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BUSINESS | Page 1

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PM underpins freedom of navigation in Iran FM call

Security, stability discussed with Saudi, Egypt FMs

HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani received yesterday a phone call from Iranian Minister of Foreign Affairs Abbas Araghchi. The call discussed efforts to achieve peace and enhance security and stability in the region.

HE the Prime Minister expressed the need for all parties to engage with the ongoing mediation efforts, which would open the way for addressing the root causes of the crisis through peaceful means and dialogue, leading to a sustainable agreement and preventing renewed escalation.

He also stressed the need to open sea lanes, ensure freedom of navigation, and not use them as a bargaining chip or pressure tactic. In this context, he emphasised the negative effects of this on the countries of the region and the world's energy and food supplies as well as its repercussions on international peace and security.

The premier held a phone call with Saudi Minister of Foreign Affairs Prince Faisal bin Farhan bin Abdullah al-Saud as well.

The two sides reviewed bilateral co-operation and ways to enhance it, and discussed regional developments, particularly those related to the ceasefire between the US and Iran as well as efforts aimed at de-escalation to support security and stability in the region.

The prime minister stressed the importance of all parties responding to ongoing mediation efforts, in a way that would help address the root causes of the crisis through peaceful means and dialogue, and lead to a sustainable agreement that prevents renewed escalation.

The prime minister also received yesterday a phone call from Egyptian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Immigration and Egyptian Expatriates Badr Abdelatty.

They discussed the relations between the two countries and ways to support and strengthen them. Also reviewed were developments in the region, particularly those related to the ceasefire between the US and Iran, and efforts aimed at reducing escalation in a way that contributes to enhancing security and stability in the region.

HE the Prime Minister expressed the need for all parties to engage with the ongoing mediation efforts, which would open the way for addressing the root causes of the crisis through peaceful means and dialogue. (QNA)

PM, Kazakh FM endorse mediation



HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani met yesterday with Kazakhstan Minister of Foreign Affairs Yermeq Kosherbayev, who is visiting the country. They discussed co-operation between the two countries and ways to support and develop it. They also discussed the developments in the region, particularly those related to the ceasefire between the US and Iran, in addition to efforts aimed at reducing escalation in a way that contributes to enhancing security and stability in the region. HE the Prime Minister stressed the need for all parties to respond to the ongoing mediation efforts, which would pave the way for addressing the root causes of the crisis through peaceful means and dialogue, and lead to a sustainable agreement that prevents renewed escalation. (QNA) Page 2

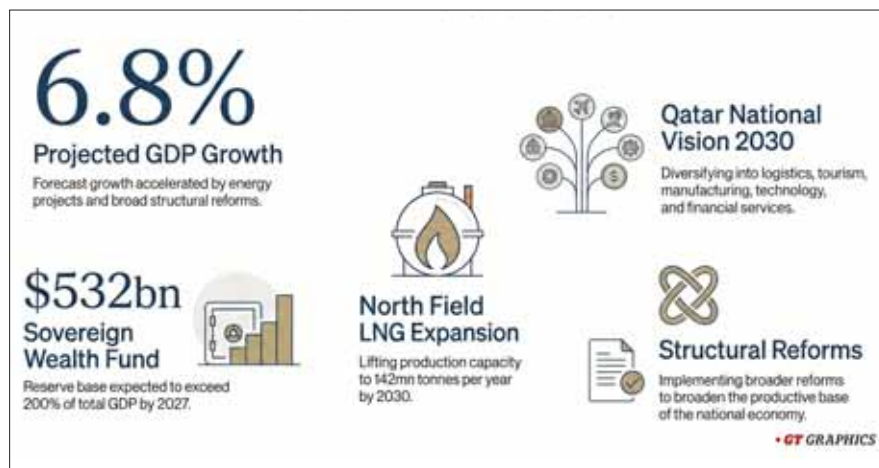
IMF: Qatar economy a model of resilience

By Ayman Adly
Staff Reporter

There is an international consensus on the resilience, endurance and strength of the Qatari economy, with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) stressing that Qatar's economy stands as an established model of flexibility and stability.

According to a report by Qatar TV, the Qatari economy has continued its strong performance, supported by effective financial management and expansion in LNG production, alongside remarkable growth in the non-oil sectors. The latest IMF estimates show that Qatar's economy recorded 2.4% growth in 2024, rising to 3% in 2025, with projections climbing to 4% over the medium term. Further estimates indicate that growth will accelerate in the coming period to reach 6.8% by 2027, underpinned by the expansion of energy projects and the rollout of broader structural reforms.

The state has succeeded over the past several years in building robust economic foundations capable of efficiently withstanding international fluctuations, uncertainties and shocks. The Qatari econ-



omy has weathered a turbulent regional landscape, including the recent fallout from the US-Iran conflict and disruptions to Gulf energy infrastructure, with its fundamentals remaining firmly intact.

A *Wall Street Journal* report further emphasised that the Qatari economy demonstrates a remarkable capacity to absorb crises and diversify its sources of income while maintaining contingency plans that

sustain stability and growth. This flexibility ensures the continuity of economic activities and business operations even during periods of international turbulence — a quality that has set Qatar apart among regional peers navigating volatile commodity cycles and geopolitical strain.

Qatar also commands substantial sovereign wealth, with its sovereign funds expected to reach \$532bn by 2027 — equiva-

lent to more than 200% of total GDP. This vast reserve base lends the Qatari economy added firepower to overcome crises, finance long-horizon investments and secure financial stability over the long run. Few economies in the world enjoy a sovereign asset cushion of comparable scale relative to output, a structural advantage that reinforces investor confidence and sovereign credit standing.

Among the principal pillars of strength of the Qatari economy is the implementation of Qatar National Vision 2030, particularly its emphasis on diversifying income streams and reducing dependency on hydrocarbon revenues. The vision continues to channel investment into priority sectors including financial services, logistics, tourism, manufacturing, technology and sports, broadening the productive base of the economy and cementing Qatar's status as one of the most stable economies in the region.

The North Field expansion, which is set to lift Qatar's LNG production capacity to 142mn tonnes per year by 2030, remains the cornerstone of the country's energy strategy and a key driver behind the IMF's upbeat medium-term outlook, while non-hydrocarbon growth continues to gather pace in parallel.

Media City Qatar, IAMT tie up to boost Doha's media footprint



By A Staff Reporter
Doha

Media City Qatar has signed a Platinum Partnership with the International Association for MediaTech (IAMT), a strategic alliance

designed to elevate Qatar's standing as a regional hub for media production, content creation and broadcast technology.

Under the agreement, Media City Qatar will gain expanded global visibility across IAMT's digital platforms and at a series of flagship international industry gatherings throughout 2026. These include IBC

in The Netherlands, the NAB Show in the United States, ISE in Spain, CABSAT in the UAE, Broadcast Asia in Singapore, and Inter BEE in Japan — a circuit that collectively draws tens of thousands of broadcasters, technology vendors, content creators and policymakers each year.

The exposure across these touchpoints is expected to sharpen Media City Qatar's profile among decision-makers in the global media supply chain, while reinforcing international awareness of Qatar's fast-expanding media ecosystem.

Beyond visibility, the partnership underpins Media City Qatar's longer-term commitment to sectoral development. It opens the door to selected IAMT training programmes and knowledge-sharing initiatives focused on leadership development, technical upskilling and industry capacity building — areas seen as critical to nurturing a homegrown talent pipeline capable of competing on the world stage. **To Page 2**

Deputy PM, Turkish forces chief review defence co-operation



HE the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Defence Affairs Sheikh Saud bin Abdulrahman bin Hassan al-Thani met yesterday with Chief of the General Staff of the Turkish Armed Forces Selçuk Bayraktaroğlu and his accompanying delegation, during the Turkish military commander's visit to Qatar. The two sides reviewed the latest security developments in the region and discussed aspects of defence co-operation and joint co-ordination in light of the current circumstances. The talks were attended by Chief of Staff of the Qatar Armed Forces Major General (Pilot) Jassim bin Mohammed al-Manaa, alongside a number of senior officers from both sides. The visit comes amid sustained engagement between Doha and Ankara on regional security, and follows a series of high-level defence exchanges over recent months.

Amir, Deputy Amir congratulate Tanzania president

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani sent a cable of congratulations yesterday to Tanzania's President Dr Samia Suluhu Hassan on the anniversary of her country's Union Day. His Highness the Deputy Amir Sheikh Abdullah bin Hamad al-Thani sent a similar cable of congratulations

to the Tanzanian president on the occasion. Meanwhile, HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani sent a cable of congratulations to Tanzania's Prime Minister Dr Mwigulu Nchemba on the anniversary of his country's Union Day. - QNA

SJC reviews Judicial Inspection Authority's 2026-30 programme

The Supreme Judiciary Council (SJC) has reviewed the 2026-30 work programme of the Judicial Inspection Authority to enhance the efficiency of the judicial system, develop monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, and consolidate the principles of quality and governance in judicial work.

This came during a meeting held by the SJC in the presence of HE the President of the Council and President of the Court of Cassation Dr Hassan bin Lahdan al-Mohannadi, and with the participation of the heads of the courts.

During the meeting the features of the new strategy were presented, which is launched with an updated organisational structure and an integrated operational framework that enhances the effectiveness of performance, clarifies the competencies and achieves integration of roles within the Authority.

The Judicial Inspection Authority's programme comes in the wake of the Supreme Judiciary Council President's Decision No. 45 of 2025 regarding the organisational structure of the Authority, and Council Decision No. 54 of 2025 issuing its work system, in accordance with



the provisions of Law No. 8 of 2023 issuing the Judicial Authority Law.

The Authority undertakes the tasks of technical and administrative inspection of the work of judges, investigating complaints related to their job performance or conduct, in addition to monitoring and analysing judicial performance indicators, in order to promote the principles of impartiality and transparency, and contribute to raising the quality of judicial work.

Its responsibilities include preparing judicial training programmes, conducting studies and research, preparing reports and statistical analyses and making them available to the relevant authorities, in support of institutional development and decision-making processes.

The Authority's organisational structure encompasses four main departments: the Judicial Inspections Department, the Judicial Governance Department, the Judicial Training and Research Department, and the Judicial Statistics Department, all supervised by a specialised judicial and administrative staff.

The head of the Judicial Inspection Authority, Judge Ahmed al-Mansouri, affirmed in a statement that the new strategy represents an important milestone in the development of institutional work, and is based on enhancing efficiency and consolidating the principles of integrity, impartiality and transparency, in addition to developing monitoring and evaluation mechanisms in a way that supports the quality of judicial performance.

He said the new organisational structure and work system contribute to the efficiency of performance and enhancing integration between departments, and provide a clearer and more effective work environment, which supports the Authority's role in monitoring judicial performance and stimulating development in the courts. - QNA



Shura Council Speaker meets US embassy official

HE the Speaker of the Shura Council Hassan bin Abdullah al-Ghanim met yesterday with US embassy charge d'affaires Mo Barghouty. They discussed bilateral co-operation, relations, particularly in the parliamentary field, and ways to strengthen them and develop joint co-ordination mechanisms. - QNA



PM's adviser meets top UK official on Sudan



HE the Adviser to the Prime Minister and Official Spokesperson for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Dr Majed bin Mohammed al-Ansari met yesterday with the head of the British Office for Sudan and UK Special Representative to Sudan, Richard Crowder. During the meeting in Doha, they reviewed bilateral co-operation and the latest regional and international developments. - QNA

DJWE 2026 scheduled to begin in late September

The Doha Jewellery and Watches Exhibition (DJWE) 2026, organised by Qatar Tourism (QT), and brought by Visit Qatar, will take place from September 28 to October 3 at the Doha Exhibition and Convention Centre (DECC), the QT announced yesterday.

This year's edition will bring together an exceptional line-up of leading local and international brands, further cementing its position as one of the region's premier luxury exhibitions.

As a flagship event on Qatar's annual calendar, the DJWE represents a defining moment for the global jewellery and watch industry, convening leading maisons, designers, and discerning audiences from around the world. - QNA



Libyan leader meets Qatar's ambassador

The chairman of the Presidential Council of Libya, Dr Mohamed al-Menfi, met yesterday with Qatar's ambassador to Libya Dr Khalid bin Mohammed Zaben al-Dosari to discuss co-operation and ties between the nations. - QNA

Media City Qatar, IAMT tie up to boost Doha's media footprint

From Page 1

"This partnership strengthens Media City Qatar's role as a connector between regional ambition and global industry expertise," said Media City Qatar chief executive Hamad Omar al-Mannai.

"Through IAMT's international platforms and leading industry events, we are expanding access to global networks, insight, and visibility that support our licensed companies and help attract new international media, content creation and technology players to Qatar, reinforcing the country's position as a regional platform for growth and collaboration, in line with Qatar National Vision 2030," he added.

"This partnership creates a foundation for new opportunities by connecting regional growth with

global expertise, enabling companies to access emerging markets, form strategic partnerships, and play a more active role in shaping the next phase of the MediaTech industry," said IAMT chief executive Saleha Williams.

Home to over 500 licensed companies - ranging from early-stage startups to established multinational players in broadcasting, digital content, post-production and media technology - Media City Qatar has positioned itself at the centre of the country's drive to diversify its economy.

The hub remains committed to strengthening international collaboration and expanding its role as a globally connected destination for media and technology growth, anchoring Qatar's broader ambitions to become a leading content and innovation gateway between East and West.

Damaan Islamic Insurance Company
Q.P.S.C

بيمه
Beema

شركة الضمان للتأمين الإسلامي
(شركة مساهمة عامة قطرية)

Beema Reports a 6.6% Growth in Shareholders' Net Profit for the three-month period ended 31 March 2026

- Recognised Takaful Contributions rose 22.0% year-on-year to QAR 140.7 million (YTD Q1 2025: QAR 115.4 million), with growth primarily in the Takaful & Health and Motor segments
- Shareholders' Net Profit: Grew by 6.6% to QAR 25.5 million (YTD Q1 2025: QAR 23.9 million)

- Earnings Per Share: QAR 0.127 (YTD Q1 2025: QAR 0.120)
- Shareholders' Equity: Increased by 7.8% to QAR 586.7 million (YTD Q1 2025: QAR 544.3 million)
- Net Investment Income: Increased by 20.9% to QAR 14.1 million (YTD Q1 2025: QAR 11.7 million)

Three months ended Year-to-Date (YTD) Q1 2026 key financial highlights:



Damaan Islamic Insurance Company Q.P.S.C. ("Beema" or the "Company"), a leading provider of Islamic insurance in Qatar, announced its financial results for the three-month period ended 31 March 2026.

Recognised takaful contributions for the period amounted to QAR 140.7 million, representing a 22.0% increase compared to QAR 115.4 million in the prior-year period of 2025, primarily from growth in the Takaful & Health and Motor segments. The Takaful & Health segment increased to QAR 63.3 million from QAR 53.0 million in the prior year, while motor contributions rose to QAR 42.0 million from QAR 27.2 million. Contributions from the Fire & General Accident and Marine & Aviation segment though flat-lined year-on-year.

The takaful gross margin is impacted by elevated provisioning for outstanding claims, primarily within the Fire and General Accident segment. As the year progresses, the ratio of takaful costs to contributions typically moderates, supporting takaful gross and

net margins.

Net Investment Income rose by 20.9% to QAR 14.1 million, compared to QAR 11.7 million in the prior-year period of 2025. Of this amount, QAR 8.8 million was attributable to policyholders, while QAR 5.3 million was attributable to shareholders. The increase reflected higher income from the Company's sukuk-based investment portfolio across both the policyholders' and shareholders' funds.

Shareholders' net profit rose 6.6% to QAR 25.5 million, compared with QAR 23.9 million in the prior-year period of 2025. The increase reflected higher Wakala fee income, which grew in line with the expansion of the takaful portfolio, together with higher investment results. Earnings Per Share rose to QAR 0.127, up from QAR 0.120.

As at 31 March 2026, investments measured at fair value is QAR 1,011.8 million, compared to QAR 841.7 million as at 31 March 2025. Shareholders' equity rose to QAR 586.7 million, supported by retained earnings. The Company maintains a debt-

free balance sheet. The solvency ratio stood at 337% as at 31 December 2025, above applicable regulatory requirements.

At the Annual General Assembly held on 3 March 2026, shareholders approved a cash dividend of QAR 0.25 per share in respect of FY 2025, totalling QAR 50 million (FY 2024: QAR 0.20 per share, totalling QAR 40 million). The dividend was paid during the first quarter of 2026.

Commenting on the results, Nasser Al Misnad, CEO of Beema, stated: "The first quarter of 2026 reflected growth in recognised takaful contributions, up 22.0% year-on-year, and in net investment income, up 20.9%. Shareholders' net profit rose 6.6% to QAR 25.5 million, supported by higher Wakala fee income and investment results. The Company's capital position remains in excess of regulatory requirements, and Beema remains focused on growing its takaful business in a disciplined, Shari'a-compliant manner while maintaining a balance between the interests of policyholders and shareholders".

Damaan Islamic Insurance Company Q.P.S.C. ("Beema") is a Qatari takaful operator listed on the Qatar Stock Exchange (Ticker: BEMA). It holds a Moody's A3 Long-Term Insurance Financial Strength Rating and an AM Best A- (Excellent) rating.

