



Qatar Insurance

Financial Results (Q1 2026)

Gross Written Premiums (GWP)

13% ▲

QAR 3.2B

Net Profit

6% ▲

QAR 217M

Investment Income

10% ▲

QAR 238M

Insurance Service Results

70% ▲

QAR 130M

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BUSINESS | Page 1

QNB, CMU-Q to launch joint business innovation centre



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PM honours Al Noor Center graduates



HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani attended yesterday the closing ceremony of Al Noor Center for The Blind of the Qatari Foundation for Social Work for the year 2026, at the Center's headquarters in Lusail City. During the ceremony, a total of 29 graduates from the Center's affiliates and beneficiaries from inclusive schools and universities were honoured, in recognition of the successes of an integrated educational and rehabilitation journey. A number of Their Excellencies the ministers, officials and representatives of bodies concerned with social work also attended the ceremony, alongside families of affiliates, beneficiaries, and those interested in the field of visual impairment. (QNA)

Gas contracts power Qatar's projects market in first quarter

By Santhosh V Perumal
Business Reporter

Qatar's gas sector saw almost doubled contracts, leading to a "strong" \$8.8bn in overall projects awarded in the country during the first quarter (Q1) of 2026, according to Kamco Invest, a regional economic thinktank.

The total value of contracts awarded in Qatar saw a strong year-on-year (y-o-y) increase of 62.1%, attaining \$8.8bn in Q1-2026 against \$5.5bn in Q1-2025, Kamco Invest said, quoting data from MEED Projects.

"This expansion in contract awards was principally driven by a substantial surge in the value of projects within Qatar's gas sector, which recorded a nearly two-fold increase to reach \$8.2bn in Q1-2026, up from \$4.3bn in Q1-2025," the report said.

The gas sector constituted over 93% of the total contracts awarded in the country during

the quarter, which was mainly due to the recent \$8bn investment that Qatar has committed to building two new LNG (liquefied natural gas) processing trains with a total capacity of 16mn tonnes per year.

On the other hand, total contracts awarded in the Qatar's construction sector dipped 2.2% y-o-y to \$610mn, compared to \$624mn in Q1-2025.

The war in the Gulf Co-operation Council (GCC) region is expected to "thwart" the strong outlook for the GCC projects market in 2026, the report said.

So far, three countries – Kuwait, Qatar, and Bahrain – have declared force majeure in several of their energy production and export infrastructure, while some other remaining countries in the region have reduced their production, it said.

"This significant disruption is expected to dent the GCC countries' ability to fund projects during the year," Kamco Invest said. **To Page 11**

Qatar's resilience: The art of staying calm

By Kamran Rehmat
Doha

As regional tensions sharpened and the threat environment darkened, daily life in Doha barely flinched – a continuity that is not accidental or instinctive, but the product of a strategy to preserve public calm.

From the Corniche waterfront to the bustling alleys of Souq Waqif, the rhythm of the city held steady even at the height of uncertainty. Residents went about their routines against a backdrop of quiet vigilance. That visible normalcy was the dividend of a co-ordinated state approach fusing timely communication, logistical readiness and institutional support.



A view of a calm evening at the Aspire Park on the last night of Eid al Fitr. **PICTURE:** Thajudheen

and medicine – a decisive factor in heading off the panic buying and hoarding that so often define crises elsewhere.

Healthcare continuity formed another pillar. Hamad Medical Corporation kept regular services running while widening remote access, including home delivery of medicines and expanded helplines. The approach eased pressure on facilities while signalling that critical care remained fully intact.

In the public sector, a partial shift to remote work for most employees reduced congestion without disrupting administrative flow. Applied across ministries, it was framed as precaution rather than emergency – further reinforcing the tone of controlled normalcy.

Retail played its own stabilising role. Supermarkets and neighbourhood outlets ran at full capacity, shelves visibly replenished, queues conspicuously absent. Traders credited consistent official messaging with averting

the demand spikes that typically strain distribution systems.

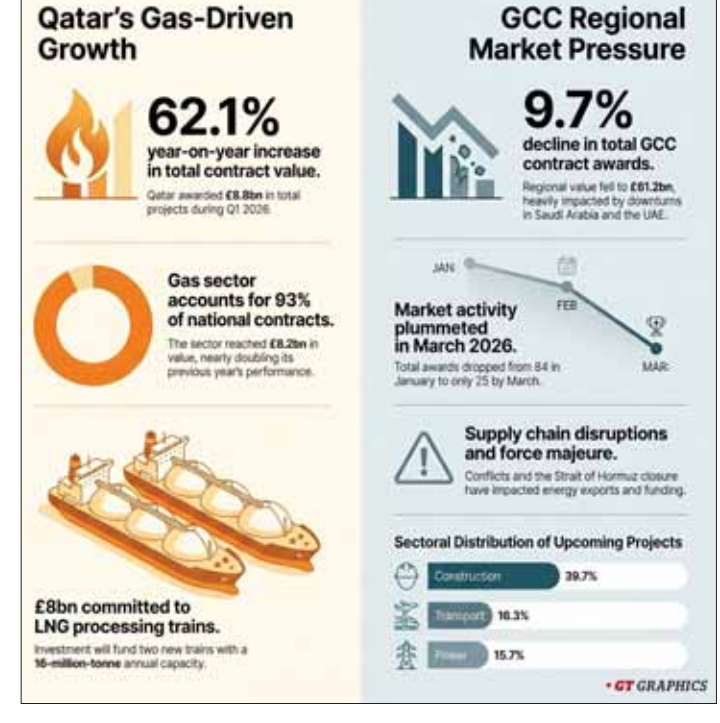
This alignment between state messaging and lived reality has been the linchpin of public calm. When official assurances are matched by what people actually see – stocked shelves, open roads, functioning services – confidence holds.

The absence of visible disruption is itself a powerful signal. It shapes perception as much as policy does.

