Canada plans to assist Cuba while Washington squeezes island nation

Canada said on Monday that it plans to provide assistance to Cuba while the island grapples with fuel shortages after Washington moved to choke off Cuba's oil supplies. Washington has escalated a pressure campaign against the Communist-run island and long-time US foe in recent weeks. US President Donald Trump's administration has moved to block all oil from reaching Cuba, including that from ally Venezuela, pushing up prices for food and transportation and prompting severe fuel shortages and hours of blackouts.

"We are preparing a plan to assist. We are not prepared at this point to provide any further details of an announcement," Canadian Foreign Minister Anita Anand said on Monday, without giving details on what such an assistance will include.

The UN has warned that if Cuba's energy needs are not met, it could cause a humanitarian crisis.

Canada said last week that it was monitoring the situation in Cuba and was concerned about "the increasing risk of a humanitarian crisis" there.

Trump has said that "Cuba will be failing pretty soon". The UN human rights office has said the US raid in which Maduro was seized was a violation of international law.

Human rights experts cast Trump's foreign policy and his focus on exploiting Venezuelan oil and squeezing Cuba as echoing an imperialist approach. - Reuters

## At least 23 dead after heavy rains hit Brazil's southeast

Torrential rains in south-eastern Brazil have left at least 23 people dead and 47 missing in flooding and landslides, officials said yesterday.

Streets turned into raging rivers, with one resident seen clinging to an electricity pole while another waved for help from a window, according to images shared by the fire brigade after the violent downpour which began late on Monday.

The deluge in the state of Minas Gerais caused a river to burst its banks, prompting flooding, landslides, and building collapses.

The municipality of Juiz de Fora recorded 16 deaths and 43 missing and the city of Uba recorded seven deaths and four people missing, according to official figures.

Sniffer dogs ran over the debris and mud looking for victims, while residents joined in the hunt for lost loved ones.

Valtencir Coutinho told local broadcaster TV Globo that he was looking for his six-year-old daughter Sophia under the rubble and prayed to find her alive.

"We are fighting for that," he said.

Firefighters were responding to "flooding incidents, landslides, and structural risks along the banks and in areas near the Parabuna River", which overflowed its banks, said Lieutenant Henrique Barcellos, spokesman for the Minas Gerais fire department.

Juiz de Fora's mayor, Margarida Salomao, declared a state of emergency.

President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva said his government recognised the state of emergency and placed the national civil defence on high alert.

"Our focus is to guarantee humanitarian assistance, the restoration of basic services, aid to displaced people, and support for reconstruction," he wrote on X. Salomao said her municipality of a little over 500,000 people was experiencing its wettest February on record, with 584mm (1.9') of accumulated rainfall.

Some neighbourhoods are isolated, with at least 20 landslides, Salomao said, calling the situation "extreme".

Her office said that an estimated 440 people had to leave their homes and were receiving support for temporary shelter.

"Nobody wants to stay here. We're asking for help not only from the Minas Gerais state government but also from the federal government," Angelica Rezende Moreira, 44, owner of a restaurant where "everything was lost", told the *Estadão* newspaper.

State authorities suspended classes in all municipal schools. Brazil's National Institute of Meteorology issued yesterday heavy-rain alerts for parts of 14 states, including the entire area of Minas Gerais and Rio de Janeiro.

- AFP/Reuters

## German union calls nationwide local transport strike

Reuters/AFP  
Berlin

Germany's Verdi public sector union has called on local transport workers across the country to stage a strike on February 27 and 28 to raise pres-

sure in negotiations on wages and working conditions, it said.

Talks on a collective wage agreement affect about 150 bus, tram and local train companies with around 100,000 employees in states across Germany, including the cities of Berlin and Hamburg.

The negotiations cover working

conditions, specifically working hours and shift work, allowances for night and weekend work, as well as salaries.

"The negotiations are hardly making any progress, even though there have been four rounds in some areas," said the union's deputy chair Christine Behle.

It is the second such strike in weeks, after a walkout earlier this month paralysed public transport.