For the complete financial statements for the three-month period ended 31 March 2026 and additional information, please visit www.beema.com.qa. For any inquiries, please contact Beema's Investor Relations Department at investorrelations@beema.com.qa

Important information

This press release has been prepared by Damaan Islamic Insurance Company "Beema" (Q.P.S.C.) (the "Company") for informational purposes only. This press release does not constitute an offer or invitation or solicitation of any offer to subscribe for or purchase any shares or other securities or

recommendation to invest in any shares or other securities. This press release is not intended to be relied upon as the basis for an investment decision, and is not, and should not be assumed to be, complete. It is provided for information purposes only. Any investment is subject to various risks, none of which are outlined herein. All such risks should be carefully considered by prospective investors before they make any investment decision.

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Statements contained in this press release that are not historical facts are based on current expectations, estimates, projections, opinions and beliefs of the Company. Such statements involve known and unknown risks, uncertainties and other factors, and reliance should not be placed thereon. In addition, this press release contains "forward-looking statements." Actual events or results or the actual performance of the Company may differ materially from those reflected or contemplated in such forward-looking statements.

This press release has not been approved by the securities regulatory authority of Qatar or any other state or jurisdiction.

**INTERIM CONDENSED FINANCIAL INFORMATION AND INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REVIEW REPORT
FOR THE THREE-MONTH PERIOD ENDED 31 MARCH 2026**

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REVIEW REPORT

To the Shareholders

Damaan Islamic Insurance Company "BEEMA" (Q.P.S.C.) Lusail – Qatar

Introduction

We have reviewed the accompanying interim statement of financial position of Damaan Islamic Insurance Company "BEEMA" (Q.P.S.C.) (the "Company") as at 31 March 2026, and the related interim statements of policyholders' revenues, expenses and other comprehensive income, policyholders' surplus, shareholders' income statement and other comprehensive income, changes in shareholders' equity and cash flows for the three-month period then ended, and a summary of significant accounting policies and other explanatory notes. Management is responsible for the preparation and presentation of this interim financial information in accordance with the FAS 41 Interim Financial Reporting issued by the Accounting and Auditing Organisation for Islamic Financial Institutions ("AAOIFI") ("FAS 41"). Our responsibility is to express a conclusion on this interim financial information based on our review.

Scope of review

We conducted our review in accordance with International Standard on Review Engagements 2410, "Review of Interim Financial Information Performed by the Independent Auditor of the Entity". A review of interim financial information consists of making inquiries, primarily of persons responsible for financial and accounting matters, and applying analytical and other review procedures. A review is substantially less in scope than an audit conducted in accordance with International Standards on Auditing and consequently does not enable us to obtain assurance that we would become aware of all significant matters that might be identified in an audit. Accordingly, we do not express an audit opinion.

Conclusion

Based on our review, nothing has come to our attention that causes us to believe that the accompanying interim financial information is not prepared, in all material respects, in accordance with the FAS 41.

Doha – Qatar

26/04/2026

For Deloitte & Touche

Qatar Branch

Joseph Khalife

Partner, License No. 433

QFMA Audit Registration 120156

**INTERIM STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION
As at 31 March 2026**

Note	31 March 2026 QR (Reviewed)	31 December 2025 QR (Audited)
Policyholders' assets		
Cash and bank balances	3 240,444,185	229,079,245
Investments at fair value through equity	4 (a) 586,659,794	597,155,015
Investments at fair value through income statement	4 (b) 6,369,705	6,418,117
Re-takaful arrangement assets	5 83,041,678	92,010,715
Takaful arrangement assets	5 579,769	19,768
Property and equipment	1,384,293	1,875,947
Other receivables	9,317,711	9,938,772
Total policyholders' assets	927,797,135	936,497,579
Shareholders' assets		
Cash and bank balances	3 64,734,459	94,363,204
Investments at fair value through equity	4 (a) 409,617,273	413,682,993
Investments at fair value through income statement	4 (b) 9,125,949	9,134,785
Prepayments and other receivables	5,626,559	4,851,275
Due from policyholders	115,601,722	120,153,859
Right-of-use assets	2,597,641	2,597,641
Property and equipment	104,948,944	106,495,139
Total shareholders' assets	712,252,547	751,278,896
TOTAL ASSETS	1,640,049,682	1,687,776,475
Policyholders' liabilities		
Takaful arrangement liabilities	5 601,237,157	578,398,196
Re-takaful arrangement liabilities	5 2,186,502	1,001,388
Other payables	11,472,472	12,384,013
Due to shareholders	115,601,722	120,153,859
Distributable surplus payable	79,255,773	66,864,527
Total policyholders' liabilities	809,753,626	778,801,983
Shareholders' liabilities		
Provisions and other payables	110,812,776	117,556,823
Due to related parties	6,093,342	6,093,342
Net Ijarah liability	2,865,558	2,865,558
Employees' end of service benefits	5,737,548	5,562,457
Total shareholders' liabilities	125,509,224	132,078,180
Shareholders' equity		
Share capital	200,000,000	200,000,000
Legal reserve	200,000,000	200,000,000
Fair value reserve	(4,959,808)	2,988,954
Retained earnings	191,703,131	216,211,762
Total shareholders' equity	586,743,323	619,200,716
Total shareholders' liabilities and equity	712,252,547	751,278,896
TOTAL LIABILITIES, POLICYHOLDERS' SURPLUS AND SHAREHOLDERS' EQUITY	1,640,049,682	1,687,776,475

Sheikh. Jassim Bin Hamad Bin Jassim J. Al Thani
Chairman

Nasser Rashid Al Misnad
Chief Executive Officer

**INTERIM STATEMENT OF POLICYHOLDERS' REVENUES, EXPENSES AND OTHER COMPREHENSIVE INCOME
For the three-month period ended 31 March 2026**

Note	For the three-month period ended 31 March 2026 QR (Reviewed)	31 March 2025 QR (Reviewed)
Recognised takaful contributions	7 140,726,233	115,356,715
Recognised takaful costs	7 (131,803,209)	(88,457,122)
Re-takaful net results	7 (20,198,942)	(21,894,585)
Takaful gross margin	(11,275,918)	5,005,008
Amortisation of deferred cost (related to provision of takaful arrangements)	7 (6,972,050)	(6,460,741)
Amortisation of deferred income (related to re-takaful arrangements held)	7 1,231,726	1,796,567
Net amortisation of deferred cost	(5,740,324)	(4,664,174)
Net takaful result	(17,016,242)	340,834
Depreciation of property and equipment	(491,654)	(491,654)
Fair value gain on investment at fair value through income statement	14,492	94,053
Reversal for impairment of investment at fair value through equity	4 91,717	51,781
Investment income	9,122,214	7,034,620
Investment expenses	(465,842)	(387,814)
Mudarib share	(5,506,583)	(4,571,739)
Other income	3,138,633	1,932,181
Other expenses	(1,549,573)	(3,103,082)
Net (deficit)/surplus for the period	(12,662,838)	899,180
OTHER COMPREHENSIVE (LOSS)/INCOME		
Items that may be subsequently reclassified to statement of Policyholders' revenue and expenses		
Net change in fair value of debt-type instruments designated at fair value through other comprehensive income	(11,631,624)	3,874,932
TOTAL COMPREHENSIVE (LOSS)/INCOME FOR THE PERIOD	(24,294,462)	4,774,112

**INTERIM STATEMENT OF POLICYHOLDERS' SURPLUS
For the three-month period ended 31 March 2026**

	Retained surplus QR	Fair value reserve QR	Equalization reserve QR	Total QR
Balance at 1 January 2025 (Audited)	65,619,139	(13,847,169)	90,000,000	141,771,970
Net surplus for the period	899,180	-	-	899,180
Net change in fair value of investment at fair value through equity	-	3,874,932	-	3,874,932
Total comprehensive income for the period	899,180	3,874,932	-	4,774,112
Surplus distribution to policyholders during the period	(9,562,817)	-	-	(9,562,817)
Balance at 31 March 2025 (Reviewed)	56,955,502	(9,972,237)	90,000,000	136,983,265
Balance as at 1 January 2026 (Audited)	67,818,627	(123,031)	90,000,000	157,695,596
Net deficit for the period	(12,662,838)	-	-	(12,662,838)
Net change in fair value of investment at fair value through equity	-	(11,631,624)	-	(11,631,624)
Total comprehensive loss for the period	(12,662,838)	(11,631,624)	-	(24,294,462)
Surplus distribution to policyholders during the period	(15,357,625)	-	-	(15,357,625)
Balance at 31 March 2026 (Reviewed)	39,798,164	(11,754,655)	90,000,000	118,043,509

**INTERIM SHAREHOLDERS' INCOME STATEMENT AND OTHER COMPREHENSIVE INCOME
For the three-month period ended 31 March 2026**

Note	For the three-month period ended 31 March 2026 QR (Reviewed)	31 March 2025 QR (Reviewed)
Income		
Income from shareholders' investments	5,614,928	4,997,540
Wakala fee	34,908,661	29,891,080
Mudarib share	5,506,583	4,571,739
Other income	315,000	411,397
Total income	46,345,172	39,871,756
Staff cost	(12,322,653)	(10,355,561)
Depreciation of property and equipment	(1,567,011)	(1,533,484)
Fair value gain on investment at fair value through income statement	2,994	132,705
Reversal for impairment of investment at fair value through equity	4 67,823	52,105
General and administrative expenses	8 (6,668,279)	(3,850,223)
Finance cost	(7,349)	(80,943)
Investment expenses	(359,328)	(322,084)
Total expenses	(20,853,803)	(15,957,485)
Profit before tax for the period	25,491,369	23,914,271
Tax expense	-	-
Net profit for the period	25,491,369	23,914,271
Basic/Diluted earnings per share in Qatari Riyal	12 0.127	0.120
OTHER COMPREHENSIVE INCOME		
Net profit for the period	25,491,369	23,914,271
Items that may be subsequently reclassified to shareholders' income statement		
Net change in fair value of debt-type instruments designated at fair value through other comprehensive income	(7,948,762)	2,759,907
TOTAL COMPREHENSIVE INCOME FOR THE PERIOD	17,542,607	26,674,178

**INTERIM STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN SHAREHOLDERS' EQUITY
For the three-month period ended 31 March 2026**

	Share Capital QR	Legal reserve QR	Fair value Reserve QR	Retained earnings QR	Total QR
Balance at 1 January 2025 (Audited)	200,000,000	200,000,000	(5,448,602)	163,042,255	557,593,653
Net profit for the period	-	-	-	23,914,271	23,914,271
Net change in fair value of investment at fair value through equity	-	-	2,759,907	-	2,759,907
Total comprehensive income for the period	-	-	2,759,907	23,914,271	26,674,178
Dividends paid*	-	-	-	(40,000,000)	(40,000,000)
Balance at 31 March 2025 (Reviewed)	200,000,000	200,000,000	(2,688,695)	146,956,526	544,267,831
Balance at 1 January 2026 (Audited)	200,000,000	200,000,000	2,988,954	216,211,762	619,200,716
Net profit for the period	-	-	-	25,491,369	25,491,369
Net change in fair value of investment at fair value through equity	-	-	(7,948,762)	-	(7,948,762)
Total comprehensive income for the period	-	-	(7,948,762)	25,491,369	17,542,607
Dividends paid*	-	-	-	(50,000,000)	(50,000,000)
Balance at 31 March 2026 (Reviewed)	200,000,000	200,000,000	(4,959,808)	191,703,131	586,743,323

*Dividend declared amounting to QR. 50 million at the rate of QR. 0.25 per share (2024: QR. 40 million at the rate of QR. 0.20 per share) was approved by the Shareholders at the Annual General Assembly meeting held on 3 March 2026.

**INTERIM STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS
For the three-month period ended 31 March 2026**

Note	For the three-month period ended 31 March 2026 QR (Reviewed)	31 March 2025 QR (Reviewed)
OPERATING ACTIVITIES		
Shareholders' profit for the period	25,491,369	23,914,271
Policyholders' (deficit)/surplus for the period	(12,662,838)	899,180
	12,828,531	24,813,451
Adjustments for:		
Depreciation of property and equipment	2,058,665	2,025,138
Amortization of right-of-use assets	-	61,849
Net reversal of impairment of financial investments	(159,540)	(103,886)
Realized gain from investments	(14,737,142)	(12,032,160)
Loss on disposal of property and equipment	-	108
Amortization of deferred cost	-	75,023
Fair value gain on investments at fair value through income statement	(17,486)	(226,758)
Provision for employees' end of service benefits	193,724	459,687
Operating profit before changes in working capital	166,752	15,072,452
Change in takaful and re-takaful arrangements	32,433,111	31,835,693
Change in prepayments and other receivables	(154,223)	6,689,351
Change in provisions and other payables	(7,655,588)	(4,036,444)
Net cash generated from operations	24,790,052	49,561,052
Employees' end of service benefits paid	(18,633)	(5,989)
Net cash generated from operating activities	24,771,419	49,555,063
INVESTING ACTIVITIES		
Acquisition of property and equipment	(20,816)	(783,093)
Proceeds from disposal of property and equipment	-	300
Investment in fixed deposits	11,679,000	(2,504,400)
Net movement in investments	(4,785,171)	2,583,311
Realized gain from investments	14,737,142	12,032,160
Net cash generated from investing activities	21,610,155	11,328,278
FINANCING ACTIVITIES		
Policyholders' surplus paid during the period	(2,966,379)	(2,336,411)
Dividends paid	(50,000,000)	(40,000,000)
Repayment of gross Ijarah liability	-	(142,460)
Net cash used in financing activities	(52,966,379)	(42,478,871)
Net (decrease)/increase in cash and cash equivalents	(6,584,805)	18,404,470
Cash and cash equivalents at 1 January	46,200,649	29,737,475
CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS AT 31 MARCH (Note 3)	39,615,844	48,141,945

Minister of State for Foreign Affairs bids farewell to Costa Rica's ambassador



HE the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Sultan bin Saad al-Muraikhi met with ambassador of the Republic of Costa Rica to the State of Qatar Juan Carlos Esquivel, on the occasion of the end of his tenure. HE the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs extended thanks to the ambassador for his efforts in supporting and strengthening bilateral relations, wishing him success in his new duties. (QNA)

Minister of Labour meets US embassy charge d'Affaires



HE the Minister of Labour Dr Ali bin Smaikh al-Marri met yesterday with the Charge d'Affaires of the US Embassy in Qatar, Mohammed Barghouty. During the meeting, discussions focused on a range of topics of mutual interest, with a particular emphasis on bilateral co-operation within the labour sector, as well as ways to support and develop it. (QNA)

Qatar participates in GCC ambassadors' visit to Chechnya



Ambassador of the State of Qatar to the Russian Federation Sheikh Ahmed bin Nasser al-Thani participated in the visit of the delegation of the ambassadors of the Gulf Co-operation Council (GCC) countries to the Chechen Republic. Head of the Chechen Republic Ramzan Kadyrov received the ambassadors of the GCC countries, and the two sides reviewed the friendly relations between the GCC countries and the Russian Federation. Head of the Chechen Republic affirmed that the visit opens up promising new horizons for economic, trade and cultural co-operation between the two sides. During the visit, Sheikh Ahmed bin Nasser al-Thani emphasised the friendly relations and co-operation in various fields between the State of Qatar and the Russian Federation, and expressed his pleasure at visiting the Chechen Republic. (QNA)

Qatari Armed Forces chief receives Turkish counterpart



Chief of Staff of the Qatari Armed Forces Major-General (Pilot) HE Jassim bin Mohammed al-Mannai received yesterday Chief of the General Staff of the Turkish Armed Forces Selcuk Bayraktaroglu and his accompanying delegation. The visit comes amid sustained engagement between Doha and Ankara on regional security, and follows a series of high-level defence exchanges over recent months.

MoPH advice for taxi drivers to maintain safe trips

On the occasion of The Gulf Week for Occupational Health and Safety, held annually from April 26-30, the Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) has shared some advice for a safe journey for the taxi drivers working with the smart transport apps.

The MoPH stressed that speeding should be avoided and the drivers have to abide by the applicable rules, regulations and systems. The vehicle should be always clean, and smoking should not be allowed inside the vehicles. Drivers should also abide by the safety rules of seating and arranging cargo inside the car. Further, drivers should not stop their vehicles in undesignated or unsafe areas even if they were requested for so by the customers.

MoPH speeds up process of monitoring food products

The Ministry of Public Health has stressed that it has been continuing its controls to ensure the safety of food products, as it is accelerating the frequency of food inspections to maintain a safe food supply.

In particular, the targeted products include meat and poultry, dairy products, fish and seafood, and perishable goods among others. The mechanism used to achieve this involves identifying and accelerating inspection procedures at entry points and local market. Besides, the sampling and laboratory testing are considerably increased, while the efforts of monitoring transport, storage and refrigeration conditions are constantly going on.

Council of Ministers, QU sign agreement

QNA
Doha

The Council of Ministers General Secretariat and Qatar University signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) for joint co-operation in academic co-ordination and exchange, as part of a strategic initiative aimed at strengthening integration between government work and national academic institutions.

The signing ceremony was attended by HE the Minister of Justice and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Ibrahim bin Ali al-Mohannadi. The MoU was signed by the Secretary-General of the Council of Ministers Hamad bin Ahmed al-Muhannadi on behalf of the General Secretariat, and by President of Qatar University Dr Omar bin Mohammed al-Ansari on behalf of the university. The ceremony was held at the headquarters of the Council of Ministers General Secretariat, in the presence of a number of officials from both sides.