For Qatar, perception management is bound up with broader strategy. As a country that markets itself as a stable hub for diplomacy, investment and global events, projecting calm during regional volatility carries weight at home and abroad.

The approach also draws on hard lessons from past crises, when rapid information flows and misinformation amplified uncertainty. By holding a steady communication rhythm and minimising contradictory signals, authorities narrowed the space in which speculation could take root.

Yet messaging alone was never the whole story. Beneath it sat a robust framework of preparedness – from civil defence readiness to logistical planning – enabling institutions to respond without visible strain. **To Page 11**



Qatar unveils mascot 'Washeq' ahead of GCC Games in Doha

By Sports Reporter
Doha

Qatar yesterday unveiled the official mascot "Washeq" as it confirmed full readiness to host the 4th GCC Games - Doha 2026, with all preparations completed ahead of the event scheduled from May 11 to 22.

The announcement was made during a press conference at the Qatar Olympic Committee headquarters in the presence of senior officials and media representatives.

The fourth edition of the GCC Games will feature competitions across 19 sports, including handball, table tennis, athletics, squash, padel, fencing, boxing, taekwondo, karate, swimming, billiards, snooker, basketball (5x5 and 3x3), shooting, archery,



volleyball, equestrian, and bowling. Speaking at the news conference, Sheikh Abdullah bin Saud al-Thani, Head of the Marketing and Communications Committee, said the mascot launch marked an important step in building public engagement, particularly among youth, while reflecting the spirit and identity of the Games. **Sport Page 1**

Trump says US is holding 'very positive discussions' with Iran

AFP, Reuters
Washington

US President Donald Trump said yesterday that US officials were holding "very positive discussions" with Iran over potential steps toward ending the war that has upended the Middle East.

"I am fully aware that my Representatives are having very positive discussions with the Country of Iran, and that these discussions could lead to something very positive for all," Trump posted on his Truth Social platform.

Iran's foreign ministry earlier said that Tehran had submitted a 14-point plan "focused on ending the war" and that Washing-



ton had responded to it in a message to Pakistani mediators. Trump also said the United States will escort ships through

the Strait of Hormuz from today, claiming that "countries from all over the world" had requested it.

"For the good of Iran, the Middle East, and the United States, we have told these Countries that we will guide their Ships safely out of these restricted Waterways, so that they can freely and ably get on with their business," Trump posted on his Truth Social platform.

"This process, Project Freedom, will begin Monday morning, Middle East time."

Earlier, Iran said it had received a US response to its latest offer for peace talks, a day after President Donald Trump said he would probably reject the Iranian proposal because "they have not paid a big enough price".



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Minister meets South Sudan ambassador



HE the Minister of Municipality Abdullah bin Hamad bin Abdullah al-Attiyah met yesterday with the ambassador of the Republic of South Sudan to the State of Qatar, Lily Adhieu Martin Manyiel. During the meeting, they discussed co-operation relations between the two countries and ways to support and develop them in areas of mutual interest. (QNA)

Interior minister meets Canadian envoy



HE the Minister of Interior and Commander of the Internal Security Force (Lekhwiya) Sheikh Khalifa bin Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani met yesterday with the ambassador of Canada to the State of Qatar Karim Morcos. During the meeting, they discussed co-operation relations between the two countries, particularly in the security fields, and ways to support and develop them, in addition to several topics of mutual interest. (QNA)

Qatar participates in MEPC 84 meetings

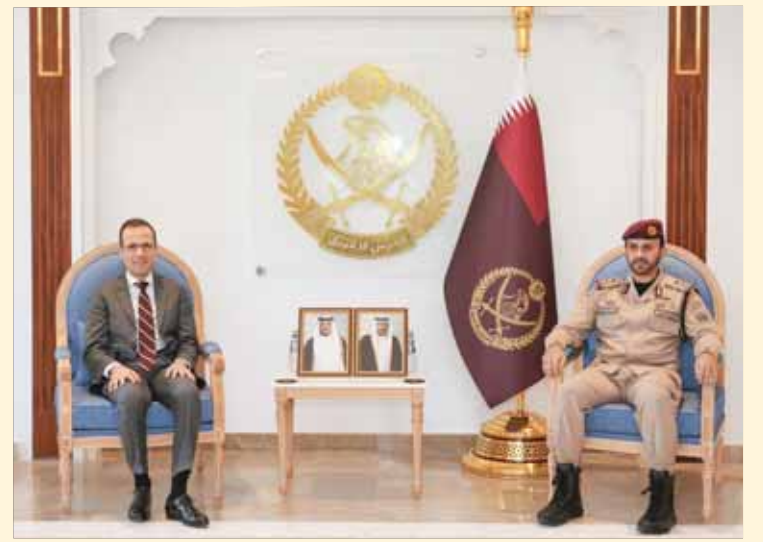


The State of Qatar, represented by its Permanent Mission to the International Maritime Organisation and Qatar Energy, participated in the meetings of the Marine Environment Protection Committee (MEPC 84) of the International Maritime Organisation (IMO), held in London. This participation comes within the framework of the State of Qatar's support for international efforts aimed at protecting the marine environment and enhancing cooperation among member states on relevant environmental issues. The committee discussed a number of environmental topics, most notably ways to reduce greenhouse

gas emissions from ships, in addition to other issues related to the protection of seafarers and the marine environment, as well as de-escalation in the Strait of Hormuz. During the meetings, the State of Qatar's delegation expressed its concern regarding the threats facing navigation in the Arabian Gulf and the Sea of Oman and the potential environmental risks they pose. The delegation emphasised the importance of ensuring freedom and safety of navigation, including in the Strait of Hormuz, and rejected any measures that impede international transit. (QNA)

Amiri Guard commander meets French ambassador

HE the Amiri Guard Commander Major General Staff Mohammed bin Sultan al-Suwaidi met yesterday at Barzan Camp with the ambassador of the French Republic to the State of Qatar Arnaud Pescheux. During the meeting, they exchanged views on a number of topics of common interest and ways to support and enhance them. The meeting was attended by the deputy commander of the Amiri Guard, the French military attaché to the country, and a number of senior officers of the Amiri Guard. (QNA)



Shura set to discuss strengthening parental care and family cohesion



The Shura Council will discuss the topic of strengthening parental care and supporting family cohesion in its weekly session slated for today. This discussion falls within the Council's focus on issues related to family building and the protection of children, considering the family as the fundamental building block of society, and its associated dimen-

sions that contribute to consolidating social stability and reinforcing values among future generations.