In January there were walkouts in other parts of the public sector, including universities and schools, in protest at issues ranging from staff shortages to stagnating wages.

## Jailed ex-PM Khan gets eye treatment: hospital

AFP  
Islamabad

Pakistan's jailed former prime minister Imran Khan received eye treatment yesterday, according to a hospital statement, although a spokesman for the ex-cricketer star complained that he was not allowed to see his personal doctor.

Khan has been in jail since 2023 and was sentenced late last year along with his wife to 17 years on corruption charges they both deny.

The 73-year-old's family and lawyer say that he has lost most of the vision in his right eye.

Khan was taken to the Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (PIMS) in Islamabad for a second dose of eye injections, the hospital said.

"Khan was found to be clinically stable," it added.

However, Khan's press adviser Sayed Zulfiqar Bukhari said that "access should be granted to his personal physician and family".

Last week, more than a dozen international cricket captains concerned for Khan's health urged the Islamabad government to give him

"adequate" medical treatment.

Khan was prime minister from 2018 to 2022 before being removed in a no-confidence vote during a crisis over tensions between his government and Pakistan's military establishment. He has since faced multiple legal cases on corruption and other charges.

Khan and his party, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf, maintain that the cases against him are politically motivated.

Khan's lawyer, Salman Safdar, told a news conference on February 12 that "one of Khan's eyes has only 15% vision", following a jail visit.

## Gunmen kill seven in western Ecuador

Gunmen dressed in military-style uniforms killed seven people on Monday in western Ecuador, police said, as the country continues to grapple with drug violence.

Attacks by individuals dressed as soldiers are frequent in the South American nation, where drug trafficking gangs with connections to international cartels are fighting over turf.

Monday's massacre occurred at a ranch in Manabi, which has been under a state of emergency -

along with eight other provinces in the country - since January.

President Daniel Noboa has deployed the military in anti-drug campaigns but homicides have only increased, ticking up to a record 9,216 violent deaths last year.

Monday's attack occurred in the early morning and "left seven people dead from gunshot wounds", police said.

Among the dead was a 16-year-old boy. - AFP

## New York cops injured in snowball attack

US officials have condemned an incident in which they said New York police were injured when a crowd pelted them with snowballs.

Footage online shows two male officers being struck with snowballs on Monday afternoon as they walked through a park following the city's largest snowstorm in over a decade.

Another video showed a large group following several officers, with snowballs hitting some in the back of the head as they walked towards their vehicle.

"Multiple uniformed officers were struck in the face with snowballs," a New York Police Department (NYPD) spokeswoman told AFP.

She said the officers, who were responding to reports of a disorderly group in Washington Square Park, were taken by ambulance to a hospital for treatment.

Detectives from the NYPD are investigating the incident, according to police commissioner Jessica Tisch. - AFP

## US immigration agents' training 'broken': ex-official

AFP  
Washington

Former US immigration official said on Monday that training for federal agents was "deficient, defective and broken", adding to pressure on President Donald Trump's sweeping crackdown.

Ryan Schwank resigned this month from his job teaching law at the US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) training academy in Glynco, Georgia, after he said he was instructed to teach new recruits to violate the US Constitution.

The fatal shooting of two American citizens in Minneapolis in January reignited

accusations that agents enforcing Trump's militarised immigration operation are inexperienced, undertrained and operating outside law enforcement norms.

The administration scaled back the deployment after the killings of Renee Good and Alex Pretti in broad daylight by officers sparked protests and widespread outrage.

Schwank told a forum hosted by congressional Democrats on Monday that he "received secretive orders to teach new cadets to violate the Constitution by entering homes without a judicial warrant".

"Never in my career had I received such a blatantly unlawful order," he said.

He said that the ICE cut 240 hours from its 584-hour training programme, curtailing

subjects such as the US Constitution, lawful arrest, fire arms, the use of force and the limits of officers' authority.

"The legally required training programme at the ICE academy is deficient, defective and broken," he said.

As a consequence, poorly trained, inexperienced armed officers were being sent out "with minimal supervision", he said.