The MoU aims to enhance co-



operation between the two sides and expand co-ordination in academic, research, administrative, and technical areas, thereby supporting the institutional work system and strengthening the integration of academic knowledge with practical applications.

The MoU stipulates co-operation in the exchange of expertise, information, data, studies, and

statistics, as well as in the organisation of conferences, meetings, and training programmes, the implementation of joint research, and the exploration of further areas of mutual interest.

On this occasion, HE the Minister of Justice and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Ibrahim bin Ali al-Mohannadi affirmed that the signing of this MoU is an

extension of the State's approach to building effective partnerships with national academic institutions, which enhances the application of knowledge in developing public policies and drafting legislation.

He pointed out that this co-operation aligns with the objectives of Qatar National Vision 2030, which prioritises human development and focuses on empowering national talent and enhancing its active contribution to the sustainable development process.

For his part, Secretary-General of the Council of Ministers Hamad bin Ahmed al-Muhannadi affirmed that the signing of the MoU reflects the General Secretariat's commitment to establishing high-quality partnerships with academic institutions, which opens broader horizons for exchanging expertise and benefiting from research outputs, and contributes to supporting a knowledge-based institutional work environment.

He explained that this step complements the General Secre-

tariat's strategic objectives aimed at building a more integrated and flexible government work system, enhancing performance efficiency, and improving the quality of outputs.

For his part, President of Qatar University Dr Omar bin Mohammed al-Ansari indicated that this MoU represents a strategic step towards expanding co-operation with the Council of Ministers General Secretariat, thereby strengthening the exchange of expertise and information, and supporting the integration of efforts in various fields, which contributes to raising the efficiency of institutional performance and developing it according to best practices.

The MoU comes within the framework of the General Secretariat's commitment to strengthening institutional co-operation with national academic institutions and benefiting from research expertise and knowledge, which contributes to supporting the development of institutional work and achieving the development goals in the State of Qatar.

MoCI commences operations from new HQ

Operations commenced from the Ministry of Commerce and Industry's new headquarters in Lusail City, from yesterday, as part of ongoing efforts to enhance the work environment and improve the efficiency and integration of services.

All sectors and departments are now operating from the new location, including "Single Window" services, within a unified and integrated system that strengthens institutional co-ordination, improves performance, and enhances the overall customer experience, ensuring transac-

tions are completed smoothly within a modern service environment.

The new headquarters features advanced services that support digital transformation and streamline procedures, contributing to a more efficient and cohesive working environment while

elevating service quality.

It also offers an integrated experience for investors through the Single Window in one location, enabling faster and more efficient transaction processing, supported by practical facilitation measures that ensure ease and convenience.



The facility has been designed as an inclusive and accessible environment that accommodates all segments of society, including persons with disabilities and senior

citizens, through accessible infrastructure, valet parking, reception and guidance services, priority processing, and dedicated facilities tailored to their needs.

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AIPS president praises Qatar's Olympic Council of Asia presidency

International Sports Press Association (AIPS) president Gianni Merlo has praised the efforts of HE the President of both the Olympic Council of Asia (OCA) and the Qatar Olympic Committee, Sheikh Joaan bin Hamad al-Thani, in strengthening Asia's role on the international sporting scene. In an interview with the media delegation accompanying Team Qatar to the 6th Asian Beach Games Sanya 2026, the Italian said that HE Sheikh Joaan possesses a clear vision and an effective ability to unify the continent amid current challenges, stressing that his leadership comes at a highly important time that necessitates redefining the role of sport across Asia. The AIPS president added that HE Sheikh Joaan's assumption

of the OCA's presidency came amid exceptional circumstances, with sporting events coinciding with regional and international developments that impose on sports functions that go beyond competition. Leadership during this period, he said, is not limited to managing tournaments, rather requires having a strategic vision capable of unifying the countries of Asia and enhancing their joint co-operation, thus, achieving long-term sporting stability. Merlo highlighted that within a short period, Qatar has succeeded in establishing its position as one of the leading hubs for hosting major sporting events. This transformation was the result of a clear vision and continuous investment

in infrastructure and sporting facilities, alongside developing organisational and media capabilities, he added, emphasising that Qatar today does not merely host events, but contributes to advancing the global sports system by raising the bar higher and setting a successful example. On Qatar's chances of hosting the Olympic Games, Merlo said that the country meets most of the fundamental requirements, including advanced sports facilities, a modern transport network, and a sophisticated media infrastructure. He contrasted the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 with the upcoming edition to be held in three countries, stressing the significant difference between both events in terms of organisation

and overall experience. An integrated and unique model made Qatar 2022 stand out, Merlo said, noting that stadiums' proximity from one another helped create an exceptional experience for both fans and media professionals, whereas this upcoming edition will pose major logistical challenges, particularly in terms of transportation and media coverage. On another note, the AIPS Sport Media Awards have become a prominent international platform that reflects the advancement of sport media, the AIPS president said, affirming that the partnership with Qatar has been a key factor in the award's success, providing a supportive environment for expanding the award and its global reach. - (QNA)

QNB empowers teachers via financial education work attachment programme

QNB Group recently delivered its 'Teacher Work Attachment Programme', in collaboration with Qatar Foundation's Education Development Institute under the Educator Industry Work (EDI) initiative.

The programme brought educators into real-world banking environments to strengthen the connection between academic learning and industry practice.

As part of QNB's broader commitment to education and capability building, this initiative forms part of a wider portfolio of partnerships and programmes, including collaborations with

leading academic institutions, such as Qatar University, the QNB Emerging Leaders Programme, as well as internship, graduate development, and financial literacy initiatives.

The programme featured 12 specialised sessions across four key areas. Each day included three sessions, beginning with an introduction to retail banking, highlighting QNB Group's role, branch operations, and customer experience.

The second day focused on corporate banking, private banking, and investment services, covering corporate banking solutions, wealth manage-

ment, and capital markets.

The third day centred on operations and communications, addressing transaction processing, operational risk, and stakeholder engagement, while the final day explored compliance and internal audit, including audit frameworks, regulatory compliance, and anti-money laundering (AML) and know-your-customer (KYC) principles.

Bringing together school educators specialising in business, finance, economics, and related disciplines, the programme offered direct engagement with QNB teams across retail, corpo-

rate, and investment banking, as well as core functions such as compliance, communications, and internal audit.

Participants completed guided reflections throughout the programme to assess learning outcomes and practical application. Upon successful completion, educators were awarded certificates of attendance.

In line with Qatar National Vision 2030, QNB remains committed to supporting the development of a strong education system that fosters innovation, capability building, and long-term economic growth.



The programme brought educators into real-world banking environments to strengthen the connection between academic learning and industry practice.

Qatar Insurance 'Coins' loyalty programme surpasses 300mn points earned in first year

Qatar Insurance (QIC) has announced that its "Coins" loyalty rewards programme has surpassed 300mn points earned, a significant milestone within just one year of its launch, with active membership exceeding 60,000 members.

Since its launch in early May 2025, the Coins loyalty programme has successfully redefined the insurance experience in Qatar by transforming everyday transactions into rewarding interactions.

Customers are able to earn and redeem Coins throughout their journey with Qatar's largest and longest-established insurer.

The experience begins with welcome Coins upon account creation on the Qatar Insurance app and extends to purchasing and renewing insurance policies, as well as booking a range of non-insurance services for daily life available through the application.

Over its first year, the programme focused on expanding its partner ecosystem and diversifying redemption options.

It established new partnerships and significantly broadened the range of available redemption choices within a few months.



Salem al-Mannai, Group CEO of Qatar Insurance.

Today, these options span dozens of institutions and companies, including travel agencies, car care centres, hotels, fitness centres, entertainment venues, and electronics retailers.

In terms of redemption activity, travel services ranked as the most popular choice among programme members during the first year, followed by fuel vouchers, and at-home car wash services.

"The Coins loyalty programme was established as a testament to our commitment to rewarding the trust our customers place in QIC," said Qatar Insurance Group chief

executive Salem al-Mannai. "It has rapidly gained significant momentum among both clients and partners, a success clearly evidenced by robust membership growth, high engagement in earning and redemption, and the strategic expansion of our partner ecosystem."

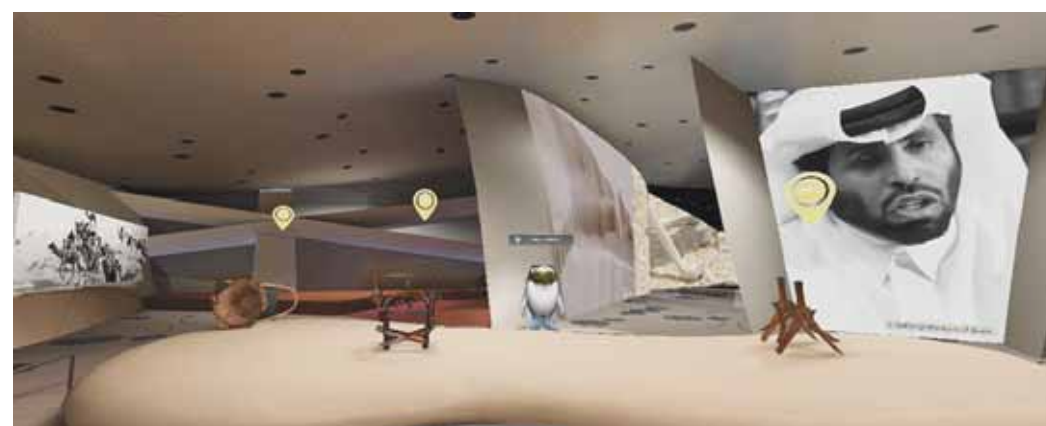
"Looking ahead, we remain dedicated to evolving the programme by diversifying redemption opportunities across lifestyle, travel, and mobility sectors, while delivering increasingly personalised experiences tailored to the unique needs of every member," he added.

QIC's success in delivering an integrated customer experience, combining exclusive insurance products, innovative digital solutions, and its Coins loyalty programme, has earned it the title of "Insurer of the Year" in the region at the MENA II Awards 2026.

The company has also been named "Motor Insurer of the Year" in the region, in addition to winning the "Insurer of the Year" in Qatar title for the fifth consecutive year.

For more information about Qatar Insurance, visit qic.online. To download QIC app and get welcome Coins, visit app.qic.online

QM affirms commitment to employing digital solutions



Qatar Museums (QM) confirmed that the collection of international awards it earned in 2026 reflects its progress in digital transformation and its adoption of innovative solutions that enhance public access to its cultural content and enrich its experience.

QM said in a statement that it has earned nine international recognitions to date in 2026 across two leading global digital awards programmes, The Webby Awards and Awwwards. The recognised projects span AI-powered visitor tools, immersive digital environments, and online cultural platforms designed to connect global audiences with Qatar's museums, heritage, and collections.

In this context, Director of Digital Experience at Qatar Museums, Asma al-Jefairi, said: "These results show how Qatar Museums is using digital tools to make cul-

ture more accessible, engaging, and relevant to audiences not just in Qatar, but worldwide. By using advanced technologies such as generative AI and immersive 3D environments, we are preserving our heritage while re-imagining how the world interacts with it."

Widely regarded as the "Internet's highest honour", The Webby Awards recognised Qatar Museums across multiple categories in 2026. Its shortlisted projects placed among the top 17% of nearly 13,000 entries from over 70 countries.

Honourée Awards were received by the Qatar Museums AI Tour (Video and Film, Trailer and AI, Consumer Application), and the National Museum of Qatar (NMoQ) Metaverse Pilot Project (Immersive Content, Arts, Fashion and Culture).

The Qatar Museums AI Tour is the world's first initiative of

this kind, offering an AI-enabled platform to explore Qatar's cultural landscape.

Meanwhile, the NMoQ Metaverse Pilot Project offers a live digital museum environment combining 3D spaces, augmented reality, extended reality, and AI-driven interaction.

Qatar Museums also received six recognitions from Awwwards, a Spain-based organisation that evaluates the world's best web designers and developers, in addition to receiving five Ribbons and one Honourable Mention.

The Mathaf Encyclopedia, re-launched in late 2025, provides peer-reviewed, bilingual content on modern and contemporary Arab artists, while the Design Doha website and QM Online Collection offer thousands of artworks and artifacts in 2D and 3D, and highlight QM's digital breadth. (QNA)

Ehsan enhances co-operation with Aspetar

Ehsan Center for Empowerment and Elderly Care, in collaboration with Aspetar Orthopaedic and Sports Medicine Hospital, has launched a new health awareness programme at promoting healthier lifestyles among seniors.

The programme, held as part of the awareness series organised by the Elderly Council at Katara Cultural Village, reflects ongoing efforts to enhance the quality of life and health awareness of older adults in the community.

The session featured a lecture by Dr Omar al-Sayrafi from Aspetar titled "Health is a Decision, Small Habits for Big Results", where he emphasised the importance of adopting simple daily habits to prevent chronic diseases. His talk provided practical guidance on improving overall well-being, encouraging seniors to maintain activity levels and adopt sustainable, health-conscious routines.

Speaking on the initiative, Omar Shaheen al-Kaabi, General Supervisor of the Elderly Council (Katara) at Ehsan, said the programme aligns with the centre's strategic vision of empowering seniors through targeted awareness campaigns. He noted that such initiatives help instil posi-



tive health behaviours and support more active and sustainable lifestyles, ultimately improving both physical and mental well-being while reinforcing seniors' active role in society.

Khalid Abdulrahman al-Naamah, director of communications and marketing at Aspetar, highlighted the hospital's commitment to senior care. "At Aspetar, we prioritise older adults through an integrated approach that combines specialised medical care with preventive awareness programs," he said. "Our collaboration with Ehsan is part of broader community initiatives

aimed at promoting a culture of health as a way of life."

In the meantime, Ehsan Centre reaffirmed its commitment to elevating the status of senior citizens as a cornerstone of society by developing high-quality programs and building impactful strategic partnerships. The collaboration with Aspetar, officials said, is part of a wider effort to foster a comprehensive ecosystem that promotes health awareness, encourages positive practices, and delivers lasting improvements in the well-being and quality of life of seniors across Qatar.

Doha Bank is first bank in Qatar to integrate QDI on mobile banking app

Doha Bank continues to lead the digital transformation of banking in Qatar with the launch of Qatar Digital Identity (QDI) integration on its mobile banking app, becoming the first bank in Qatar to offer this service.

The integration enables customers to open a new bank account directly through the app by verifying their QDI-linked biometric identity digitally in real-time. The launch is part of Doha Bank's ongoing commitment to advancing its digital infrastructure and delivering banking solutions that meet the evolving expectations of its customers.

By embedding QDI verification into its app, the bank offers a fully secure digital onboarding experience, reinforcing its focus on streamlining banking processes and enhancing the digital customer journey.

Through this digital onboarding capability, customers can instantly open Doha Bank's AI



Ghina savings account via the mobile banking app, offering a limited time preferential interest rate of up to 3% pa, along with flexible access to savings in both QR and USD.

Doha Bank Group CEO Sheikh Abdulrahman bin Fahad bin Faisal al-Thani said: "At Doha Bank, we have built our digital platform on a clear principle, delivering solu-

tions that add real value to our customers. Being the first bank in Qatar to launch QDI integration reflects that commitment and reaffirms our role in leading the digital transformation of banking. This is not where we stop. We will continue to invest in advancing our digital capabilities to remain at the forefront."

Doha Bank Deputy CEO Dimitrios Kokosioulis said: "The integration of QDI into our mobile platform represents a key step in simplifying account opening for our customers. By enabling fully digital access to savings products, such as the Al Ghina account, we are delivering greater convenience while offering attractive returns on savings."

With the integration of QDI digital identity, Doha Bank further cements its standing as one of Qatar's most forward-thinking financial institutions, continuing to set the pace for digital banking in the country.

Aspetar implements integrated medical programmes for QSL players

Aspetar Orthopaedic and Sports Medicine Hospital has implemented integrated medical programmes during the concluding sports season, as part of strengthening its partnership with Qatari football by providing medical support to Qatar Stars League (QSL) players.

As the Official Medical Partner of the Qatar Stars League, Aspetar played a central role in safeguarding player health and ensuring match readiness. Its comprehensive medical framework included preventive screenings, pre-match assessments, and advanced diagnostics, treatment, and rehabilitation in line with the highest international standards in sports medicine.

Commenting on the hospital's

efforts, Acting Director General of Aspetar Khalid Ali al-Mawlawi said: "supporting Qatari sport is a national responsibility we take great pride in at Aspetar. The specialised medical services we provide reflect our commitment to caring for athletes and preparing them according to global best practices. It has been an exceptional season at every level, and we commend the efforts behind the Qatar Stars League. We are proud to be partners in the ongoing success of Qatari football year after year."

For his part, CEO of the Qatar Stars League Foundation Hani Ballan praised the partnership, stating: "Our collaboration with Aspetar has created a safe and professional sporting environment. The hospi-



Hani Ballan

tal's dedication to player care and medical excellence continues to advance Qatari football. This partner-



Khalid Ali al-Mawlawi

ship remains a cornerstone of the league's long-term success."

Since the start of the season,

Aspetar has delivered unified medical services to all participating clubs through its National Sports Medicine Programme. Integrated medical teams accompany clubs during training and matches, ensuring consistent and immediate care for players.