The inclusion of this topic on the Council's agenda comes within the framework of its legislative and oversight priorities related to social issues with a direct impact.

The Council is scheduled to review the report of the Social Affairs, Labour, and Housing Committee regarding the request for a general debate on the aforementioned topic, which addresses a number of contemporary challenges facing families and society.

These efforts embody the pillars of Qatar National Vision 2030 and its development strategies, and reflect the directives of the wise leadership, which emphasises the role of parents in raising children, preserving national identity, and strengthening family cohesion. (QNA)

Media City Qatar surpasses 500 licensed companies, marking new phase of growth

Media City Qatar has surpassed 500 licensed companies, reflecting sustained growth across its media and creative industries as companies continue to choose Doha as a base for their operations.

In a press release yesterday, Media City Qatar said that the milestone represents a 60% increase since the start of 2026 and a fivefold increase since 2024, reflecting sustained momentum across key sectors including Gaming & Interactive; Screen, Broadcast & Music; and Tech, Digital & Social.

It added that approximately 60% of its licensed companies classified as startups, while nearly 70% of Media City Qatar's licensed companies come from outside the Middle East, underscoring its position as a truly international hub for the global media industry.

CEO of Media City Qatar, Hamad Omar al-Mannai said: "Surpassing 500 licensed companies reflects the strong momentum behind Media City Qatar and the growing confidence in Doha as a hub for media and innovation. This growth has supported the creation of around 1,250 jobs and continues to strengthen the creative sector's contribution to Qatar's GDP, in line with Qatar National Vision 2030."



Building on this momentum, Media City Qatar is expanding InsideNext with a new video mini-documentary format. Previously featured through website profile stories and social media posts, the InsideNext series follows individual licensed companies, focusing on the founders and teams behind them as they transition from early-stage ambition to measurable growth.

Media City Qatar offers a streamlined and business-friendly environment designed to support companies at every stage of growth. Media City Qatar also allows 100% foreign ownership, zero income tax, no customs duties, helping companies to focus on creating and scaling their operations, the statement added. (QNA)

GCC secretary-general, European Parliament delegation go over Middle East developments



Secretary-General of the Gulf Co-operation Council (GCC), Jassem Mohamed Al-Budaiwi discussed regional updates with a delegation from the European Parliament, during its visit.

Al-Budaiwi said that the GCC states seek to strengthen ties with their regional and international partners to promote development, prosperity, security, and stability.

The delegation's visit to the General Secretariat strengthens Gulf-European relations and opens broad-

er horizons for co-operation, he noted.

In turn, the members of the European Parliament delegation underlined their support for the GCC states in the face of recent Iranian attacks against them.

The meeting also discussed the partnership and co-operation between the GCC and the European Parliament, aimed at serving mutual interests and benefiting their peoples, while contributing to the further support of Gulf-European ties. (QNA)

QC signs agreement with Senegal's health ministry

Qatar Charity (QC), through its office in Senegal, has signed a framework co-operation agreement with the country's ministry of health and public hygiene.

The agreement aims to strengthen partnerships in the fields of health and public hygiene, support vulnerable groups, and improve health services in both urban and rural areas. The signing ceremony took place at the ministry's headquarters in Dakar, under the patronage and in the presence of Qatar's ambassador to Senegal Yousuf bin Shaaban al-Sada, along with senior ministry officials and representatives from the QC office in Senegal. The agreement was signed by Ali Jemai, the acting country director for QC Senegal,

and Minister of Health and Public Hygiene Dr Ibrahim Sy. The framework covers key areas of collaboration, most notably the construction, equipping, and maintenance of health facilities; providing hospitals and health centres with medical equipment; conducting joint medical campaigns; and combating infectious diseases and malnutrition. Additionally, a joint follow-up committee will be formed to ensure effective implementation.

The minister expressed his appreciation for the QC's role in supporting the health sector. He emphasised that this agreement represents a qualitative step in the partnership between both parties,

aligning with national goals to enhance investment in human capital and improve the quality of healthcare services. Dr Sy also highlighted the importance of co-operation in malaria control, maternal and child health, and malnutrition, as well as supporting health infrastructure and staff development, particularly in remote and fragile areas. Al-Sada praised the signing of the agreement, reaffirming Qatar's commitment to supporting health and development projects that serve the Senegalese community. He expressed his hope that this partnership would improve the lives of vulnerable populations and further strengthen bilateral co-operation between the two countries.

Department of Zakat Affairs highlights 17% zakat revenues growth in Q1-2026

The Department of Zakat Affairs at the Ministry of Endowments (Awqaf) and Islamic Affairs in Qatar achieved notable results during the first quarter (Q1) of 2026, reflecting the efficiency of its institutional framework and the success of efforts to enhance zakat services and maximise social impact, in line with its vision to promote a culture of zakat and strengthen principles of social solidarity.

Head of the Zakat Services Section Ahmed Jaber al-Jarbouei said that zakat revenues recorded a significant growth of 17% compared to the same period in 2025, noting that this increase reflects growing

trust among individuals and companies in the department, as well as rising awareness of the importance of fulfilling this obligation in accordance with Islamic principles.