The lawyer's comments coincide with the release of dozens of pages of internal ICE documents by Senate Democrats that suggest the Trump administration cut corners on training, the *New York Times* reported.

Schwank said he resigned on February 13 after more than four years working for the ICE.

## Russia 'has failed to break Ukraine'

AFP/Reuters  
Kyiv

Vladimir Putin has not broken Ukraine, its leader Volodymyr Zelensky said yesterday as the Kremlin marked the start of the fifth year of its invasion by vowing to keep fighting Europe's bloodiest conflict since World War II until it achieves its goals.

Moscow had hoped to take Kyiv in days when it launched its invasion on February 24, 2022.

Four years later - with hundreds of thousands dead, millions forced to flee, much of eastern Ukraine destroyed and US-led peace talks still deadlocked over territory - it conceded that it has not achieved all it wants in the country.

"The goals haven't been fully achieved yet, which is why the military operation continues," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters in response to an AFP question.

Ukraine, meanwhile, was ready to do "everything" it could to secure peace, Zelensky said in a video address that featured images of Ukrainians carrying out acts of resistance against Russian soldiers in the opening days of the conflict.

However, any settlement must not "betray" the price paid by Ukrainians throughout the conflict, he said.

"Putin has not achieved his goals. He did not break the Ukrainians. He did not win this war. We have preserved Ukraine, and we will do everything to achieve peace - and to ensure there is justice," Zelensky said.

"We want peace. Strong, dignified, and lasting peace," he said, but any deal must be "accepted by Ukrainians".



Local residents visit a makeshift memorial for Ukrainian and foreign soldiers in Kyiv's Independence Square, on the fourth anniversary of Russia's invasion of Ukraine. - AFP

"Everything Ukraine has gone through. It must not be surrendered, forgotten, or betrayed," he added.

Several European leaders including Finnish President Alexander Stubb and Swedish Prime Minister Ulf Kristersson visited Kyiv yesterday to mark the anniversary.

In an address to the EU parliament and speaking alongside visiting EU chiefs Ursula von der

Leyen and Antonio Costa, Zelensky urged Brussels to accelerate Kyiv's admission to the bloc, or face "decades" of Russian attempts to disrupt the process.

Yesterday's anniversary of the start of the conflict comes a day after Hungary vetoed new EU sanctions against Russia and a €90bn (\$105 billion) loan critical to Ukraine's survival.

Hungary, which maintains close ties with Moscow, and neighbour-

ing Slovakia accuse Kyiv of deliberately blocking their supplies of Russian oil via the Druzhba pipeline, which Ukraine says it is trying to repair after a Russian strike last month.

Speaking in Moscow to agents of his FSB security service, Putin said that Ukraine has "not managed to inflict a strategic defeat on Russia on the battlefield" and was upping its behind-the-lines sabotage attacks.

Separately, top Kremlin aide Yuri Ushakov was quoted as saying that Russia would brief the US on what it says are attempts by Ukraine to obtain nuclear weapons.

He provided no evidence, and Kyiv denied the claim.

In the suburb of Irpin - where the bodies of hundreds of civilians were discovered in 2022 after it and the neighbouring suburb of Bucha were occupied by Russian forces - locals told AFP how the war had completely changed their lives, and the country.

"We have become accustomed to sleeping under sirens and shrapnel," said Yevgenia Antoniuik, 43.

Recalling a moment in 2022 when she gave some bread to a hungry old man after the Russians abandoned Irpin, she said: "He burst into tears and began kissing my hands. At that moment, I hated Russians so deeply and strongly that I realised that neither I, nor my children, nor my grandchildren would ever forget or forgive them."

As in many places across the country, locals there had gathered for a ceremony to mark the four-year anniversary.

Ukrainians are filled with a mix of fatigue at the relentless bombardments and mounting battle-

field losses, and determination to resist.

Whatever the outcome on the battlefield or at the negotiating table, "there will be no victory for us in this war", said Valentyn Oleksiyenko, a 29-year-old wounded veteran.

"The price we are paying for it is too high. Too many of our people have been killed," he added.

Hundreds of thousands have been killed since Moscow invaded.