Operating within one of the most advanced integrated sports medicine models in world football, Aspetar supports players' recovery and safe return to competition while contributing to performance improvement and football development across Qatar.

Unlike many leagues where clubs manage medical care independently, Aspetar's centralised and standardised system guarantees equal access to medical services. Com-

prehensive care is delivered both on and off the pitch, with unified medical standards applied league wide.

Acting as the league's central medical authority, Aspetar ensures consistency in diagnosis, treatment, rehabilitation, and return-to-play decisions. This framework reinforces medical safety and fairness in player readiness and competitive opportunities.

Each QSL club is supported by an embedded Aspetar medical team.

These teams continuously monitor players' health, conduct regular assessments, and document all information in a unified electronic medical record system, enabling real-time tracking and coordination across the league. (QNA)



Syrian court begins proceedings against Assad regime

A Syrian court conducted the first hearing yesterday in the trial of ousted ruler Bashar al-Assad and senior figures from his government, one of whom appeared in person.

Assad and his brother Maher have fled Syria and will be tried in absentia, but one of their relatives, former security official Atef Najib, was in the dock in handcuffs.

"Today we begin the first trials of transitional justice in Syria," judge Fakhr al-Din al-Aryan declared as he opened the session.

"This includes a defendant in custody, present in the dock, as well as defendants who have fled justice," he said.

A judicial source, speaking to AFP on condition of anonymity, said the proceedings marked the beginning of preparations for the trials of Assad, his brother and other prominent figures like Najib.

Najib, who was arrested in January 2025 in the aftermath of the collapse of the Assad government, appeared in court in Damascus in a striped prison jersey.

He previously headed Syria's political security branch in the southern province of Daraa, where Syria's 2011 uprising first erupted.

He is accused of leading a broad campaign of repression and arrests there.

Assad fled to Moscow as Syrian forces closed in on Damascus in December 2024, ending more than five decades of his family dynasty's rule.

The judge did not question Najib during Sunday's session, which was dedicated to "preparatory administrative and legal procedures", and announced that a second hearing would be held on May 10.

The judicial source said in-person trials will include Wassim al-Assad, another relative of the ousted president, former grand mufti Ahmed Badreddin Hassoun, as well as military and security officials arrested by the new authorities in recent months. (AFP)



Former head of political security i, Atef Najib attends the first trial session at the Palace of Justice, in Damascus on yesterday. (AFP)

Fatah leads in West Bank elections

Palestinian president Mahmud Abbas's Fatah movement was on track to lead municipal councils in several major West Bank cities, official election results showed yesterday, with about 95 percent of ballots counted. Speaking at a press conference announcing the results, Palestinian prime minister Mohammad Mustafa described the vote as "an expression of the national will of the Palestinian people". (AFP)

Israel orders evacuation of 7 villages in Lebanon

The Israeli military ordered the evacuation of seven villages in southern Lebanon on Sunday, saying it would respond to what it said were Hezbollah's violations of a recently renewed ceasefire agreement between the countries. "In light of the terrorist organisation Hezbollah's violation of the ceasefire agreement, the IDF is compelled to take decisive action against it," the military's Arabic-language spokesman Colonel Avichay Adraee said on X, naming seven villages north of the Litani River. (AFP)

Iran FM to meet Putin in Moscow

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi will meet Russian President Vladimir Putin during a visit to Moscow on Monday, the ISNA news agency reported. It cited Tehran's ambassador to Russia, Kazem Jalali, who said that Araghchi would meet Putin and "consult with Russian officials regarding the latest status of the negotiations, ceasefire, and surrounding developments", and present a report on negotiations to end the war with the United States and Israel. (AFP)

Rebels battle for Mali's Kidal

AFP
Bamako

Fresh fighting erupted yesterday in the key Malian town of Kidal between Tuareg rebels and government forces supported by Russian mercenaries, a day after insurgents launched co-ordinated strikes across the restive Sahel nation. Tuareg rebels of the Azawad Liberation Front (FLA) coalition on Saturday had said they had seized the northern city of Kidal, supported by fighters.

"Fighting resumed in Kidal this morning. We want to drive out the last Russian fighters who have taken refuge in a camp," Mohamed Ramdane, a spokesman for the Tuareg rebels said yesterday.

A local official confirmed the fighting.

"Today, Sunday, fighting resumed in Kidal between the Malian army, the Russians and the (Tuareg) rebels. Residents heard gunfire. There's shooting," the of-



A column of black smoke rises above buildings as traffic passes the Africa Tower monument in Bamako yesterday. (AFP)

icial said, speaking on condition of anonymity.

Kidal, a Tuareg stronghold, was retaken in November 2023 by the Malian army backed by Russia's Wagner paramilitary group, ending more than a decade of control by rebels. The FLA also claims to have taken positions in the northern Gao region. "The aim of the attackers was not to seize and control cities, but to carry out co-ordinated actions in order to at least capture

Kidal, which is a rather powerful symbol," a security source told AFP.

Mali has been ravaged for more than a decade by conflict and violence but Saturday's attacks were the worst since 2020, when the junta seized power. They took place on the fringes of the Malian capital Bamako and in several towns and cities across the sprawling Sahel nation.

The fighting left 16 civilians and soldiers wounded and caused "lim-

ited material damage," the government said in a statement on Saturday evening. It added that "the situation is totally under control in all the localities" that were attacked.

In Bamako, soldiers were stationed Sunday morning around a clinic in the city where Defence Minister Sadio Camara was admitted the previous day, according to a medical source and witnesses.

According to residents, the minister's residence in Kati, a neighbouring town of Bamako and a stronghold of the ruling junta, was largely destroyed by a powerful explosion.

Camara's aides denied he was wounded while some reports emerged suggesting that he had been killed.

In the capital, access to military facilities has been blocked by barriers and tyres on the roads, an AFP journalist said. In the outlying district of Senou, where the airport is located and which witnessed heavy fighting on Saturday, the atmosphere was jittery. "I still hear the

blasts ringing in my ears. It's traumatising," a resident said.

United Nations chief Antonio Guterres condemned "acts of violence" in Mali. "The Secretary-General is deeply concerned by reports of attacks in several locations across Mali," his spokesman said in a statement.

"The Secretary-General calls for co-ordinated international support to address the evolving threat of violent extremism and terrorism in the Sahel and to meet urgent humanitarian needs," spokesman Stephane Dujarric added.

Russia's Africa Corps, an organisation under direct control of the Russian defence ministry, has taken over from the mercenary Wagner group in helping Malian forces fight jihadists.

Mali has resources including gold and other valuable minerals.

Mali's rulers, like their military counterparts in neighbouring Niger and Burkina Faso, have severed ties with former colonial ruler France and several Western countries, moving closer to Russia.

Hezbollah accuses Israel of violating truce

AFP
Beirut

Hezbollah yesterday rejected Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's accusation that it was jeopardising a ceasefire and said it would keep responding to Israel's own violations and occupation of south Lebanon.

In a statement, Hezbollah said its attacks on Israeli targets in southern Lebanon and northern Israel were "a legitimate response to the enemy's persistent violations of the ceasefire since the first day of the announcement of the temporary truce".

"Hezbollah affirms clearly and firmly that the enemy's continued ceasefire violations... and above all its continued occupation of Lebanese territory and violations of its sovereignty will be met with a response and a resistance that is present and ready to defend its land and people," the statement said.

Netanyahu told a cabinet meeting that "Hezbollah's violations are, in practice, dismantling the ceasefire", and said that "we are acting vigorously in accordance with arrangements agreed with the United States and, incidentally, also with Lebanon".

Under the terms of the truce, which came into force on April 17 and was recently extended for three weeks, Israel reserves the right to respond to "planned, imminent or ongoing attacks".

It has kept up deadly strikes on Lebanon and its troops are operating inside what it calls the "yellow line", which demarcates a ribbon



An Israeli military vehicle drives in Lebanon, as seen from the Israeli side of the border, in northern Israel, yesterday. (Reuters)

of Lebanese territory around 10 kilometres (six miles) deep along the length of the border, where Lebanese have been warned not to return.

Hezbollah said that the extension of the truce "was supposed to, according to Lebanese authorities, lead to a real ceasefire... but instead (Israel) escalated its aggression and attacks".

The group has strongly criticised Lebanese authorities and urged them to end their direct engagement with Israel after the two countries' ambassadors to the United States met in Washington twice this month.

US President Donald Trump announced the ceasefire days after the first landmark meeting between the representatives of the two countries - which have no diplomatic relations - and the truce extension at the second en-

counter on Thursday.

Hezbollah said that Lebanese authorities had gotten themselves into "a dangerous predicament when they chose to appear together in a disgraceful photograph" with Israeli representatives.

It said the government had "remained silent and been incapable of fulfilling their most basic national duties towards their land and people, watching as the enemy blows up homes and burns" Lebanese land, Hezbollah said.

Authorities must "provide a clear explanation to their people about the pretext the enemy uses from an agreement that grants them the freedom to attack, destroy and kill".

"We will not wait for or bet on disappointing diplomacy that has proven its failure, nor on an authority that has failed to protect the nation," Hezbollah added.

Israel elections: Netanyahu's rivals in fray

Reuters
Jerusalem

Two of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's most formidable political rivals said on Sunday they were joining forces in a bid to oust his coalition government in the upcoming election expected later this year.

The former prime ministers - right-wing Naftali Bennett and centrist Yair Lapid - issued statements announcing the merger of their parties, Bennett 2026 and There is a Future.

"This move is intended to unite the bloc, put an end to internal divisions, and focus all efforts on winning the critical upcoming elections - and leading Israel forward into the future," opposition leader Lapid said. Bennett's office said the new party will be called Together, and that he will be its leader.

Joining Forces once more

Bennett and Lapid have joined forces before, putting an end to Netanyahu's successive 12-year tenure in a 2021 election, only to form a coalition government that survived barely 18 months.

Before that, they muscled their way into his 2013 coalition government in a move that left Netanyahu's traditional ultra-Orthodox allies out.

Netanyahu, Israel's longest-serving prime minister, made a comeback when he won the November 2022 election and formed the most right-wing government in Israel's history.

But Hamas storming of Israel, which plunged the Middle East into turmoil and saw Israel fighting on multiple fronts, left



Israel's former caretaker prime minister Yair Lapid speaks with former premier Naftali Bennett during a meeting. (Reuters/File Photo)

Netanyahu's security credentials in tatters and polls since then have successively predicted that he will lose the next election, due by the end of October. Netanyahu, a polarising figure at home and abroad and the most dominant Israeli politician of his generation, has shown remarkable political survival skills in the past, however.

Shifting Political Map

Bennett, 54, a pugnacious former army commando turned tech millionaire has been trailing Netanyahu in election polls. An April 23 survey by Israel's N12 News found Bennett securing 21 of the Knesset's 120 seats, against 25 seats for Netanyahu's Likud.

It found Lapid's party securing only seven seats, down from the 24 it currently holds, but with Netanyahu's coalition of right-wing and religious parties commanding only 50 seats, against at least 60 seats for Bennett and Lapid's likely coalition that would include several smaller factions.

The survey was on par with previous polls by academic insti-

tutions and other Israeli media, which have put Bennett as the top contender against Netanyahu, though the political map could still shift and change.

Lapid, 62, a telegenic former TV news anchor who writes pop songs and thrillers, speaks as the voice of Israel's secular middle class, which has become increasingly incensed by what it sees as an unfair tax and military service burden. Netanyahu's ultra-religious political allies have been seeking an exemption for their communities, who have low employment and many state benefits, from the conscript military. It is a hot-button issue in Israel that has become all the more pressing since the military has warned of being over-stretched and with the last two years exacting the highest military death toll in decades.

Both have made it a central issue for their campaign. They have also criticised Netanyahu for failing to leverage military gains into strategic wins over Iran and the groups it supports in Lebanon and Gaza - Hezbollah and Hamas.

Syria balancing regional energy equation

The flow of Iraqi fuel oil shipments through Syrian territory towards the port of Baniyas in Tartus governorate on the Mediterranean Sea constitutes a step that paved the way for a strategic corridor for oil flows towards the Mediterranean.

Director of Corporate Communications at the Syrian Petroleum Company Safwan Sheikh Ahmad said this step reflects Syria's return to playing a key role as an energy corridor in the region, and the country's preparedness for operational capabilities.

He said the ongoing transport operations are carried out according to an integrated logistics system that currently relies on land transport via dedicated tankers, where the receiving, unloading and storage operations are organised within prepared facilities, leading to re-pumping via the Baniyas outlet.

He revealed that the transition to the level of pipelines, including historical projects such as Kirkuk-Baniyas, requires broader arrangements, in addition to infrastructure rehabilitation and modernisation works.

He also pointed out that this route provides direct revenues related to transit and storage services.

Ahmad noted that Syria has a unique geographical

location that qualifies it to be a pivotal energy corridor towards the Mediterranean Sea.

With the development of infrastructure and the strengthening of partnerships, this role can be expanded to include a wider range of transport and export operations in light of the regional need to diversify supply routes and enhance their reliability.

Director of Local and International Relations at the General Authority for Ports and Customs in Syria, Mazen Alloush, echoed similar views.

Alloush explained that the procedures included simplifying and standardising customs transactions, adopting dedicated routes so as to ensure convoys reach their destination with high efficiency and without registering obstacles.

He pointed out that the authorities faced several challenges due to the damaged infrastructure they inherited from the previous regime.

For example, Al Tanf crossing, which is the passage through which Iraqi fuel convoys pass needed comprehensive rehabilitation.

Despite this, he said that things are smooth as the authorities are addressing these challenges through continuous maintenance. (QNA)

ANNOUNCEMENT

I, LITON MIAH ABUL HASHEM

holder of

BANGLADESH Passport No. EG0785202
QID No. 28105004800

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from

LITON MIAH ABUL HASHEM

to

MOHAMMAD LITON MIAH ABUL HASHEM

Any objection, please contact

THE PERMANENT COMMITTEE FOR
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NEPAL Passport No. 12289017
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Ahead of midterms, Democrats cautious on cornering Trump

Reuters
Washington

Until this month, Democrats have displayed military-like discipline in staying on message about the economy. Then came US President Donald Trump's threats against Iran, his portrayal of himself as a Christ-like figure on social media and his attacks on the pope.

Since then, nearly 40% of House Democrats — 84 as of last week — signed on to Representative Jamie Raskin's bill to bolster the 25th Amendment with the creation of a special commission to assess presidents' ability to carry out their duties.

The 25th Amendment of the US Constitution provides the barebones process for taking away a president's power in a procedure separate from impeachment.

"I think the Raskin effort is matching where people (voters) are at," said Representative Mark Pocan of Wisconsin, in an interview. "They can't believe what Donald Trump's saying."

But other Democrats warn that focusing on removing Trump, or impeaching him would, at best, muddy their election-year message of making America more affordable, and at worst turn off voters who watched Democrats impeach Trump twice in his first term only to see him acquitted by a Republican-controlled Senate and elected to a second term in 2024.

Moreover, Democrats are on a winning streak with strong performances in special elections since the beginning of last year.

A Reuters/Ipsos poll of registered voters this month found 77% believe Trump bears at least a fair amount of responsibility for the rise in gas prices since the US and Israel launched a war on Iran, and polls consistently show voters favor Democrats over Republicans as the party best able to address cost-of-living issues.

"I doubt, for instance, that Mary Peltola and Sherrod Brown are going to be talking a lot about impeaching Trump," said Kyle Kondik, managing editor



President Donald Trump arrives at the Palm Beach International Airport on Friday. (AFP)

of "Sabato's Crystal Ball" at the University of Virginia, referring to two Democrats running in red states Alaska and Ohio, respectively.

Alex Conant, a Republican strategist who was an aide to Marco Rubio when the current secretary of state was a senator, said Republicans will love it if Democrats make removing Trump part of their election-year appeal to voters.

"They will say that Trump is focused on the economy and Democrats are focused on Donald Trump," he said.

IT'S THE ECONOMY, DEMOCRATS

Democratic Representative Rosa DeLauro, a Connecticut liberal, agreed that "there is something unbelievably wrong" with Trump, but she has not joined Raskin's initiative.

"Let's get to what the needs are of the country. The economy, healthcare, grocery prices, that's where I concentrate," said DeLauro, who is seeking a 19th term in Congress.

One of the most centrist House Democrats, Representative Henry Cuellar of Texas, told Reuters: "I think we need to focus on what's important to our districts: the affordability, the ICE raids."

The Trump administration has dispatched thousands of US Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents nationwide in an intensified effort to deport migrants that threatens Republican inroads with Hispanic voters. Cuellar's district hugs the border with Mexico.

"I don't think we need to vote down impeachment again. It's already happened. We know what's going to happen in the Senate," Cuellar said.

Even Senator Elizabeth Warren of Massachusetts, a leading voice for progressives, distanced herself from Raskin's effort.

"It is appropriate to look at the 25th Amendment," she said in an interview. "But it's going to take Republicans standing up and doing that. The Democrats cannot do it by themselves."

Under the 25th Amendment, the vice president, working in tandem with the president's Cabinet heads, would have to initiate a move to temporarily strip him of his powers.

PRESSURE TO IMPEACH FROM THE LEFT

Other Democrats running for re-election this year, however, might need to embrace the idea of impeaching Trump to appeal to the party's younger left-flank

voters. Representative John Larson of Connecticut, a 77-year-old establishment Democrat, facing a challenge from at least two candidates who are more than three decades younger than him, introduced 13 articles of impeachment against Trump on April 6.