He said that this growth is the result of integrated efforts combining awareness and media outreach, the development of service channels, and expanded use of digital solutions that make it easier for contributors to fulfil their obligations.

On the disbursement side, al-Jarbouei said that total assistance provided to eligible families within Qatar during the first quarter reached QR53,370,807, reflecting the department's commitment to

distributing zakat funds to rightful beneficiaries in accordance with Islamic guidelines, thereby supporting social stability and assisting the most vulnerable groups.

He noted that this assistance covered several areas, including periodic aid amounting to QR8,716,800, one-time assistance totalling QR20,880,063, medical aid of QR13,294,006, support for debtors amounting to QR2,169,038, and assistance to families benefiting from social security totalling QR5,706,000. Additional support of QR2,604,900 was also provided to residents from Gaza in Qatar as part of the department's humanitarian role.

He added that special attention was given to Zakat Al-Fitr, with 22,100 beneficiaries receiving support during the same period, reflecting the department's commitment to delivering this assistance on time with a high level of organisation and accuracy. Regarding public services, al-Jarbouei said the department processed 1,247 assistance requests during the first quarter and handled 2,020 religious inquiries through its various channels, highlighting its educational and advisory role in clarifying zakat rulings and enhancing public understanding of how to calculate and pay it.

He also said that the depart-

ment continued to strengthen its field presence and direct engagement with the business sector, conducting 151 field visits to local companies to provide religious and financial consultations on corporate zakat and to introduce them to available services, thereby fostering effective partnerships with this vital sector.

As part of its digital transformation efforts, he noted that the department made significant progress by launching an online corporate zakat calculation service through its official website, which was used by 220 companies during the first quarter, reflecting a commitment to simplifying procedures

and aligning with best practices in government service delivery.

Al-Jarbouei emphasised that these achievements stem from integrated field and media efforts aimed at raising community awareness of the importance of zakat and reinforcing its role as a key pillar of sustainable development.

He concluded by affirming that the Zakat Affairs Department will continue to develop its service system and enhance its awareness and technological initiatives in line with community expectations, in order to maximise the impact of zakat and fulfil its mission of supporting those in need and promoting social solidarity. (QNA)

Qatar Rail convenes first meeting of new Board, appoints Jassim al-Ansari as CEO

The new Board of Directors of Qatar Railways Company (Qatar Rail) held its first meeting at the company's headquarters yesterday, and announced the appointment of Engineer Jassim Mohammed al-Ansari as the new CEO, succeeding HE Dr Abdullah bin Abdulaziz bin Turki al-Subaie.

The meeting was chaired by HE Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdullah bin Mohammed al-Thani, Minister of Transport, and attended by board members: HE Dr Abdulaziz bin Nasser al-Khalifa, vice-chairman; HE Saad bin Ali al-Kharji; Engineer Abdullah bin Ali al-Thiyab; HE Sheikh Mohammed bin Hamad bin Faisal al-Thani; Brigadier Jassim al-Buhashim al-Sayed; Dr Abdulrahman Mohammed Yousuf Jolo; Engineer Saad Abdul Karim al-Qahtani; and Engineer Hamad Essa Abdulla.

Al-Ansari previously served

as Chief of Programme Delivery at Qatar Rail, which he joined in January 2012. Prior to joining the company, he held various positions in engineering management, operations management, engineering and maintenance jobs at the Ministry of Municipality, the Public Works Authority (Ashghal), and Makeen Holding. He holds a bachelor's degree in civil engineering from Qatar University.

Al-Ansari succeeds Dr al-Subaie, who has served as managing director and chairman of the company's Executive Committee since March 2011, leading and guiding the development of the rail sector in line with Qatar National Vision 2030. In January 2017, he also assumed the role of CEO in addition to his duties as managing director, continuing to oversee the planning, development and delivery of Qatar Rail's projects, as well as managing its operational activi-

ties following their completion.

Under his exceptional leadership, Qatar Rail achieved its ambitious objectives and delivered its flagship projects while adhering to the highest standards of transparency and governance and recording leading quality and performance indicators. The company also successfully launched the Doha Metro network's preview service in May 2019, one year ahead of the originally planned schedule.

Under the leadership of Dr al-Subaie, Qatar Rail delivered the major projects entrusted to it. He oversaw the delivery and operation of the Doha Metro network across its various phases, as well as the Lusail Tram network, which is considered one of the world's most advanced transport systems. He also played a pivotal role in ensuring the readiness and effective, successful operation of the network during major events hosted by Qatar, par-



HE Dr Abdullah bin Abdulaziz bin Turki al-Subaie



Engineer Jassim al-Ansari

ticularly the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022, where Doha Metro made a key contribution to the tournament's success and stood out as a leading global model for the role of public transport in delivering successful mega-events.

On the operational excellence and quality front, Dr Al-Subaie led the company in obtaining prestigious international certifications,

most notably the EFQM 5-Star Recognition for Excellence from the European Foundation for Quality Management in 2024, in addition to several prestigious international awards and certifications across various operational fields.

In the field of sustainability and innovation, Dr al-Subaie directed the company to focus on integrating environmental sustainability

solutions across its projects and on adopting advanced technologies for network management.

Born to compete: Cadillac racing's charge into F1

The Cadillac Formula 1 Team's arrival marks more than just another competitor in motorsport's premier series. It represents well over a century of American automotive innovation, with cutting-edge technology demanded by the toughest arena of modern racing.

This follows a rigorous application process that began in 2023. The Cadillac Formula 1 Team, backed by General Motors and co-owned by TWG Motorsports, worked methodically through requirements set by the FIA and Formula One Management, earning final approval in March 2025. Now, with final approval secured, the operation has already assembled over 300 specialists working across facilities in Indianapolis, Charlotte, and Warren in the US, and Silverstone in England.