The UN has verified around 15,000 Ukrainian civilians killed, but says the true number is likely considerably higher.

Others said the fact Ukraine had not fallen to the Russians was a victory in itself.

"We have shown that no matter who the enemy is that comes to our land, we can repel them," said Isakiy Zinkevich, a 38-year-old priest in Bucha, a Kyiv commuter town that became synonymous with atrocities committed by Russian troops.

The United States has been pushing to end the conflict, mediating talks this year in Geneva and Abu Dhabi between the two sides, but they remain at odds over the issue of territory.

Russia, which occupies around 20% of Ukraine, is fighting to gain full control of Ukraine's eastern Donetsk region as part of any deal.

Ukraine has rejected the demand and said it would not sign a deal without security guarantees from allies - including the US - to deter Russia from invading again.

The grinding four-year war has devastated the country, with the cost of post-war reconstruction estimated at around \$588bn over the next decade, according to a joint World Bank, EU and UN report with Kyiv, published on Monday.

## Louvre president resigns

AFP  
Paris

The head of France's world-famous Louvre museum has resigned, the office of the French presidency announced, following a months-long string of scandals - including a brazen jewel heist.

Laurence des Cars submitted her resignation letter to President Emmanuel Macron, which was accepted, with the Elysee "hailing an act of responsibility at a time when the world's largest museum needs appeasement and a new strong impetus to carry out major security projects".

Des Cars has been under rising pressure since the October robbery at the museum that saw \$100mn of French crown jewels

stolen in broad daylight, which is currently under the scrutiny of an inquiry.

Des Cars first offered her resignation shortly after the October 19 break-in, but it was refused by Macron, who named her to the position in 2021.

Yesterday Macron thanked des Cars for her "action and commitment" as well as "her undeniable scientific expertise".

Last week, MPs leading the inquiry presented an interim assessment of their work after 70 hearings, pointing to "systemic failures" that led to the break-in.

In addition to the robbery, the Louvre has been the subject of a ticket fraud scandal and a water leak, after a pipe burst earlier this month in a wing that houses the Mona Lisa and other priceless paintings.



## Amir hosts Iftar banquet for defence, MoI, security officials

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani hosted an Iftar banquet yesterday on the occasion of the holy month of Ramadan for commanders and senior officers of the Ministry of Defence, Ministry of Interior, and the State's security agencies, at Lusail Palace. The banquet was attended by His Highness the Personal Representative of the Amir Sheikh Jassim bin Hamad al-Thani, along with a number of sheikhs, ministers, and senior officials.

- QNA

## QPC 'Press Salon' to highlight 'Media Encyclopedia' project

By Tawfik Lamari  
Staff Reporter

The Qatar Press Centre (QPC) is organising a special session on "The Media Encyclopedia in the Digital Age", which will highlight the "Media Encyclopedia", the pioneering Arab project recently launched by the Qatar Media Corporation.

This session will be part of a new meeting of the "Press Salon" to be held today, at 9pm at the QPC headquarters.

The session will shed light on the concept of the encyclopaedia and its importance in keeping pace with the rapid transformations witnessed by the media sector, especially in the context of the ongoing digital revolution, the proliferation of new platforms, and the convergence of pro-

fessional and technical concepts.

The session will also address the scholarly efforts exerted in preparing the encyclopaedia, the stages it went through, and the most prominent challenges that accompanied the process of collecting, validating, and documenting terms according to a precise scientific methodology.

The session will feature Dr Mohammed al-Khatib, head of the Scientific Committee for the Media Encyclopedia, and Mohammed Salman al-Marri, general supervisor of the Media Encyclopedia.

They will present their practical experience on this knowledge-based project and its objectives, which aim to serve researchers, media professionals, media students, and those interested in media affairs.

The session will be moderated by Dr Aisha al-Kuwari, who will discuss topics related to the importance

of documenting media terminology, the role of specialised encyclopaedias in enhancing professionalism, and their contribution to developing media discourse in accordance with academic standards and professional ethics.