They range from usurping Congress' power to declare war and committing war crimes to violating the Constitution's "emoluments" clauses prohibiting presidents from using their office to enrich themselves.

A Larson spokesperson noted that the congressman has a long record of embracing liberal stances, including his votes against the US war in Iraq.

For the time being, Democrats are treading carefully on the subject of taking on Trump, despite the party's string of successes in special elections since January, 2025.

Failing to do so elicits a flurry of accusations from Republicans that Democrats harbour "irrational hatred" of Trump.

"Democrats are Once Again Gearing Up For Impeachment, and Other Than Trump Derangement Syndrome, They Can't Articulate Why," said a press release issued April 10 by House Speaker Mike Johnson.

It is an attack that could reso-

nate in states like Ohio, Alaska and North Carolina, where Democrats are trying to oust incumbent Republican senators by winning over independent voters.

WINNING IN RED STATES

Democratic former Senator Brown is in a bid to claw back his Senate seat representing Ohio, which he lost in 2024 after years of backing from blue-collar workers.

Amid all the Washington chatter this month about removing Trump, Brown's campaign has largely ignored it.

Instead, he is sticking to affordability and arguing that workers are being cheated by "a rigged system" that he says hits everyone from blue-collar laborers to farmers. Among his proposals are capping rate increases on utility bills — not ousting Trump.

Polling puts the economy and consumer prices atop voters' list of worries, even as Trump works to defend the impact of higher gasoline prices stemming from the US war on Iran as a good investment.

Trump campaigned in 2024 promising to bring down prices. Instead, going into the thick of this year's political campaigns, the U.S. inflation year-over-year rate was 3.3% in March, up from 2.4% in February.

Just 25% of respondents in a late March Reuters/Ipsos poll approved of Trump's handling of the cost of living.

Polling like that heartens Democrats' midterm hopes, especially given that the party out of power historically fares well in these off-presidential-year elections.

Whether or not the words "impeachment" or "25th Amendment" should be uttered in this campaign season, Democrats agree that linking the Iran war with affordability is a winning argument.

"I had 11 town halls with (constituents') tremendous frustration around gas prices" during Congress' spring break, Democratic Senator Ron Wyden of Oregon said in an interview. "What I'm focused on now is showing that we're involved in concrete results."

King Charles' trip to the US to go ahead: Buckingham Palace

Buckingham Palace said yesterday that the four-day trip to the United States by King Charles and Queen Camilla would go ahead as planned following a shooting at a dinner attended by President Donald Trump.

"Following discussions on both sides of the Atlantic through the day, and acting on advice of government, we can confirm the state visit by their majesties will proceed as planned," a palace spokesperson said.

"The king and queen are most grateful to all those who have worked at pace to ensure this remains the case and are looking forward to the visit getting underway tomorrow," the spokesperson added. (Reuters)

Sheinbaum reacts to shooting at Trump event

"Violence must never be the way," Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum said Saturday night, referring to US counterpart Donald Trump's evacuation from a gala event in Washington after shots were fired.

"It is good that President Trump and his wife are safe following the recent events. We send them our respect. Violence must never be the way," the leftist leader said on X. (AFP)

Michael Jackson biopic debuts atop box office

"Michael," the much-anticipated biopic about late superstar Michael Jackson, debuted atop the North American box office this weekend with a thriller-ing \$97mn.

The film, directed by Antoine Fuqua and distributed by Lionsgate, chronicles the legendary artist's rise from a child star to one of the world's most famous pop icons. In the starring role is Jaafar Jackson, the popstar's nephew. "This is a record-shattering opening for a musical biography," said analyst David A. Gross of Franchise Entertainment Research. "Most critics feel the film is superficial and avoids the complicated parts of the performer's life," Gross said. With the film already released in Europe, it has globally taken in nearly \$220mn, according to Exhibitor Relations. (AFP)

Gunshots fired at Correspondents' gala dinner

Reuters
Washington

President Donald Trump and officials in his administration were the likely targets of a suspect who fired on a security agent guarding the White House Correspondents' Association dinner in Washington, US Acting Attorney General Todd Blanche said.

The man fired a shotgun at a Secret Service agent at a security checkpoint in the Washington Hilton hotel before being tackled and arrested. Trump and first lady Melania Trump were rushed out of the dinner.

"It does appear that he, he did, in fact, have set out to target folks that work in the administration, likely including the president," Blanche told NBC News' "Meet the Press," adding that the suspect likely travelled by train from Los Angeles to Chicago and then to Washington.



Agents draw their guns during the White House Correspondents' dinner at the Washington Hilton in Washington, DC. (AFP)

The suspect will be charged in federal court on Monday with assault of a federal officer, discharging a firearm and attempting to kill a federal officer, Blanche said, adding he did not know if there was an Iran connection to the attack.

Trump told reporters at a late-night White House briefing that he believed he was the target of the attack. He said the Secret Service officer was saved by his bulletproof vest and was in "good shape."

A law enforcement official iden-



Law enforcement personnel detain Allen. (Reuters)

tified the suspect as Cole Tomas Allen, a California resident about 31 years old. Little was immediately known about Allen's background, but social media postings suggested he was a teacher in Torrance, near Los Angeles.

Washington interim Police Chief Jeffery Carroll said the suspect was armed with a shotgun, a handgun and multiple knives. He was taken to a local hospital to be evaluated but it was too soon to say what his motivation was, Carroll said.

Based on preliminary information, he was believed to have been a guest at the hotel, Carroll added.

A focus of the investigation is likely to be how the gunman was able to smuggle the shotgun into the hotel, which hosts the annual White House Correspondents' Association dinner, a marquee fixture of Washington's social calendar.

The black-tie event was attended by many members of Trump's cabinet and other senior administration officials amid heavy security. It was the first time Trump attended the event as president, having boycotted it in previous years.

The site of the dinner was the scene of an attempt on the life of President Ronald Reagan, who was shot and wounded by a would-be assassin outside the hotel in 1981.

Closed-circuit TV footage released by Trump on Truth Social showed the suspect running rapidly through a security checkpoint, momentarily catching security personnel off-guard before they drew their weapons.

No shots were fired at the gun-

man who got through two checkpoints before being brought down.

Officials believe he is a "lone wolf," Trump said after the gala dinner was canceled. Video footage shows Trump and his wife sitting at a banquet table on stage in conversation with someone when a commotion at the rear of the ballroom — caused by the noise of gunshots — triggers a ripple of gasps through the room. Many of the 2,600 attendees dressed in tuxedos and ball gowns took cover under tables as security personnel drew their weapons, with some pushing cabinet secretaries to the floor and covering them with their bodies while others formed a protective cordon.

Security personnel in combat fatigues stormed the stage pointing rifles into the ballroom as Trump, his wife Melania and Vice President JD Vance were evacuated. After which cabinet members were escorted out by their security details one by one.

Colombia road bombing death toll rises to 19

Colombia's forensic institute said yesterday it was examining 19 bodies after a massive roadway explosion the day before, which authorities have blamed on an armed group ahead of next month's elections.

Buses and vans were left mangled in the blast Saturday on the Pan-American Highway, in the restive southwestern Cauca department. Several cars were flipped over by the force of the explosion and a large crater was blown out of the roadway. The department's governor on Saturday evening provided a death toll of 14, with more than 38 injured, but the National Institute of Legal Medicine and Forensic Sciences said Sunday morning it had begun the examination of "nineteen (19) bodies."

Military chief Hugo Lopez told a news conference on Saturday that the bomb exploded after assailants stopped traffic by blocking the road with a bus and another vehicle.

"It is a terrorist attack against the civilian population," Lopez said.

The attack comes just over one month ahead of national elections, in which voters will pick a successor to leftist President Gustavo Petro.

"Those who carried out this attack... are terrorists, fascists and drug traffickers," President Gustavo Petro said on X. "I want our very best soldiers to confront them," he said. Petro blamed the bombing on Ivan Mordisco, the South American country's most-wanted criminal, whom the president has compared to late cocaine kingpin Pablo Escobar.

The violence came after a bomb attack Friday on a military base in Cali, Colombia's third-largest city, injured two people and set off a string of attacks in the Valle del Cauca and Cauca departments.

According to Lopez, 26 attacks have been recorded in the two de-



A man walks past destroyed vehicles after an attack with explosives in Cajibío, Colombia yesterday. (Reuters)

partments over the past two days. Authorities have boosted military and police presence in the

areas, Defense Minister Pedro Sanchez said Saturday. Colombia has a history of armed

groups — which finance their operations through drug trafficking, illegal mining and extortion — at-

tempting to influence elections through violence.

FARC remnants who rejected a 2016 peace deal with the government have been actively trying to disrupt stalled peace talks with Petro. Security is one of the central issues of the May 31 presidential election. Political violence was brought into sharp focus last June, when young conservative presidential frontrunner Miguel Uribe Turbay was shot in broad daylight while campaigning in the capital Bogotá.

Leftist Senator Ivan Cepeda, an architect of Petro's controversial policy of negotiating with armed groups, is ahead in polls.

He is trailed by right-wing candidates Abelardo de la Esprilla and Paloma Valencia, both of whom have pledged to take a hard line against rebel groups.

All three have reported receiving death threats and are campaigning under heavy security. (AFP)



Taiwan foreign minister arrives in Eswatini after president's trip blocked

Reuters, AFP
Taipei

Taiwan Foreign Minister Lin Chia-lung arrived in Eswatini saying Taipei would not be held back by "authoritarian forces", after the government accused China of pressuring three African states to block overflight permission for President Lai Ching-te.

Taiwan last week said the Seychelles, Mauritius and Madagascar unilaterally revoked flight

permits for its presidential aircraft to cross airspace they manage on a planned trip to Eswatini, one of Taiwan's 12 diplomatic allies.

It marked the first time a Taiwan president cancelled an entire foreign trip due to denial of airspace access, representing what appeared to be a new Chinese strategy to curb the island's international engagement.

Late on Saturday Lin posted a picture on Facebook of himself getting off a private jet upon arrival in the small southern African kingdom, formerly known as Swaziland.

"In that moment, I felt the deep friendship between Taiwan and Eswatini that transcends distance, and I became even more convinced that Taiwan will not be held back by authoritarian forces," he wrote.

"No matter how China uses political power to interfere with normal international civil aviation operations, politicising and weaponising flight information... it will not make Taiwan bow its head, nor will it stop our progress," Lin posted on Facebook yesterday.

"No unreasonable blockade or



Taiwan's Foreign Minister Lin Chia-lung. (Reuters/File Photo)

pressure can shake our resolve and will to safeguard our dignity

and connect with the international community," he added.

Lai, in a video message yesterday to King Mswati III for the 40th anniversary of his accession, said the Republic of China, Taiwan's formal name, is a "sovereign country" and belongs to the world.

"Our 23mn people have the right to engage with the international community. The greater the external pressure we face, the more courage and resolve we have," he said in English.

China denied pressuring the

three countries but praised them for blocking flight permission.

Lin did not offer details on his trip, saying only that his delegation "overcame all obstacles" to get to Eswatini in his capacity as Lai's special envoy.

China says democratically governed Taiwan is one of its provinces, with no right to the trappings of a state. Taiwan's government rejects Beijing's sovereignty claims.

The US last week criticised China's actions, while the European Union also expressed concern.

Two US citizens among 19 killed in raid: Manila

AFP
Manila

Two US citizens were among 19 people killed in a raid on an alleged communist stronghold in the Philippines that has sparked a probe by the country's rights commission, a government task force said.

More than 300 residents in the Toboso municipality of Negros island fled their homes on April 19 as gunfire rang out in the remote sugar cane-farming region, the municipal disaster management office told AFP last week.

The number of people killed in the firefight, in which only one soldier was wounded, sparked calls for an investigation.

The two Americans, identified as Lyle Prijoles and Kai Dana-Rene Sorem, arrived in Negros Occidental province about a month before they were killed, the task force said in a statement late Saturday.

"The National Task Force to End Local Communist Armed Conflict (NTF-ELCAC) notes with serious concern the confirmation that a second American national was among those killed in the April 19, 2026 armed encounter," the statement said.

"This brings to two (2) the number of US citizens... who died in the same incident," it added, identifying all 19 killed as "combatant" members of the New People's Army (NPA), which has been fighting a long-running insurgency for nearly 60 years.

Prijoles' name had been released shortly after the clash.

The US embassy did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

"The military operations carried out by the Philippine Army's 79th Infantry Battalion... warrant an urgent investigation," Congresswoman Leila de Lima said Saturday.

She pointed to the deaths of a young student and a community journalist in the raid.

In a separate statement, local rights monitor Karapatan said the "sheer number of those killed triggers significant questions and conclusions on the conduct of the AFP (Armed Forces of the Philippines) operations".

The Philippine military, which handed out medals to a number of soldiers involved, said the raid was "a legitimate armed encounter, not a massacre", noting the seizure of 24 firearms.

Addressing a probe launched by the country's Commission on Human Rights, Philippine Army spokesman Colonel Louie Demala told reporters on Sunday the military was "open to investigation and the evidence will speak for us".

The military told AFP last week it had been fighting "remnants" of the NPA near the Toboso municipality.

Demala said the area was "one of the more active remnants of the (guerrilla) front in the central Philippines".

The military estimates the rebel group has fewer than 2,000 armed members left.

China, Myanmar vow more trade, security co-operation

AFP
Yangon

China and Myanmar have pledged to expand trade and security ties, especially along their border, during talks in the southeast Asian nation with its junta chief-turned-president and both countries' top diplomats, the two governments said.

China's Wang Yi has been on a three-country visit to Southeast Asia, travelling to Cambodia, Thailand and Myanmar this week, seeking to strengthen ties and present Beijing as a more stable alternative to Washington.

China will "firmly support" Myanmar in safeguarding its national sovereignty and security, Wang told Myanmar's leader Min Aung Hlaing during a meeting in the capital Naypyidaw on Saturday, according to a Chinese foreign ministry readout.

"As this year marks the first year of the new Myanmar government's tenure, both sides should seize this opportunity to carry forward and promote their traditional friendship," Wang said.

Min Aung Hlaing was sworn in as president this month, continuing his rule from a civilian post five years after snatching power in a military coup that sparked the ongoing civil war.

The parliamentary ceremony where he was sworn in was attended by more than 20 foreign representatives including from China, which analysts say was the junta-backed election's biggest supporter.

Democracy watchdogs have described the tightly controlled election that concluded in January as an effort to rebrand military rule, with voting not taking place in swaths of the country controlled by rebels who are fighting the military and rejected the poll.

Over the past year, there have been signs the



China's Foreign Minister Wang Yi shaking hands with Myanmar's President Min Aung Hlaing during a meeting at the Presidential House in Naypyidaw, Myanmar, yesterday. (AFP)

military is on the front foot — with a string of moderate victories thanks largely to China-backed truces with ethnic minority rebels along their shared border.

Analysts say China's recent interventions to rein in the ethnic fighters — who have long resisted central rule — are a sign Beijing is backing the military establishment to provide a semblance of stability in the country.

In a meeting with Myanmar's Foreign Minister Tin Maung Swe on Saturday, Wang called for joint efforts to "enhance cooperation" in electricity, oil and gas, expand bilateral trade

and investments, and "deepen security collaboration" to maintain stability along their border, according to a Chinese foreign ministry statement.

Myanmar's state-run Global New Light of Myanmar yesterday also said the meetings emphasised further co-operation in the "stability of border regions, facilitating smooth, swift, and efficient trade flows and the efforts to restore the internal peace process".

Since resigning as armed forces chief and becoming president, Min Aung Hlaing has called on groups fighting the military to engage in peace negotiations ahead of a late July deadline.

He has led the country since 2021 when he deposed the elected government of Aung San Suu Kyi, detaining her and sparking the civil war which has killed tens of thousands of people on all sides.

The two nations' diplomats also discussed "combating online scamming and illegal activities in border areas", Global New Light of Myanmar said.

Myanmar has emerged as a regional base for cyberscam operations in recent years, with the military publicising raids on sprawling fraud compounds.

Transnational crime groups initially mostly targeted Chinese speakers before widening their reach and stealing tens of billions of dollars annually from victims around the world.

Both the US and China have pressured Myanmar and other nations in the region to crack down on operators of fake romance and cryptocurrency investment cons, perpetrated over the internet by thousands of scammers — some willing participants and others trafficked.

China was willing to cooperate with Myanmar to "resolutely and thoroughly eradicate the scourge" of online gambling and telecommunications fraud, Wang said.

Russian defence minister visits North Korea

Russian Defence Minister Andrei Belousov has arrived in North Korea, Russia's defence ministry said yesterday, the second senior Russian official to visit Pyongyang in recent days.

Earlier, North Korean state media KCNA reported that Russia's State Duma Chairman Vyacheslav Volodin had also arrived in Pyongyang and will attend the opening ceremony of a newly built memorial for North Korean troops who died fighting in the Ukraine war.

Belousov is due to hold talks with North Korea's top leadership and senior military officials and will take part in "ceremonial and commemorative events," the Russian

defence ministry said. Separately, Russian President Vladimir Putin sent a telegram to North Korean leader Kim Jong-un to mark the opening of the memorial, the Kremlin said.