Engineering Heritage Meets Modern Competition

Cadillac's motorsport credentials extend well beyond this F1 venture. Cadillac's modern performance and motorsport journey took shape with the introduction of the V-Series, a portfolio that celebrated its 20th anniversary in 2024 and continues to bring racing learnings directly to the road. More recently, Cadillac has demonstrated its competitive edge in contemporary endurance racing. The V-Series.R Hypercar secured a podium finish in its 2023 Le Mans debut while the brand swept every IMSA GTP trophy that season.

This motorsport success builds on 120 years of engineering milestones. From the first mass-produced V8 engine in 1915 to the electric self-starter in 1912 - technology now standard across the industry - Cadillac has consistently pushed technical boundaries. The brand's "Standard of the World" moniker, earned through pioneering standardised,

interchangeable parts, was not just marketing, but recognition of genuine innovation.

Today's Cadillac lineup reflects this legacy through a diverse portfolio that balances performance and innovation.



Advanced driver assistance technology exemplifies the brand's continued focus on innovation: Super Cruise, the industry's first true hands-free driver assistance system, has helped customers rack up hundreds of millions of hands-free miles on roads across the US and Canada. The F1 program represents the next chapter in Cadillac's performance journey, where racing development will inform future production technologies just as it has throughout the brand's history.

Building Toward a Full Works Operation

GM Performance Power Units LLC, led by industry veteran Russ O'Blenes, is already developing proprietary F1 engines. With over 30 years in motorsport engineering, O'Blenes brings experience from championship-winning programs and has spearheaded the development of hybrid powertrains for IMSA competition.

The F1 power unit development leverages GM's expertise in electrification, hybrid systems, sustainable fuels, and advanced controls.

A dedicated facility near GM's



Charlotte Technical Centre is scheduled to open in 2026, housing the power unit development operation. The team has already begun prototype engine testing, working toward approval for race use by the end of the decade - transforming Cadillac into a full works constructor building both chassis and power units.

While many expansion teams face steep learning curves, Cadillac's preparation has been methodical. Operational wind-tunnel models are producing data, parts manufacturing has commenced, and performance testing continues at pace. The team's multi-facility structure allows specialisation: aerodynamics and chassis development in England, powertrain engineering in Michigan, and race operations based in Charlotte and Indianapolis.

The 2026 F1 regulations - featuring revised technical specifications, including new power unit architecture - provide a fresh challenge for all teams, somewhat levelling the competitive landscape. Cadillac's hybrid racing experience from IMSA competition with the electrified V-Series.R serves as a technical foundation.

Putting American Motorsport Back onto the Global Stage

Cadillac's F1 entry carries particular significance for American motorsport. No American constructor has won an F1 race since the 1970s, and factory-backed American participation has been limited in recent decades. The Cadillac program, backed by America's largest automaker, represents genuine ambition.



ARTIC advances sustainable mobility across its Qatar portfolio with electric vehicle charging infrastructure

Al Rayyan Tourism and Investment Company WLL (ARTIC), one of the world's leading hospitality investment companies and a subsidiary of Al Faisal Holding, announced the rollout of electric vehicle (EV) charging stations across its hospitality portfolio in Qatar, reinforcing its commitment to sustainability and responsible tourism development.

The initiative, implemented across a number of ARTIC's hotels and residences, supports the growing adoption of environmentally friendly transportation while enhancing convenience for guests and residents.

The charging stations have been installed in collaboration with leading partners "Porche Centre Doha" to ensure efficiency, reliability, and ease of use.

This step reflects ARTIC's broader strategy to integrate sustainable practices into its operations and assets, aligning with global environmental priorities and Qatar's vision for a greener future.

"We are committed to advancing sustainable hospitality by integrating environmentally responsible practices across every aspect of our hotel portfolio, from reducing waste and optimising energy and water consumption to



Tarek M El Sayed

sourcing local products and supporting communities," said ARTIC's managing director and chief executive Tarek M El Sayed.

"The introduction of electric vehicle charging stations across our portfolio marks an important milestone in our sustainability journey," he said. "As the sustainable hospitality sector continues to evolve, we remain committed to adopting innovative solutions that reduce environmental impact while enhancing the guest experience."



The initiative underscores ARTIC's ongoing commitment to embedding sustainability across its operations, while continuing to deliver high-quality hospitality experiences across its portfolio.

Most of its hotels have earned Green Key certification, an internationally recognised eco-label that reflects excellence in environmental responsibility and sustainable operations.

MoI inaugurates Traffic Week 2026

The Traffic Week 2026 kicked off yesterday through a traffic awareness exhibition organised by the Ministry of Interior (MoI), represented by the General Directorate of Traffic, at Place Vendome Mall, with the participation of relevant entities.

The event aims to enhance road safety and promote a culture of safe road use.

The exhibition was inaugurated by Director General of Traffic Brigadier Jabr Ali al-Kubaisi, in the presence of Director of the Non-Communicable Disease Prevention Programmes Department at the Ministry of Public Health Sheikh Dr Mohammed bin Hamad al-Thani, along with several directors, officers from the MoI, and representatives of participating entities.

The exhibition brings together the 38th Unified GCC Traffic Week under the theme "I Cross Safely", in addition to World Traffic Day and Arab Traffic Week under the theme "Slow Down... We Are Waiting for You". The events will continue until Friday and



include awareness and interactive activities to promote understanding of traffic laws and road etiquette.

Brigadier Jabr Ali al-Kubaisi emphasised that the alignment of these three occasions strengthens awareness efforts and supports initiatives to reduce accidents and protect lives. He noted that the development of traffic services aligns with the MoI's strategic goal of enhancing service quality. Traffic services available through the "Mettrash" application have

reached 85 services, with more than 552,000 transactions completed in 2025, reflecting the expansion and efficiency of digital services.