This encyclopaedia reflects the Qatar Media Corporation's commitment to supporting scientific research and developing modern media discourse. It aims to support media knowledge in Arabic, meet the needs of academics and professionals, and keep pace with the rapid transformations in the digital environment.

Furthermore, it documents media concepts, theories, prominent media figures, and influential institutions within a scientific and methodological framework that enhances knowledge empowerment and supports the development of Arabic media discourse.

The first volume of the Media Encyclopedia is scheduled for release at the upcoming Doha International Book Fair 2026, while the corporation is preparing to publish the next volume in May as part of a periodic publishing plan that maintains the project's momentum and enables on-going research contributions.

The encyclopaedia is available in two formats: written and audio, through a dedicated online platform that provides access to the content at any time.

A policy of continuous updating will be adopted to keep pace with developments in the media field.

The encyclopaedia's content covers key topics including: traditional and digital media terminology, media theories and their applications, influential media figures in the Arab world and internationally, and leading media institutions.

Dr Aisha al-Kuwari, Dr Mohammed al-Khatib and Mohammed Salman al-Marri (right).



Ambassador Badr El-Din Abdullah Mohamed Ahmed.

## Ramadan in Qatar marked by piety and sharing

The holy month of Ramadan in Qatar is marked by a deeply spiritual atmosphere, with men, women and children eager to attend congregational prayers, particularly the widely attended Taraweeh prayers.

This was stated by Sudan's ambassador to Qatar Badr El-Din Abdullah Mohamed Ahmed, who highlighted the profound religious and social significance of Ramadan in both Sudan and Qatar.

He described Ramadan in Sudan as a deeply social occasion that strengthens family and community bonds.

Among the country's most distinctive traditions is the preparation of a unique Sudanese beverage, known for its rich aroma, which is collectively made by women in the weeks leading up to the holy month.

Ahmed said that its preparation is more than a culinary task; it is a cultural ritual that fosters connection and solidarity.

The drink is often shared with neighbours, he added, and even sent to relatives abroad, symbolising unity and remembrance.

Ramadan in Sudan, the envoy noted, is widely regarded as a season of togetherness, reinforcing ties within extended families and across local communities.

He stressed the importance of preserving Sudanese Ramadan traditions while living abroad.

The holy month, Ahmed said, encourages hosting and attending gatherings - especially Iftar meals and evening visits - helping expatriate communities maintain cultural continuity while strengthening social relationships.

The envoy also lauded the Ramadan atmosphere in Qatar, highlighting its strong religious and communal character.

He noted the clear commitment of residents to observing religious practices and commended the Garangao celebration for introducing children to the values of fasting in a joyful and engaging way, fostering a lasting emotional connection to the holy month.

## Quick action can help prove cybercrimes successfully: MoI official

By Joseph Varghese  
Staff Reporter

Prompt reporting of cybercrime is crucial to successfully proving the offence or mitigating its impact, an official from the Ministry of Interior (MoI) has said.

"When a fraud or a cybercrime occurs, the speed of reporting the incident is an important factor in the success of the evidence-gathering process as digital evidence is subject to loss and manipulation," said First Lieutenant Adnan Hasan al-Rashed of the MoI's Economic and Cyber Crimes Prevention Department. "As soon as the crime has happened or you are a victim of a cybercrime, you should immediately report it to the concerned department, which is the office of the Cybercrimes Prevention Department."

He was speaking yesterday at a webinar organised by the MoI's Public Relations Department on the topic of "Cybercrimes and Methods of Prevention".

The webinar discussed various cybercrimes, including hacking, fraud of all

kinds, threatening people and blackmailing them, sexual exploitation of children, and spreading rumours.

Al-Rashed said that when such a crime takes place, people can report it in various ways.

"However, the best option for the public to raise a complaint is by visiting the office of the department and report it personally, especially in case of a fraud involving huge amount of money," he stated. "Other methods of reporting through e-mail or Metrash can be applied in case of minor crimes."

Al-Rashed noted that in case of an economic crime involving bank accounts, there are some procedures to be followed.

"In such cases, the person has to first go to the bank and take a report about details of the account from the bank," he said. "It should be sealed and signed by the bank."