Putin thanked Kim and North Korean soldiers for helping Russia repel a major Ukrainian incursion into its western Kursk region and said he was confident the two countries would continue to strengthen their strategic partnership. Kim and Putin met in June 2024 and signed a comprehensive strategic treaty that includes a mutual defence pact. The two countries have rapidly developed diplomatic and military ties since 2023. (Reuters)

Russia Speaker thanks N Korea leader for 'liberation of Kursk'

AFP
Seoul

Russia's parliamentary Speaker thanked North Korean leader Kim Jong-un for "the liberation of Kursk" by sending troops there to fight off Ukrainians, Russian news agency TASS reported yesterday.

Pyongyang has sent thousands of troops — as well as missiles and munitions — to support Russia's war in Ukraine.

They were deployed to Russia's western Kursk region to fend off a months-long counter-offensive by Kyiv's troops.

Seoul estimates about 2,000 North Koreans have been killed in Moscow's war with Ukraine. In return, analysts say North Korea is receiving financial aid, military technology, food and energy from Russia, helping Pyongyang circumvent heavy international sanctions over its banned nuclear programmes.

A Russian delegation, including Vyacheslav Volodin — the speaker of Russia's Duma, or lower house of parliament — arrived in Pyongyang on Saturday to attend the opening ceremony of a memorial complex honouring those killed while supporting Moscow's war effort against Ukraine.

"(Let me express these) words of gratitude to you, esteemed Comrade Kim Jong-un, and to

the Korean people for their fraternal support in the liberation of Kursk," Volodin was quoted as saying by TASS.

"Korean soldiers fought shoulder to shoulder with our soldiers and officers, liberating Russian soil from the Ukrainian Nazis," he said.

A short video posted on TASS's Telegram account shows Volodin and Kim hugging, with Volodin delivering his opening remarks in a meeting.

North Korea has yet to comment on the meeting.

Russia's Defence Minister Andrei Belousov also arrived in Pyongyang yesterday "for talks

with the country's top leadership and armed forces command", TASS reported.

In 2024 the two countries signed a military treaty, obligating both states to provide military assistance "without delay" in the event of an attack on the other.

North Korean soldiers are said to have been instructed to kill themselves rather than be captured in battle.

Only two North Korean troops have been captured alive and are currently in custody of Ukrainian authorities.

The two soldiers have expressed their desire to come to South Korea.



Russia's State Duma Chairman Vyacheslav Volodin with Jo Yong-won, head of the North Korean Supreme People's Assembly, in Pyongyang, on Saturday. (Reuters)

Japan deploys hundreds of firefighters, evacuates over 3,200 as wildfires rage



A helicopter conducts firefighting operations in Otsuchi, Iwate Prefecture, Japan, yesterday. (Reuters)

Reuters
Otsuchi, Japan

Japan has deployed 1,400 firefighters and dozens of Self-Defense Force personnel to battle mountain blazes that have been raging in the north for five days and threaten to reach homes in the picturesque coastal town of Otsuchi, officials said yesterday.

Fanned by dry, windy weather, two more wildfires broke out elsewhere in the north yesterday — one in Kitakata city and the other in Nagaoka, potentially stretching firefighting resources thin as local authorities send personnel to neighbouring areas.

The area burned by the Otsuchi fires reached 1,373 hectares (3,393 acres) as of yesterday morning, up 7% from a day earlier.

The fires threaten residential districts of Otsuchi on the Pacific

Coast — a town that lost nearly a 10th of its population in one of Japan's worst disasters, the March 2011 earthquake and tsunami.

Authorities expanded the scope of evacuation orders to 1,558 households or 3,257 residents by last evening, roughly a third of Otsuchi's population.

"Although the Self-Defense Forces are fighting the fires from the sky (with helicopters), the dry weather and winds are helping the fires expand," Otsuchi Mayor Kozo Hirano told a press conference.

Some residents used hoses to spray water onto their houses and surrounding foliage, hoping to keep the flames at bay.

"I am prepared to evacuate by my car at any time. Fire won't be able to catch up to us since it does not move as fast as a tsunami," said resident Shigeki Fujiwara, 67.

Flames up in the mountain were visible from his home, and

while his family has already been evacuated, he said he had chosen to stay behind because he was worried about the house.

The only casualty to date has been one minor injury suffered when a person fell at an evacuation centre, Japan's Fire and Disaster Management Agency said on its website.

Rain is expected in some parts of Iwate prefecture's southern coastal region, where Otsuchi is located, according to the Japan Meteorological Agency.

The cause of the Otsuchi fires is not clear and is under investigation.

While Japan has experienced relatively few wildfires compared with other parts of the world, climate change has increased their frequency, especially as the early spring months before the humid rainy season have been hot, dry and with winds that can whip up flames.

Thai police arrest Indonesian wanted for \$10mn fraud

Police in Thailand have arrested an Indonesian who allegedly defrauded Americans of about \$10mn, Thai authorities said yesterday, adding that they will extradite him to the US. The 33-year-old Indonesian man was arrested on Friday at a luxury resort in the coastal town of Phuket after a tip-off from the US Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). Suriya Pongsombat of the national immigration police told AFP.

King Charles 'greatly relieved' Trumps unharmed after Washington shooting

AFP
London

Britain's King Charles III was "greatly relieved" US President Donald Trump, his wife Melania and other guests were unharmed after a shooting at a Washington media gala, Buckingham Palace said yesterday.

The incident late Saturday at the annual dinner of the White House Correspondents' Association came less than 48 hours before Charles and Queen Camilla begin a four-day state visit to the US.

The British monarch was being "kept fully informed of developments", the palace added.

"A number of discussions will be taking place throughout the day to discuss with US colleagues and our respective teams to what degree the events of Saturday evening may or may not impact on the operational planning for the visit."

Earlier, senior UK minister Darren Jones told British broadcasters during a round of interviews that security teams in Britain and the



US President Donald Trump and Britain's King Charles III inspect a guard of honour during a ceremonial welcome in the Quadrangle at Windsor Castle in Windsor during the US president's second state visit. (AFP/File Photo)

US were "working closely to ensure the security arrangements are put appropriately in place" for the state visit.

It is understood the king and queen reached out privately to the

Trump to express their sympathies with those impacted Saturday night, and to share their gratitude to the security services who prevented further injury.

Trump has said one law enforce-

ment officer was shot at close range but appeared to not be critically injured.

During the four-day state visit — organised to honour the historic relationship between Britain and the US as America marks 250 years of independence — Charles and Camilla will visit Washington and New York.

Charles will become the first British monarch to address Congress since his mother, the late queen Elizabeth II, in 1991, while the royal couple will have tea with Trump and Melania and attend a state dinner.

It comes as transatlantic tensions over the Iran war and the Epstein scandal's long shadow threaten to intrude on the landmark visit.

Trump has repeatedly lambasted British Prime Minister Keir Starmer over his war opposition, as well as his government's immigration and energy policies.

The pair spoke by phone yesterday, when Starmer "extended his best wishes... following the shocking scenes at last night's White House Correspondents Dinner,"

Starmer 'shocked' by shooting at Trump event

UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer said yesterday he was "shocked" by a shooting at a Washington media gala, adding it was "a huge relief" that President Donald Trump and others were unharmed.

"Any attack on democratic institutions or on the freedom of the press must be condemned in the strongest possible terms," Starmer said on X. Starmer sent a message yesterday to Trump "in solidarity for the events that took place", senior minister Darren Jones told UK broadcasters during a round of interviews.

The shooting late Saturday at the annual dinner of the White House Correspondents' Association came less than 48 hours before King Charles III arrives in the US for a state visit.

He will visit Washington and New York during the four-day trip alongside Queen Camilla, which will see the royals have tea with Trump and first lady Melania and attend a state dinner.

Jones said security teams in Britain and the US were "working closely to ensure the security arrangements are put appropriately in place".

"As you would imagine, the government and the palace take the security of His Majesty very seriously, and there were already extensive discussions taking place, which will continue over the coming days," he told Sky News. (AFP)

Downing Street said.

"He expressed his relief that the President and First Lady were safe and wished a speedy recovery to the officer injured," it added.

They also discussed "the urgent

need to get shipping moving again in the Strait of Hormuz, given the severe consequences for the global economy and cost of living for people in the UK and globally," Starmer's office noted.

N Ireland police suspect dissident republicans in latest car bombing

AFP
Belfast

Police in Northern Ireland said yesterday they suspect dissident Irish republicans could be behind an overnight car bomb attack outside a police station near Belfast, which caused no reported casualties.

The explosion in Dummurry, southwest of the Northern Irish capital, occurred after a "gas cylinder-type device" was placed in a delivery driver's hijacked car and driven to the location, according to police.

It followed a similar attempted bombing on March 30, when the device failed to explode outside a police station in the nearby town of Lurgan, with paramilitary group the New IRA claiming responsibility for that attack.

So-called dissident republicans are pro-Irish unity individuals and groups who do not accept

a landmark 1998 peace deal that largely ended three decades of sectarian conflict known as the "Troubles".

"There are very many similarities between the two incidents and... our early working hypothesis is that this may well be the work of the New IRA," deputy chief constable Bobby Singleton of the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) told reporters.

He added investigators will "keep an open mind" and "it's still the very early stages of the investigation" but noted it likely showed that "murderous intent and capability" still exists within paramilitaries in the UK territory.

"Police personnel immediately — and I have to say, extremely courageously, literally running into danger, placing themselves in harm's way — evacuated nearby homes in order to protect the community," he said.

The PSNI's terrorism investigation unit has launched an attempted murder investigation.

Videos circulated on social media showing the vehicle on fire at the police station around midnight. Fire crews and police worked to put out the blaze, according to local media.

Politicians have denounced the incident, with Northern Ireland's First Minister Michelle O'Neill, from the pro-Irish unity Sinn Fein party, saying those behind the attack "speak for absolutely no one".

Gavin Robinson, the leader of the Democratic Unionist Party — the British region's main pro-UK party — called the incident "deeply concerning".

"If this was another attempt by dissident republicans to intimidate communities and target the police, then it must be met with the full force of the law," he said.

Dissident republican groups are smaller than the Provisional IRA, which ended its violent campaign in 2005, but have used improvised explosive devices and mortars in past attacks.

Exiled Tibetans to elect government

AFP
Bylakuppe

Tibetans outside Chinese control vote yesterday for a government-in-exile, an election of heightened significance as they brace for an inevitable, eventual, future without their revered spiritual leader, the Dalai Lama.

The India-based Central Tibetan Administration (CTA) — condemned by China as "nothing but a separatist political group" — is a key institution for the exiles, especially after the Dalai Lama handed over political power in 2011.

"Our votes matter," said Tenzin Tsering, 19, a first-time voter waiting to cast his ballot to push for greater youth representation.

"We need voices that reflect where our community is going, not just where it has been," he said, speaking in Bylakuppe in India's southern state of Karnataka, one of the largest Tibetan communities outside the Himalayan plateau.

Polling is due to take place in 27 countries — but not China.

The 91,000 registered voters include Buddhist monks in the high Himalayas, political exiles in South Asia's megacities and refugees in Australia, Europe and North America.

The 90-year-old Dalai Lama,



A Tibetan reacts as he gets his documents verified before casting his ballot at a polling station in Dharamsala yesterday during the final round of parliamentary elections held for exiled Tibetans. (AFP)

based in India since fleeing the Tibetan capital Lhasa after Chinese troops crushed an uprising in 1959, insists he has many more years to live.

But supporters of the Nobel Peace Prize laureate are acutely aware that self-declared atheist and Communist China said last year that it must approve the Buddhist leader's eventual successor.

The Dalai Lama says only his India-based office has that right.

Tibetan Buddhists believe he is the 14th reincarnation of a spiritual leader first born in 1391.

The five-year parliament, which sits twice a year, has 45 members from across the world: 30 represent-

ing three traditional provinces, 10 representing five religious traditions and five representing the diaspora.

Headquartered in Dharamsala in northern India, it functions as a representative body for an estimated 150,000 Tibetans living in exile worldwide.

Lines of red robed monks and nuns lined up to vote in the Indian hill town yesterday.

The government's "sikyong", or leader, Penpa Tsering, was elected for a second term on February 1, after taking 61% in the preliminary round — a high enough threshold to win outright.

Tsering, like the government, does not seek full independence

for Tibet, in line with the Dalai Lama's long-standing "Middle Way" policy seeking autonomy.

Exiled voters represent only a fraction of ethnic Tibetans — whom the CTA estimates at six mn worldwide, compared with more than seven mn China counted in its 2020 census.

Beijing, which in 1950 sent troops to the vast high-altitude plateau it calls an integral part of China, has condemned the elections as a "farce".

Its foreign ministry calls the exiled government an "illegal organisation that completely violates the Chinese constitution and laws".

Among younger voters, some were worried at the perceived underrepresentation of Tibet's next generation in the corridors of the exile government.

"I want to see fresh faces, leaders who represent the potential of young Tibetans," said 25-year-old Tenzin Pema, expressing her weariness at the sometimes divisive arguments between older political leaders.

More than half of voters, about 56,000, live in India, Nepal and Bhutan. The remaining 34,000 are scattered around the world, including roughly 12,000 in North America — including New York and Toronto — and 8,000 in Europe, including Paris, Geneva, Zurich and London.

Results are expected on May 13.

Swiss International says five injured after flight aborts takeoff in India

Reuters
New Delhi

Swiss International said that a flight from Delhi to Zurich had to abort its takeoff early yesterday after an engine issue, adding that four passengers and one crew member were injured.

The airline did not elaborate, but the Economic Times reported that one of the engines had caught on fire as the plane was accelerating down a runway and that the passengers were injured during an emergency evacuation.

"Shortly after 1am local time on April 26, an issue occurred with one of the engines during the takeoff of flight LX147 in Delhi. The crew aborted the takeoff and, after assessing the situation, decided as a precaution to evacuate the aircraft," Swiss International said in a statement.

It said that it had set up a task force to look into the incident, adding that the injured passengers were taken to hospital, while the crew member had sustained a sprained ankle.

The airline had earlier said that six passengers had been injured but revised the number.

There were 228 passengers, four infants and 13 crew members on board the aircraft, which was an Airbus A330.

Delhi's Indira Gandhi International Airport declared an emergency following the incident, but runway operations have since resumed, said a source familiar with the matter who was not authorised to speak on the issue and declined to be identified.

Sri Lanka detains monks for drug smuggling

AFP
Colombo

Twenty-two Sri Lankan monks returning from Thailand were arrested yesterday at the main international airport with 110 kilogrammes (242 pounds) of powerful cannabis, officials said.

A Sri Lanka Customs spokesman said the group, returning home after a four-day holiday in the Thai capital, had Kush — a potent, plant-based strain of cannabis — hidden in their luggage.

"Each carried about five kilos of the narcotic concealed within false walls in their luggage," the spokesman said, adding that the monks had been handed over to police.

They were to be taken before a magistrate later yesterday. The monks were mostly young students from temples across Sri Lanka and had been on a holiday sponsored by a businessman.

Customs officials said it was the largest single detection of Kush at the South Asian country's main international airport.

A 21-year-old British woman was arrested in May last year with 46 kilogrammes (101 pounds) of the drug at the same airport. She was also travelling to Colombo from Bangkok.

Sri Lanka authorities have also made several detections of large hauls of heroin and other narcotics smuggled in via small fishing boats in recent years.

Sri Lanka seeks buyers for white-elephant airport

AFP
Colombo

Sri Lanka's government issued a call yesterday for investments in a currently loss-making airport, after a 30-year lease agreement with an Indo-Russian joint venture had failed to take off.

Mattala Rajapaksa International Airport, built with Chinese loans near a wildlife sanctuary on the island's southern coast, has no regular flights.

The small airport has failed to generate enough revenue to cover even electricity bills since opening in 2013, and has been a running sore on state coffers.

Calling for expressions of interest from investors, the government said the facility offers "untapped potential for growth opportuni-

ties... for exotic tourism development and strategic investment".

Two years ago, the Sri Lankan government announced it had awarded a 30-year lease to a joint venture between India's Shaurya Aeronautics and Russia's Airports of Regions Management Company, but the plan never materialised.

The airport is named after former president Mahinda Rajapaksa, who borrowed heavily from China for infrastructure projects that quickly became commercial failures.

Debts to China are partly blamed for an unprecedented financial crisis that prompted Sri Lanka to default on its \$46bn foreign debt in 2022.

Since receiving an International Monetary Fund bailout early the following year, Sri Lanka has sought to privatise a host of unprofitable state-owned enterprises, with no success.

The Mattala airport is located on a migra-

tory bird route, with several aircraft forced to ground after striking airborne fowl.

At one point, Sri Lanka's military deployed hundreds of troops to remove deer, wild buffalo and elephants from the runway so operations could continue.

The airport is regarded as an alternate destination in case of bad weather at the country's main international gateway in the capital Colombo, a half-hour flight away.

Several cargo carriers and some charter aircraft operate via Mattala, but the revenue is insufficient for the facility's upkeep, according to official reports.

In 2017, unable to repay a large Chinese loan, Sri Lanka allowed China Merchants Port Holdings to take over the Hambantota port, near Mattala.

The deal, which granted the Chinese company a 99-year lease, fuelled fears over Beijing's use of "debt traps" to exert influence.

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EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Faisal Abdulhameed al-Mudahka

Deputy Managing Editor

Kamran Rehmat

P.O.Box 2888, Doha, Qatar
 editor@gulf-times.com
 44350478 (News),
 44466404 (Sport),
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GULF TIMES

NPT: Between aspirations and challenges

Governments from most countries around the world are set to participate in the 11th Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), which opens today at United Nations headquarters and runs through May 22.