The Director General of Traffic also voiced his appreciation to the participating entities for their co-operation and role in supporting awareness efforts, stressing that road safety is a shared responsibility that begins with compliance with the law, and that respecting the road is a form of respecting human life. (QNA)

Justice ministry organises workshop on Data Classification Project

The Ministry of Justice (MoJ), represented by the Planning, Quality, and Innovation Department, organised a workshop to introduce the Data Classification Project. The workshop aimed to familiarise ministry employees with the project, review its objectives and deliverables, and explain the mechanisms for implementing data classification according to approved national policies. This contributes to raising awareness and enhancing compliance with cybersecurity requirements and information protection.

In a statement issued today, the ministry indicated that the workshop outlined the laws and regulations governing data classification in Qatar, including the National Data Classification Policy (NDCP), the national policy adopted by the National Cyber Security Agency, and the data classification mechanism. Data classification is defined as the process of organising data into categories based on its sensitivity, importance, or compliance requirements, while considering the appropriate level of protection and controls for each category. This ensures that sensitive or critical data is adequately secured.

The workshop addressed the importance of data classification policies in helping organisations identify best practices for data handling, ensuring compliance with regulations and laws, and formalising and clarifying practices.

It also covered alignment with data classification controls and defined the different types of data classification: public information that can be disclosed to everyone, both inside and outside the organisation;



information with limited internal use for organisation users or pre-defined external users to meet business requirements; information with restricted access to specific users within the organisation (a leak of which could negatively impact operations); and confidential and top-secret information, which is extremely sensitive and, if compromised, could expose the organisation to financial, legal, or other risks.

The workshop further emphasised that confidential information is restricted to a very small group of people within the organisation.

The ministry noted that the workshop underscored the importance of data governance and classification as a shared responsibility across organisations. It also highlighted the availability of specialised data classification tools for establishing necessary classifications, as accurate classification is the key factor in data protection. (QNA)

QC launches health campaign for Sudanese refugees in Chad

Qatar Charity (QC) launched a free field medical campaign for Sudanese refugees in Chad, targeting around 2,300 refugees living in camps, as part of an urgent humanitarian response aimed at easing pressure on health services and improving access to treatment in displacement areas.

The initiative, implemented in Iriba area of Wadi Fira Region in eastern Chad near the Sudanese border, is being carried out through a temporary health clinic operating for several weeks.

The initiative comes amid extremely fragile health conditions in refugee-hosting areas, which suffer from limited medical facilities and shortages of staff and medicine supplies, making Sudanese refugees among the most vulnerable groups to health risks, particularly women, children, the elderly, and patients with chronic diseases.

The temporary clinic operates six days a week, providing integrated and free medical services, including general medical examination and diagnosis; measurement of vital signs and body mass index (BMI); basic laboratory tests; and the dispensing of medicines for common diseases such as malaria, diabetes, hypertension, typhoid, and respiratory illnesses.

It also includes maternal and child healthcare, management of chronic non-communicable diseases in line with approved treatment protocols, in addition to health education activities for patients, aimed at raising preventive awareness and improving daily health practices among refugees.

The clinic represents a temporary health intervention designed to fill an urgent gap in healthcare services for a limited period, until sustainable solutions are available to meet the growing needs of refugees and host communities. (QNA)

HBKU develops strategy to support individuals with autism

By Joseph Varghese
Staff Reporter

Providing inclusivity for all sections of the community, Hamad Bin Khalifa University (HBKU) has positioned itself at the forefront of autism research and community support in Qatar through a comprehensive, multi-layered strategy, a professor from the university told *Gulf Times*.

"HBKU has developed a number of activities spanning research, technology, community engagement, and capacity building to help individuals with autism," said Dr Marwa Khalid Qaraqe, associate professor at the HBKU's College of Science and Engineering. "In terms of research, HBKU treats autism as a research flagship area with focus on genetics and molecular mechanisms of autism."

Dr Qaraqe, who is also the co-founder of the Autism Sensing Centre (A-Sense) at the HBKU,

noted that the university's efforts span advanced research programmes, awareness campaigns, and collaborative initiatives aimed at improving the quality of life for individuals with autism and their families.

"Our research aims to identify risk genes and biological pathways, development of culturally appropriate screening technologies for Qatar and the region, and pioneering the development of intelligent technologies to analyse behaviour and facilitate technology-assisted interventions and therapies," she said.

"At the core of HBKU's approach is its commitment to research, where autism has been designated a flagship priority," Dr Qaraqe added.

"Researchers at the university focus on understanding the genetic and molecular foundations of autism, working to identify risk genes, biomarkers, and biological pathways that could lead to more



Dr Marwa Khalid Qaraqe

precise and effective interventions," she continued. "HBKU is developing culturally relevant screening technologies tailored to Qatar and the wider region, addressing a critical gap in early diagnosis."

According to the professor, another major area of focus is the use

of artificial intelligence (AI) and sensing technologies to analyse behaviour and support personalised, technology-assisted therapies.

Beyond research, she said that the HBKU actively engages with the community through a wide range of outreach initiatives.

"These include public talks, panel discussions, and interactive exhibitions that showcase assistive technologies," Dr Qaraqe said.

"Such activities are particularly prominent during World Autism Awareness Month, when the university intensifies its efforts to raise awareness and promote understanding of autism," she highlighted. "Faculty and researchers also participate in major events such as technology summits and forums, where they highlight innovations and advocate for inclusive practices."

Dr Qaraqe noted that a distinctive aspect of the HBKU's work is

its emphasis on co-creation and community involvement.

"The university collaborates directly with individuals with autism and their families in designing technologies and interventions, ensuring that solutions are practical, relevant, and user-centred," she pointed out. "Through initiatives like the A-Sense Centre of Excellence, HBKU partners with schools and community centres to test and refine technologies in real-world settings, bringing innovation closer to those who need it most."

She said that the HBKU has also contributed significantly to national-level initiatives.