"(Then) approach the MoI department along with the document," the official continued. "The most important thing in raising a complaint related with the cybercrime is the immediate action taken by the victim."

As for blackmailing through various social media channels, al-Rashed advised

victims not to respond to the perpetrator at all and block the person from all communication channels.

"In such cases, the economic and cybercrime prevention department must be informed directly through the available reporting channels, such as e-mail, phone, Metrash, or by representing personally to initiate investigation," he said.

"Most important thing: if a person becomes a victim of blackmail, he should not respond to the offender at all and block him from all networking channels," al-Rashed emphasised. "Sometimes the offender will be asking for many things which may lead to many other complications."

He said that people should always be extra vigilant while using online communication channels.

"It is important to have strong passwords for all the online accounts, including personal accounts in banks as well as social media accounts," the official said. "There should be continuous backups of the systems, and they should be updated periodically."

"It is also important to have multi-factor authentication as it ensures extra security



First Lieutenant Adnan Hasan al-Rashed.

## Grand Mufti of Bosnia and Herzegovina presents award to QF alumnus

The head of Muslim Scholars and Grand Mufti of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Dr Husein Kavazovic, yesterday honoured Dr Vahid Suljic with a prestigious award, recognising his outstanding efforts in strengthening co-operation between the Islamic community in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Qatar.

"This distinguished award affirms his many years of dedicated, committed, and responsible work in enhancing institutional, cultural, and friendly ties between Bosnia and Herzegovina and Qatar," Dr Kavazovic said. "Through his continuous engagement, Dr Suljic has made a significant contribution to advancing co-operation between the Islamic community in Bosnia and Herzegovina and institutions and partners in Qatar."

Dr Suljic thanked Dr Kavazovic for the award, emphasising that it reflects the continuity of his efforts to connect institutions and individuals and to build bridges of co-operation and mutual trust between the two friendly states.

Dr Suljic is an alumnus of Qatar Foundation (QF), Hamad Bin Khalifa University (HBKU), and Qatar University (QU). Originally from Bosnia and Herzegovina, he came to Qatar to pursue his higher education after being awarded a scholarship by His Highness the Father Amir Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani.



Dr Suljic (left) receiving the award from Dr Kavazovic.

He remains profoundly grateful for this opportunity and expresses lifelong appreciation to His Highness Sheikh Hamad, Qatar's leadership, and its people for their continued support, generosity, and commitment to education and international co-operation.

Throughout his academic and professional journey, Dr Suljic has actively contributed to strengthening educational, institutional, and cultural ties, as well as bilateral relations between Bosnia and Herzegovina and Qatar, promoting dialogue, collaboration, and mutual understanding.

He is the founder of Qatar's largest student platform, @stu-

dents\_qatar, which today boasts of more than 144,000 subscribers.

The platform serves as a leading hub for student engagement, information-sharing, and community building across the country, reflecting Dr Suljic's commitment to empowering youth and supporting academic excellence in Qatar.

Dr Suljic has previously received recognition for his contribution to the development of bilateral relations between Bosnia and Herzegovina and Qatar, including honours from the former ambassador of Bosnia and Herzegovina to Qatar, Dr Bisera Turkovic, as well as from ambassador Haris Lukovac.



## Painting captures the heart of the traditional Qatari home

In this painting by Qatari artist Mariam al-Mulla, we are presented with a meticulous visual recapture of the traditional Qatari kitchen, considered the heart of the home and the centre of its daily warmth, especially during Ramadan.

The subject is a woman sitting on the floor in front of a simple stove, preparing food in a traditional steaming pot. Her serene presence and her low posture reflect the simplicity of life and modest means. Stylistically, the artist leans towards an expressionist style with a hint of Cubism, yet simplified, characterised by clear forms, defined lines, and muted colours in shades of grey and warm yellow.

The light entering from the left creates a gentle contrast between the interior and exterior, evoking a morning scene. The composition is balanced; the figure occupies the largest visual space on the left, while the utensils, shelves, and cupboard are on the right, lending the painting a visual stability that reflects the tranquility of daily life.