Held every five years, the conference assesses the effectiveness of the treaty – born out of Cold War tensions more than half a century ago – and examines whether it can advance disarmament, restraint, and co-operation amid mounting global security challenges.

The NPT is one of the most widely adhered-to multilateral agreements and a cornerstone of international security.

Entering into force in 1970 and regarded as a landmark diplomatic achievement of the United Nations, the treaty aims to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons by prohibiting their development, testing, production, acquisition, transfer, use, or threat of use. It also promotes co-operation in the peaceful use of nuclear energy and advances the goal of general and complete nuclear disarmament.

To date, 191 states have joined the treaty, which formally recognises five nuclear-weapon states – the United States, Russia, the United Kingdom, France, and China – on the basis that they conducted nuclear tests prior to January 1, 1967.

However, non-signatory states possessing nuclear weapons remain a major challenge to the treaty's effectiveness, as they operate outside its legal and verification framework.

The UN High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Izumi Nakamitsu, said the review conference provides an opportunity for countries to identify common ground despite an increasingly difficult security environment and escalating rhetoric.

She warned that the risk of nuclear weapons use is rising and must not be allowed to become normalised.

Despite the treaty's success in preventing the use of nuclear weapons in conflict for over five decades, the global non-proliferation regime is facing what many describe as its most serious crisis in years.

The international security landscape is marked by rising nuclear risks and deepening mistrust, while many Cold War-era agreements have either collapsed or expired.

In February, the New START treaty between the United States and Russia – which capped deployed strategic nuclear warheads – expired without a replacement.

At the time, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres warned that the world is entering uncharted territory, with no legally binding limits on the nuclear arsenals of the United States and Russia, which together possess the vast majority of the world's nuclear weapons.

This era of mistrust was reflected in the previous two NPT review conferences in 2015 and 2022, both of which concluded without agreement on a substantive final document.

All Arab states are parties to the NPT and have placed their nuclear facilities under comprehensive safeguards of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA); a step Israel has yet to take despite repeated international calls and UN resolutions.

Qatar has consistently emphasised, across international forums, the importance of adhering to all agreements and treaties related to nuclear disarmament and weapons of mass destruction.

In February, Qatar participated in the high-level segment of the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva, represented by Jawhara bint Abdulaziz al-Suwaidi, the charge d'affaires at Qatar's Permanent Mission in Geneva.

She stated that the international system is undergoing a critical phase marked by increasing armed conflicts, declining adherence to international law and the UN Charter, rising geopolitical polarisation and competition, accelerated nuclear modernisation programmes, and the integration of emerging technologies into military systems.

Al-Suwaidi noted that 2026 represents a pivotal moment for the global nuclear order with the convening of the 11th NPT Review Conference.

She stressed that the treaty remains the cornerstone of the non-proliferation regime and a fundamental basis for pursuing nuclear disarmament, emphasising that disarmament is a humanitarian, security, and developmental necessity.

She further underscored that establishing a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction remains a priority for enhancing regional security and stability. – QNA

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Radiating loss



People light candles set in shape of a radiation sign during a ceremony yesterday marking the 40th anniversary of the explosion at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant, in front of a memorial for Chernobyl victims in the town of Slavutych. – AFP

Freedom Day: South Africa's journey in a changing world



By Ghulam Hoosein Asmal
South Africa's ambassador to Qatar

Today millions of South Africans at home and across the world commemorate Freedom Day, a moment of profound significance for our nation.

This date marks South Africa's decisive transition from the oppressive apartheid system to a free, democratic and constitutional state, following the country's first democratic elections on April 27, 1994.

Freedom Day is more than an anniversary; it is a powerful reminder of transformation against immense odds.

This year's commemoration, held under the theme *United in Resilience for the Defence of Our Freedom and Democracy*, concludes our year-long marking of 30 years of freedom and democracy.

It speaks both to how far we have come as a nation and to the responsibility we carry to protect these gains in an increasingly uncertain world.

From being a pariah state excluded from global institutions, South Africa has emerged as a country widely recognised for its commitment to human dignity, democracy, non-racialism, non-sexism, and constitutional governance, values the world urgently needs.

South Africa's transition stands as proof that dialogue, sacrifice, compromise, and principled leadership, exemplified by President Nelson Mandela, can overcome entrenched injustice.

Freedom Day invites all the friends of South Africa to reflect honestly on the lived realities of apartheid and to contrast them with life in a democratic South Africa.

Under apartheid, millions, especially Black South Africans, were systematically marginalised, dispossessed and denied basic human rights: the vote, freedom of movement, economic opportunity and dignity.

Families were torn apart, livelihoods undermined, and social cohesion destroyed.

Yet, from this painful history, a new social order emerged, founded on constitutionalism, democracy, and the rule of law.

The adoption of South Africa's Constitution in 1996, whose 30th anniversary we commemorate this year, gave concrete expression to the ideals of the Freedom Charter, shaped by decades of struggle

against colonialism, apartheid and oppression.

Today, the South African Constitution remains the highest law of the land, guiding efforts to consolidate democracy while confronting persistent inequality and historical injustice.

For South African residents in Qatar, this reflection carries added significance, as their presence here as professionals, entrepreneurs, educators, and skilled contributors to Qatar's development is itself a direct product of South Africa's democratic transformation.

It reflects a restored international standing and full re-entry into the global community.

South Africa's historical experience has also shaped its approach to global justice.

The values enshrined in our Constitution compel us to act consistently on the international stage. It is within this moral and historical framework that South Africa has approached the International Court of Justice (ICJ) to hold Israel accountable for acts of genocide.



Cape Town in South Africa.

This action underscores our commitment to international law, accountability and the protection of civilians, and serves as a warning against the dangers of extreme nationalism and unchecked violence.

Our own past reminds us that silence in the face of injustice is never neutral.

South Africa's post-apartheid identity is inseparable from global solidarity, having emerged from a collective international struggle in which states, civil society, and ordinary people around the world collaborated to dismantle apartheid and affirm the universality of human dignity.

Conscious that its own freedom was secured through the moral courage and principled action of the international community, South Africa has consistently framed its foreign policy as a debt owed to peace, justice, and international law.

It is within this ethical tradition that South Africa approached the ICJ, invoking the Genocide Convention to hold Israel accountable for alleged acts of genocide, not as an act of hostility, but as a reaffirmation of the same legal and moral principles that once protected South Africans themselves, namely, that grave injustices must never be normalised and that no people should be denied

protection under international law.

As we commemorate Freedom Day, we must celebrate progress while remaining clear-eyed about what remains to be done.

In 1994, South Africa inherited a deeply divided, unequal society and an economy isolated from the world. Despite limited resources and enormous backlogs, tangible progress has been made.

Access to housing, clean water, electricity and basic services has expanded significantly for millions.

These improvements have transformed everyday life for many South Africans.

In 2024, South Africa entered a new chapter with the establishment of a Government of National Unity, reflecting a shared commitment to inclusive growth, job creation, poverty reduction and social cohesion.

Encouragingly, key economic indicators have stabilised: inflation has eased, public investment is rising, electricity generation has improved, and confidence, both domestic and international, is slowly returning.

civilian infrastructure, including critical energy facilities, as such acts are not only illegal in terms of international law and human morality, but also inflict immense human suffering and threaten regional and global stability.

Upholding international law, protecting civilian lives, and fostering peaceful engagement remain central to efforts aimed at enduring security and prosperity.

Energy co-operation remains a pillar of the bilateral relationship, exemplified by Sasol's gas to liquids investment in Qatar and PetroSA's involvement in the chemical sector.

These partnerships support South Africa's industrial stability while diversifying Qatar's international energy co-operation.

Multilaterally, South Africa's role in BRICS and Global South platforms complements Qatar's diplomatic outreach.

At a time of geopolitical fragmentation, middle powers must build resilience through co-operation rather than rigid alignment.

Current global disruptions – from energy supply shocks to disruptions in Red Sea and Suez trade routes – underscore the interconnectedness of energy security, civilian infrastructure and economic stability.

These challenges contribute to inflationary pressures worldwide, affect Africa's trade and food security, and demand closer co-operation between responsible global actors.

Today, Qatar is South Africa's fifth-largest trade partner in the Middle East and Gulf, with total bilateral trade of R7.9bn in 2023, spanning multiple fields.

There remains significant untapped potential – particularly in attracting greater Qatari investment into South Africa's priority, job-creating sectors.

In light of regional uncertainty, the South African government, through its mission in Doha, remains fully attentive to the safety and wellbeing of South Africans in Qatar.

We continue to engage closely with Qatari authorities, who have demonstrated their commitment to stability and the protection of all residents. Qatar remains a safe and welcoming host country.

As South Africans abroad, you are ambassadors of our nation, embodying resilience, excellence and solidarity. Your contributions strengthen South Africa's reputation and deepen the bonds of friendship between countries.

As we commemorate Freedom Day, let us recommit ourselves to the ideals that shaped our liberation: unity, dignity, equality and mutual respect.

Let us defend our democracy, deepen our partnerships, and work collectively to build a South Africa that truly belongs to all who live in it.

Freedom, after all, is not only something we commemorate – it is something we must continuously protect and advance, together.

Mediation highly instrumental for resolving contractual disputes

By Ayman Adly
Staff Reporter

In a significant legal development, the Investment and Commerce Court has issued a ruling dismissing a lawsuit between two companies after confirming the existence of a mediation clause in their contract, an outcome that indicates the binding legal effect of such provisions in commercial agreements.

The decision came after the defendant invoked the mediation clause, prompting the court to decline hearing the case. Legal experts say the ruling reflects the growing weight of mediation clauses under Qatar's Law No 20 of 2021 on the Mediation of Civil

and Commercial Disputes, which establishes mediation as a mandatory procedural step when explicitly agreed upon in writing.

Accordingly, a number of lawyers, academics, and business leaders stressed that mediation clauses are no longer mere formalities or decorative legal language. Instead, they constitute enforceable procedural commitments that can directly affect the admissibility of lawsuits if disputes arise and one party bypasses agreed dispute-resolution mechanisms.

They explained that courts may rule a case inadmissible or decline jurisdiction if a valid mediation clause exists and is invoked in a timely manner. The law requires mediation agreements to be in writing and recognises explicit

contractual references to mediation as integral and binding parts of the agreement.

Lawyer Sheikh Ahmed bin Mohamed al-Thani, described the evolution of alternative dispute resolution in Qatar as a "legislative milestone," pointing to Law No 2 of 2017 on arbitration, which established arbitration as an independent legal system. He noted that arbitration clauses, when valid, can similarly bar court proceedings if invoked properly.

He added that failing to raise such a clause at the appropriate stage may be interpreted as a waiver of that right.

"Arbitration is essentially a private form of justice derived from the parties' agreement," he said, noting its advantages such as speed, confi-

dentiality, flexibility, and the ability to appoint specialised arbitrators.

"Mediation shifts disputes from confrontation to understanding, from a win-lose equation to a win-win outcome," he explained. He also clarified that mediators do not impose decisions but facilitate dialogue, helping parties reach mutually acceptable solutions.

Dr Rajab al-Ismail, assistant professor of accounting at Qatar University's College of Business and Economics, described mediation clauses as a cornerstone in modern legal systems, widely adopted internationally to accelerate dispute resolution and reduce court burdens. He noted that mediation offers a structured yet amicable path to resolving disputes before resorting to litigation.

"Mediation helps ease pressure on courts, especially in routine commercial disputes such as sales and rental disagreements," he said. He added that certified mediation offices provide efficient and cost-effective solutions, often addressing disputes rooted in misunderstandings or lack of legal awareness.

Businessman Jaber al-Marri echoed pointed out that clearly defined mediation and arbitration clauses contribute to reducing disputes and accelerating their resolution, thereby strengthening trust between contracting parties. While affirming that courts remain essential, he stressed the importance of activating alternative mechanisms that save time, effort, and costs. He also called for simplified and

accessible contract templates to improve legal clarity, noting that many disputes stem from poor understanding or misinterpretation of contractual terms.

Lawyer Dr Johar al-Mohammadi explained that under Law No 20 of 2021, mediation is defined as an amicable dispute-resolution method initiated either by agreement between parties or by court referral. He noted that mediation clauses typically outline procedures for handling disputes, ensuring that jurisdiction initially lies with mediators rather than courts.

"With the enactment of the law, mediation clauses have moved beyond being symbolic language to becoming binding agreements that can shift jurisdiction away from courts," he said.

QC holds foundation-stone laying ceremony for Gaziantep Social Centre project



Qatar Charity (QC) held a foundation-stone ceremony to launch the Gaziantep Social Centre project in the presence of M Faisal bin Abdullah al-Hanzab, ambassador of Qatar to Türkiye; Kemal Çeber, governor of Gaziantep; and Nawaf al-Hammadi, executive vice-president for programmes and communication at Qatar Charity.

Held in partnership with the Ministry of Family and Social Services, Türkiye, the project aims to establish an integrated centre serving orphans and their mothers, providing a safe, stable residential and social environment and improving beneficiaries' quality of life.

It includes residential units of varying sizes to accommodate 45

families, fully equipped with essential facilities, along with service and recreational amenities such as a dining hall, spaces for social activities, play grounds and children's areas, outdoor green spaces, and parking.

The project spans approximately 9,975sq m, with a built-up area of 3,375sq m. Completion is expected within one year, at an estimated cost of around QR10mn.

Ambassador al-Hanzab said: "The foundation-stone ceremony for the Gaziantep Social Centre reflects the depth of the strong fraternal ties between Qatar and Türkiye. Qatar remains committed to supporting development and humanitarian projects that meet the needs of the most vulnerable groups especially orphans – ensuring them

a dignified life and a safe future in a stable environment."

Governor Çeber praised the close co-operation with Qatar Charity and the Ministry of Family and Social Services of Türkiye, noting that the social centre will be a significant addition to the province's humanitarian services.

Al-Hammadi said the new social centre aims to create a lasting impact for 45 families of orphans by providing a comprehensive residential and social environment that goes beyond traditional shelter. He added that the project covering nearly 10,000sq m was designed as a vibrant community with service and recreational facilities and green spaces, helping promote beneficiaries' psychological and social stability.

Chairman of NCIHL outlines Qatar's efforts in promoting international humanitarian law

QNA
Doha

HE the Undersecretary of the Ministry of Justice and Chairman of the National Committee for International Humanitarian Law (NCIHL), Saeed bin Abdullah al-Suwaidi outlined the State of Qatar's most prominent efforts in promoting international humanitarian law and the challenges associated with its implementation.

Delivering a lecture at the Joaan Bin Jassim Academy for Defence Studies, His Excellency discussed the historical development of international humanitarian law, addressing its concepts in old civilisations and Islamic law, and its reflections in international instruments, including the four Geneva Conventions and their Additional Protocols and the Hague Conventions. He also highlighted the fundamental principles upon which this law is based.

His Excellency explained that the establishment of the National Committee for International Humanitarian Law in the State of Qatar was in line with the State's international obligations and its



commitment to strengthening the rule of law, and in response to the need for a national body concerned with co-ordinating efforts related to the application and dissemination of this law. He outlined the Committee's objectives, contributions, and most prominent achievements at the local, regional, and international levels.

He noted the committee's efforts to expand its membership to include representatives from new government entities and bodies, thereby strengthening institutional integration, particularly regarding the establishment of emergency committees and joint action plans during armed conflicts.

He also explained the NCIHL's role in awareness and training, through organising lectures and introductory seminars for university and school students, in addition to specialised programmes targeting diplomats in

co-operation with the Diplomatic Institute at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, military personnel in co-operation with the Ministry of Defence, medical staff in co-operation with the Ministry of Public Health, as well as journalists and legal researchers in co-operation with the Centre for Legal and Judicial Studies at the Ministry of Justice.

He commended the inclusion of international humanitarian law concepts in the country's educational curricula, in co-operation with the Ministry of Education and Higher Education, as part of efforts to instil a culture of this law and promote adherence to its principles.

His Excellency touched on the committee's role in proposing accession to relevant international agreements, or signing or ratifying them, and working to harmonise them with national legislation through amendment or issuing new laws, in addition to providing legal opinions to government agencies when requested, and enhancing co-operation with international organisations and counterpart committees, in addition to the committee's role in media awareness related to the attacks that the State of Qatar was subjected to from Iran.

QU announces preparations for graduation ceremony of its 49th class

Qatar University (QU) has announced its final preparations for the graduation ceremony for its 49th cohort, Class of 2026 students.

QU Vice-President for Student Affairs Dr Mohammad Diab highlighted the university's readiness.

"The total number of graduates is 4,024 – 902 male graduates and 3,122 female graduates," he said. "This occasion is one we take great pride in, as it represents a national milestone that reflects the university's role in preparing qualified graduates capable of contributing to national development and serving the community."

"We are also pleased this year to announce a significant milestone: the graduation of the first cohort of students from the College of Nursing," Dr Diab continued. "This achievement reflects the university's commitment to supporting the healthcare sector in the country and supplying the labour market with qualified national talent in one of the most vital fields within the healthcare system."



He noted that the organising committee for QU's graduation ceremony began preparations early, through various committees and organisational and logistical teams that worked diligently over recent months.

The graduation website was also launched recently, providing relevant information about the ceremony and the schedules for college-level ceremonies.

Additionally, graduation gowns will be distributed to female graduates this week.