"It played a key role in the Qatar Foundation Autism Task Force and helped shape the Qatar Foundation Autism Strategy for 2025-35," the professor said. "This strategy outlines priority areas such as early diagnosis, inclusive education, employment pathways, and research and innovation, reflecting

a holistic vision for autism support in the country."

"In addition, HBKU faculty contributed to the development of the Autism Community Hub, an online platform designed to provide families with access to resources across areas including diagnosis, education, vocational training, and healthcare," she said.

Dr Qaraqe stated that inclusivity is a guiding principle across all HBKU initiatives.

The university actively involves autistic individuals and their families in research design, public discussions, and programme development.

"HBKU continues to expand its efforts through various initiatives like the A-Sense Centre of Excellence," Dr Qaraqe concluded. "The centre focuses on developing scalable technologies for behavioural analysis and personalised interventions, with the potential to be deployed across clinical, educational, and community settings."

Qatar-Canada and Mexico 2026 Year of Culture initiative

Fanfare marks launch of Winter Sports Development Programme

QNA
Doha

The Winter Sports Development Programme officially launched today at the Ali Bin Hamad Al Attiyah Arena, as part of the Qatar-Canada and Mexico 2026 Year of Culture initiative. The programme is held through a strategic partnership between the Qatar Winter Sports Committee and the Cultural Years initiative under Qatar Museums, aiming to strengthen the presence of winter sports in the country and promote cultural and sporting exchange with nations around the world.

This ambitious programme serves as an integrated platform combining sport and culture, offering interactive experiences and specialised activities designed to raise awareness of ice sports. It also supports the development of local talent and fosters collaboration with international expertise,

particularly from Canada and Mexico.

The event featured a vibrant sporting and diplomatic atmosphere, highlighted by an official opening ceremony attended by ambassador of Canada to Qatar, Karim Morcos; ambassador of Mexico to Qatar, Jose Guillermo Ordorica; and Chairman of the Qatar Winter Sports Committee, Majed Rashid al-Sulaiti. The event included the ceremonial puck drop to signal the start of an exhibition ice hockey match between amateur players from Qatar and Canada-based residents.

The programme also included curling demonstrations, giving the public an opportunity to try the sport under the supervision of specialised coaches, as well as educational and training sessions in ice skating. Participants of all ages were able to engage directly with winter sports, while families enjoyed a range of cultural enter-

tainment activities. A diverse selection of Qatari, Canadian, and Mexican cuisine was also featured, reflecting the spirit of cultural diversity and openness embodied by the Cultural Years initiative.

Majed Rashid al-Sulaiti praised the strong public turnout, which exceeded expectations, noting the event's success in attracting a diverse audience that actively engaged with the Year of Culture activities in collaboration with Qatar Museums, chaired by HE Sheikha Al Mayassa bint Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani.

He added that such strong participation highlights the importance of cultural initiatives in fostering communication between peoples, as well as the committee's commitment to organising joint events with countries worldwide to promote cultural exchange. He emphasised that engagement with Canadian and Mexican cultures contributes to enriching dialogue and mutual understanding.

Vortex International Swimming Championship 2026 concludes

Hamad Aquatic Centre in the Aspire Zone witnessed an exciting atmosphere during the Vortex International Swimming Championship 2026, held from April 30 to May 2.

The event, organised by Aspire Zone Foundation in collaboration with the Qatar Swimming Association, was attended by a remarkable crowd, underscoring its importance.

The championship opened on its first day with a simple yet engaging ceremony, featuring a distinctive performance that set the tone for strong competition and brought together around 680 male and female swimmers representing more than 30 clubs from five countries. On the second day, the intensity increased with a series of races and challenges that showcased diverse technical levels and a strong competitive spirit among participants.

Hamad Yousef al-Obaidly, director of Communications and PR at Aspire Zone Foundation, said: "The Vortex International Swimming Championship reflects our ongoing commitment to providing



a world-class platform for athletes of all levels to compete, develop, and excel. Through such events, we aim to inspire the next generation of talent while reinforcing Aspire Zone's position as a leading hub for sports excellence in the region."

The excitement continued until the final day, when the competition reached its peak with strong performances across all age categories, from young swimmers in their first competitive experience to elite athletes. The championship concluded with the recognition of 22 male and female winners, honouring their outstanding perform-

ances throughout the event.

From the start of the competition until its conclusion, the venue witnessed strong audience engagement, while the presence of Tunisian Olympic swimmer and world champion Ahmed Jaouadi added a special atmosphere, as he inspired participants through his interactions with the crowd.

This event highlights Aspire Zone Foundation's success in hosting high-level sporting events in collaboration with its partners, contributing to the development of swimming and strengthening Qatar's position as a leading destination for major sporting events.

beIN SPORTS receives global recognition at AIPS Awards, international film festivals

QNA
Doha

beIN SPORTS, the leading sports network and part of the beIN Media Group, achieved a new international milestone at the 2025 AIPS Awards ceremony held in Lausanne, Switzerland. Two of its original productions secured spots among the top 10 globally in their respective categories.

The short feature "In Gaza, Hope Always Rises from the Rubble" and the documentary "Palestine: One Jersey, Many Roots," both produced by beIN SPORTS journalist Mohammed al-Nakhleh, were honoured in the short feature and documentary categories, respectively.

The feature "In Gaza, Hope Always Rises from the Rubble" sheds light on the reality of athletes in the Gaza Strip under the weight of war, embodying their resilience and determination to achieve their dreams despite the harsh challenges. Meanwhile, the documentary "Palestine: One Jersey, Many Roots" documents the journey of the Palestinian national football team, presenting the game as a symbol of identity, unity, and hope that transcends borders and limitations.

The documentary is currently available to stream on beIN's TOD digital platform in the Middle East and North Africa.