Invitation cards for the college ceremonies will be distributed starting tomorrow, while attendance cards for the two main ceremonies will be distributed following the rehearsal.

Dr Diab also said that comprehensive rehearsals will be held on

Saturday (May 2), and noted that rehearsals are an important opportunity to familiarise graduates with all procedures and ensure they are fully aware of the ceremony details.

"The organising committees are working to prepare all aspects of the event by providing clear guidance to graduates," he added.

As part of its strategic vision, Dr Diab said, the Student Affairs Sector continues efforts to enrich the student experience through impactful cultural, academic, and community-based activities.

It also supports talented and outstanding students through specialised initiatives and development programmes aimed at strengthening both their academic and personal skills. – QNA

Speaker of Indonesian People's Consultative Assembly meets Qatar's ambassador



Speaker of People's Consultative Assembly of the Republic of Indonesia Dr Ahmad Muzani met with ambassador of the State of the Qatar to Indonesia Sultan bin Mubarak al-Dosari. During the meeting, co-operation relations between the two countries were reviewed. (QNA)

Environment Ministry holds workshop with Economic Zones Company

The Ministry of Environment and Climate Change has stepped up efforts to streamline environmental procedures, hosting a specialised workshop aimed at enhancing co-ordination and accelerating project approvals for investors.

Organised by the ministry's Environmental Assessment and Permits Department, the workshop was titled "Environmental Assessment and Permitting Procedures for the Projects of the Economic Zones Company (Stages, Requirements, Challenges, and Opportunities for Improvement)". It is considered part of the ministry's annual plan to strengthen institutional performance and modernise operational frameworks.

The session brought together officials from the Economic Zones Company, focusing on improving integration between the two entities. The initiative is designed to speed up project completion while ensuring precision in implementation, in line with Qatar's broader push toward sustainable development and investor-friendly processes.

Participants were guided through the full lifecycle of environmental assessment and permitting procedures, with detailed explanations of key requirements and regulatory steps. The workshop also addressed major challenges faced by both authorities and investors, opening the floor to practical solutions aimed at



improving efficiency and strengthening environmental compliance.

A significant portion of the discussion highlighted opportunities for process improvement, particularly through the newly launched automated services. These include upgraded digital forms and electronic procedures linked to environmental permits, enabling faster application submissions, quicker processing times, and improved service quality for stakeholders.

The workshop saw strong engagement from participating departments, with the participants stressing the importance of sustained collaboration and co-ordination.

Qatar Olympic Academy rolls out 16th Advanced Sports Management Diploma

Qatar Olympic Academy has launched the 16th edition of its Advanced Sports Management Diploma Program, delivered in partnership with and accredited by the International Olympic Committee (IOC), Olympic Solidarity, and the International Olympic Academy.

The programme has attracted more than 50 participants from diverse sporting, administrative, and academic backgrounds, representing Qatar and several countries across the Gulf and Arab region. The cohort includes a distinguished group of Qatari, Gulf, and Arab athletes. The first module of the programme was held over four days under the theme "Organisational Structures of Sports and Olympic Institutions." The diploma programme consists

of seven modules running from April 20 through December. Participants attend in person at the academy's headquarters for four days each month. The second module is scheduled to take place from May 18 to 21 and will focus on strategic planning. It will cover key areas including preparation of the strategic process, analysis of the sports organisation's environment, and the development of vision, values,

mission, and strategic objectives, in addition to action planning, monitoring, and evaluation. At the conclusion of the programme, participants who successfully pass all modules and submit their final projects will be awarded a diploma certificate issued by the International Olympic Committee. The certificate will bear the signature of Kirsty Coventry, President of the IOC, as well as HE Sheikh Joaan bin Hamad al-Thani, President of the Qatar Olympic Committee. Participants will also receive individual certificates upon completion of each module. (QNA)





Markel Magnolia Cup 2026 at Goodwood to support EAA

A group of women from across the globe has been announced for the 2026 Markel Magnolia Cup, one of the most anticipated highlights of the Qatar Goodwood Festival, presented by Visit Qatar at Goodwood Racecourse in West Sussex, United Kingdom.

This year's charity race will raise funds for the Education Above All (EAA) Foundation, a global education foundation dedicated to expanding access to quality education and opportunities for vulnerable children and youth.

Taking place on Ladies' Day, July 30, the Markel Magnolia Cup will see 12 amateur riders charge down Goodwood's iconic home straight, marking the culmination of months of rigorous preparation. Representing a diverse range of backgrounds, the riders have undergone intensive training, including early morning riding sessions, jockey fitness assessments, and professional evaluations at the British Racing School.

Since its launch in 2011, the Markel Magnolia Cup has raised over £3.5mn for children and women-focused charities, while championing greater inclusion and representation in horse racing.

This year, proceeds will support the work of the EAA Foundation, which has helped provide access to quality education and employment opportunities for more than 18mn children and young people across 77 countries since its establishment in 2012.

The Duke of Richmond said: "We are very much looking forward to supporting Education

Above All Foundation as the charity partner of this year's Markel Magnolia Cup. Over the past 15 years, the Markel Magnolia Cup has become a powerful force for real and lasting change, championing women and raising more than £3.5mn for vital causes.

"I am confident that the generosity of our partners, sponsors and racegoers, as well as the dedication and commitment of our riders, will allow us to deliver meaningful support to Education Above All Foundation. We wish this year's riders all the best in their training and look forward to seeing them race down Goodwood's home straight in July."

Taking place on Ladies' Day, July 30, the Markel Magnolia Cup will see 12 amateur riders charge down Goodwood's iconic home straight, marking the culmination of months of rigorous preparation

Al-Jazi Darwish, director of communications and engagement, EAA, added: "The Markel Magnolia Cup is a powerful example of how sport can be harnessed to drive meaningful change. At Education Above All Foundation, we believe education is the most effective pathway to transform lives and build more peaceful, inclusive societies. The support generated through this initiative will help us continue reaching children and young people affected by poverty, conflict, and crisis, ensuring they have the opportunity to learn, thrive, and shape their own futures."

Green dates adorn palms in run-up to peak harvest season

Date palms are seen in Nuaija area with several bunches and abundant number of tender green (kimri) dates as the flowering season is getting over. Date palms across Qatar are heavy with young tender dates as most trees in the country have flowered and most of them carrying the fruit in most regions of the country. With the approaching summer season, they are on the way to maturing and ripening over the next couple of months. **PICTURES:** Shaji Kayamkulam



Katara library discusses Qatari author's novel

The Katara Arabic Novel Library hosted a vibrant literary evening on Saturday as part of its "Library Guest" series, featuring Qatari novelist Dr Huda al-Nuaimi and a discussion of her novel *Khatm Khazal*.

Held at the library's headquarters in Building 48 at the Cultural Village Katara, the event drew a strong turnout of writers, critics, and literature enthusiasts.

The panel explored the work's artistic and intellectual dimensions, as well as its place within the Gulf's evolving literary landscape. Their analysis delved into the novel's layered storytelling, character development, and the symbolic weight of its title, opening multiple avenues for interpretation.

Khatm Khazal unfolds within a narrative space that blends his-



torical and social dimensions, offering what critics described as a "living memory" text. The novel revisits the history of Al-Ahwaz through a sweeping literary lens, reconstructing events dating back nearly a century. With twelve central characters, men and women whose lives diverge between ex-

ile and those who remained, the story captures a wide spectrum of experiences and perspectives.

Critics at the event praised the novel's concise yet evocative language and its immersive, almost cinematic style, which draws readers into the heart of events. Its use of suspense was also noted

as a key element in maintaining narrative momentum through to the final pages.

Speakers also commended al-Nuaimi's ability to weave local detail into a broader human context, alongside her skill in crafting cohesive plots and dynamic characters. Her narrative voice, they noted, balances intellectual depth with stylistic clarity, securing her a distinctive position in both Qatari and Gulf literary circles.

The evening concluded with an engaging dialogue between the author and the audience, whose thoughtful questions and interventions reflected a high level of literary awareness. The exchange transformed the session into an open forum, enriching the discussion and deepening engagement with the text.

Doha Debates expands global mission from Qatar

By Shaima Sheriff
Staff Reporter

Doha Debates, part of Qatar Foundation is reshaping global discourse, refining its truth-seeking mission, amplifying youth and Global South voices, and expanding internationally in 2026.

Amjad Atallah, managing director, Doha Debates told Gulf Times that the organisation is "doubling down on a simple idea: truth-seeking dialogue in a respectful majlis setting".

"In a world where too many conversations are engineered for heat rather than light, we're refining our mission around calm, rigorous exchange," Atallah said. "We're bringing expert voices from across regions and disciplines into the same space and asking the questions that will shape our shared future, not just the next news cycle."

In the context of recent regional instability, the importance of informed, measured dialogue becomes even more pronounced. Atallah added that Doha Debates encourages audiences to engage with global developments thoughtfully, equipping them to form their own perspectives through critical thinking and open exchange, rather than reaction.

A central part of that recalibration is widening the lens of global dialogue by placing youth at the centre. According to Atallah, when students engage directly with leading thinkers, debates are forced to confront both present realities and long-term consequences.

"That multi-generational perspective is one of the clearest gaps in global discourse, and one we're committed to addressing," he said.

At a time when public disagreement often descends into hostility, Atallah stressed that respectful debate remains indispensable. "Respectful debate is one of the few



methods we have for getting closer to understanding," he said. "When people can make their case clearly, and others can test it without ridicule or shouting, you start to see a more complete picture, not as a slogan, but as something you can examine from multiple angles."

Stewarding such conversations, however, presents challenges. The issue, he explained, is not controversy itself. "Serious ideas deserve public scrutiny," he noted. The greater difficulty lies in overcoming a media culture that rewards spectacle.

"Modern media has conditioned audiences to treat debate as gladiator sport," Atallah said. "We want discussions that are fair, well-prepared and intellectually honest, while maintaining nuance and complexity, without reducing difficult topics into binaries."

Ensuring representation also remains critical. Doha Debates actively platforms voices from Qatar, West Asia and the wider Global South alongside perspectives from the Global North.

"If you only platform Western issues, you can narrow the global conversation," he said. "Bring the rest of the world into the conversation and you develop perspective."

Topic selection follows overarching themes that resonate across cultures: grand narratives shaping how societies interpret the world, the meaning of freedom, and the enduring significance of family. These, Atallah explained, are

"meaning of life" questions, globally relevant yet deeply personal.

Youth participation remains foundational. More than 400 young people from around 80 countries engage annually through its programmes, supported by a digital community exceeding seven million followers.

"Young people aren't just audiences, they are stakeholders," Atallah said. "When you offer them serious conversation, they show up prepared, thoughtful and willing to wrestle with complexity."

Participants gain transferable skills beyond traditional education, including critical thinking, argumentation, active listening and the ability to "disagree without dehumanising others."

"The world is not short on opinions," he added. "It's short on people who can reason through hard questions with clarity and respect."

In an increasingly crowded media landscape, Doha Debates deliberately creates space for slower, more considered discussion. "Our format lets audiences hear competing arguments in full and see how a strong claim holds up under scrutiny," he said, emphasising the importance of skilled moderation.

A recent town hall on superintelligence exemplified this approach. During the debate, Roman Yampolskiy, Professor, Computer Scientist and AI Safety Researcher, presented a stark warning about existential risks linked to advanced AI.

"You could feel the room shift,



Amjad Atallah

not into panic, but into nervous surprise," Atallah recalled. "What stayed with me was how the conversation remained rigorous and human. They met a frightening possibility with calm reasoning."

Being based in Qatar, he noted, fundamentally shapes the organisation's tone. "Qatar gives us a distinct cultural foundation for dialogue, the spirit of the majlis, hospitality and respect. Listening is a form of strength," he said, adding that the ongoing regional situation has underscored the importance of dialogue grounded in patience, perspective, and mutual respect. "It not only shapes Doha Debates but reflects a broader commitment to dialogue that resonates globally," he added.

Looking ahead to 2026, Doha Debates plans to expand its global town hall programme, grow its Ambassador Programme, continue weekly episodes of its podcast, and film a new season of its flagship show.

HMC Sealine clinic operations for 2025-26 camping season ends



Hamad Medical Corporation (HMC) has wrapped up its clinic operations for the 2025-26 winter camping season in the Sealine area. The clinic was open throughout the camping period, from October 16, 2025 to April 11, 2026, marking the sixteenth year in a row that this service has been provided.

During this season, 1,680 patients of various ages and nationalities received medical care, including both visitors and campers in the Sealine area. Of these, 291 patients were treated directly at HMC's Sealine clinic, 692 cases required transfer to HMC hospitals by ambulance or air ambulance, and 697 patients received onsite treatment and necessary medical procedures from HMC emergency medical teams.

The Sealine clinic operated weekly: every Thursday and Friday from 2pm-2am, and Saturdays from 10am-10pm throughout the season. This schedule ensured essential healthcare services for beach visitors and campers. Meanwhile, emergency departments at HMC hospitals stayed on high alert to handle cases that required hospital transfers.

The clinic treated a range of mild to moderate medical cases, including colds, gastrointestinal infections, burns, and minor injuries. These were handled directly at the clinic, which was equipped with the necessary medical devices and medications for such emergencies. Critical cases were promptly transferred to hospitals by ambulance or LifeFlight, depending on the spe-

cific needs of each patient.

During operating hours, the clinic was staffed by a doctor and a nurse under the supervision of a medical officer. It was fully stocked with all necessary medical supplies and medications. Additionally, an air ambulance landing area was located next to the clinic.

The opening of the clinic was supported by ongoing coverage from HMC's Ambulance Service. This included the permanent deployment of two standard ambulances and two four-wheel-drive ambulances for transporting patients from sand dune areas to the clinic, a standard ambulance, or the air ambulance landing site, as needed.

On weekends, school holidays, and special occasions, the Ambulance Service increased its presence in the Sealine camping area to six standard ambulances and five four-wheel-drive ambulances, providing effective emergency response across the sand dunes with speed.

Additionally, HMC's Ambulance Service, during the camping season, offered LifeFlight services and deployed a team of medical professionals including paramedics, critical care paramedics, rapid response paramedics, supervisors, communications officers, and operations officers.

Staff assignments were organised according to command and control system plans for events and daily operations, developed by Emergency Preparedness and Events Planning within the Ambulance Service, in alignment with the camping season's medical coverage objectives.

Young artist gains global attention through Art Basel Qatar

By Joseph Varghese
Staff Reporter

For Yasamin Shaikhi, it was a moment of realisation and great pride when her artwork 'The Loudest Grain' made of rice, won Media City Qatar's inaugural "Next in Arts" programme at Art Basel Qatar 2026.

It was a great moment in her career as several high-profile dignitaries and artists visited her work and suddenly she was among the talks of the inaugural edition of Art Basel Qatar.

Shaikhi, an alumna of Virginia Commonwealth University School of the Arts Qatar (VCUarts Qatar), told Gulf Times that the number of high profile visitors to her work was truly exciting and the significance of 'The Loudest Grain' lies in the irony of its material.

She said "Presenting the work through this platform has also

shown me how widely that idea can resonate. Seeing The Loudest Grain viewed by figures such as Her Highness Sheikha Moza bint Nasser, HE Sheikha Al Mayassa bint Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani, Angelina Jolie, and thousands of exhibition visitors reinforced for me that even the most ordinary materials can spark meaningful global conversations when framed in the right way."

"We usually think of rice as something quiet, humble, and biodegradable. A material that exists in volume, but is rarely noticed as an individual unit. By transforming rice waste into a rigid, structural biomaterial that represents digital waves, I'm giving that "quiet" grain a loud, permanent voice. It's about making the invisible signals of our media landscape tangible through a material that everyone recognises," she explained.

Shaikhi noted that she first came across the topic during her master's programme at VCUarts

Qatar as she was deeply researching food waste renaissance, exploring how everyday organic waste could be repurposed into high-quality design materials.

She continued: "When the opportunity with Media City Qatar came up, I wanted to find a way to bridge that material research with the concept of media. I realised that both rice and media are ubiquitous. They are everywhere. They sustain us, yet we rarely stop to think about their underlying substance. That's when the idea clicked: using the "grain" of the rice to visualise the "grain" of a digital signal."

The young artist noted that some of the challenges associated with creating The Loudest Grain were primarily about precision and predictability. "Technically, I had to ensure the material cured at exactly the right thickness and strength, while also understanding how to manipulate it in its uncured, flexible state. It was a bit of



a puzzle to predict exactly how the final form would hold once fully cured," she remarked.

"Conceptually, the challenge was in giving form to something invisible, finding a way to translate the abstract digital signals into a physical language while remaining true to the grounded, organic nature of the material. Balancing that tension between

the high-tech concept and the low-tech material is exactly what made the final piece so rewarding," she underlined.

She said that her next steps are deeply rooted in collaboration. She emphasised: "I firmly believe that when different disciplines come together and exchange ideas, a certain kind of magic happens, the work begins to speak across



Yasamin Shaikhi with her winning art work.

multiple worlds and audiences. I want to continue partnering with local creatives to explore how my material research can intersect with their fields and practices."

"I also plan to work closely with local galleries, institutions, and museum platforms to exhibit these pieces more widely across the country, creating greater visibility for this type of experimental design work. My hope is to spark curiosity in viewers and, in turn, inspire other emerging artists and designers to think differently about materiality, process, and sustainability," added, Shaikhi.