In terms of results, the feature "In Gaza, Hope Always



Rises from the Rubble" won first place in Asia and sixth place globally. It also received special recognition for its human rights work during the official ceremony, in appreciation of its powerful storytelling and humanitarian message. The documentary "Palestine: One Jersey, Many Roots" came in second place in Asia and was officially selected for screening at major international sports festivals, most notably the Beausoulet Cote d'Azur International Sports Film Festival in France and the Istanbul International Sports Film Festival 2026.

These successes come amidst fierce competition that saw 1,987 entries from 130 countries, placing beIN SPORTS productions among the top 4.5% of entries worldwide.

This recognition reflects the group's unwavering commitment to providing exceptional sports content and compelling storytelling that resonates with global audiences.

Qatari International Search and Rescue Group pays training and advisory visit to Egypt

The Qatari International Search and Rescue Group conducted a training and advisory visit to the Arab Republic of Egypt as part of a technical support programme for the Egyptian Civil Protection Team. This visit is part of the team's preparations for obtaining international accreditation from the International Search and Rescue Advisory Group (INSARAG), of the UN Office for the Co-ordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), scheduled for next August. This visit is the sixth and final one in a comprehensive programme focused on enhancing the Egyptian team's readiness



through a simulated earthquake exercise that replicates realistic devastation conditions. These efforts reflect the State of Qatar's commitment to supporting the capabilities

of sister nations in disaster response by transferring knowledge and building capacity in accordance with best international practices. (QNA)



ANNOUNCEMENT

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QU organises seminar on Gulf economy amid current crises

QNA
Doha

Qatar University (QU) explored the most significant economic repercussions stemming from political tensions and developments in the region, including their impact on global energy markets, supply chains, and international trade flows, as well as their direct effects on Gulf economies and financial stability.

This came during a seminar organised by the College of Business and Economics (CBE) at QU, under the title "The Gulf Economy Amid the Current Crisis," with the participation of a distinguished group of academics, experts and officials, and a strong attendance from students and those interested in economic affairs from both the public and private sectors in the country.

The event reflects the University's commitment to advancing informed



dialogue on current economic challenges and raising awareness of regional developments and their implications for Gulf economies.

Speakers included Associate Professor of Finance at CBE, Dr Khalid al-Abdulqader, Head of the Finance and Economics Department at CBE, Dr Alanoud al-Maadid, Assistant Professor of Economics at CBE, Dr Jalal

Qanas, and Senior Director of Treasury, Asset and Liability Management, and Financial Institutions at Qatar Development Bank (QDB), Mohammed al-Naimi, in addition to Bureau Chief of CNBC Arabia in Qatar, Muammar Awad, as the moderator of the seminar.

In this context, Head of the Finance and Economics Department at CBE, Dr al-Maadid, said, "The depart-

ment is committed to remaining at the forefront of academic institutions that respond to global economic developments by providing dialogue platforms that enrich students' knowledge and connect them directly with economic realities, enhancing their readiness for the labour market and unexpected global economic challenges."

In turn, Dean of the College of Business and Economics at QU, Prof Rana Sobh, emphasised that the seminar reflects the College's commitment to its role as a leading platform that anticipates global economic shifts and examines their implications.

She noted that the College fosters critical thinking, connects theory with practice, and prepares students to engage with economic realities, indicating that this aligns with a broader vision to develop national talent capable of adapting to and shaping a more sustainable, innovative economic future.

Qatar Calendar presents packed seasonal programme this May

Aligned with Qatar's summer season, Visit Qatar's "Hala Summer" campaign, running from April to September 2026, sets the stage for a vibrant line-up of events and experiences across the country.

Within this context, the May edition of Qatar Calendar highlights the beginning of a dynamic seasonal programme, reinforcing Qatar's positioning as a leading summer destination.

From major international exhibitions, such as the Doha International Book Fair 2026 (DIBF 2026) to prestigious sporting events, including the Amir Cup Final 2026, as well as concerts and circus performances, May offers residents and visitors a diverse schedule of experiences across Doha and various locations in the country.

Entertainment enthusiasts can look forward to a full calendar of events, with Fontana Circus, the first travelling water circus in the Middle East, presenting family shows at the circus tent in Hyatt Plaza until May 31.

The "Legend: King of Pop Live show" concluded its run at the Oa-

sis Theatre at Mall of Qatar yesterday (May 2), bringing iconic performances back to the stage.

For theatre and comedy audiences, the Qatar National Convention Centre (QNCC) will host the interactive children's musical *Jamal Jamal* from May 27-29, the first three days of Eid al-Adha, while Doha Players will present the play *Nine* by Jane Shepard from May 13-15, exploring themes of human connection.

At Abdulaziz Nasser Theatre in Souq Waqif, audiences can enjoy the comedy show *Wagef!* with Mina Nader in Qatar on May 23.

Music enthusiasts can attend "Candlelight" concerts at Four Seasons Hotel Doha on May 16, featuring "From Mozart to Chopin" and "Best of Arabic and Western Songs".

The Qatar Philharmonic Orchestra will present Mozart and Bartók at Katara Opera House on May 23, while Heenat Salma Farm will host "A Tribute to Asha Bhosle" on May 8.

For families, the Museum of Islamic Art (MIA) will organise "Family Day: Hajj - Traditions, Art

and Legacy" on May 9, featuring interactive educational activities.

May will also host major sporting events, led by the Amir Cup Final 2026 at Khalifa International Stadium on May 9.

Various venues across the country will host the "4th GCC Games" from May 11-22, bringing together athletes from across the region to compete in 19 sports.

For fitness enthusiasts, the QTRI Azure Beach Club Aquathlon will take place at Azure Beach Club on Qetaifan North Island on May 2, featuring swimming and running races for different age groups.

The month also features a strong cultural and artistic line-up, including the DIBF 2026 at the Doha Exhibition and Convention Centre (DECC) from May 14-23, bringing together writers, ideas and cultures.

At the same venue, Sneaker Con Doha will take place from May 29-31 as one of the world's largest sneaker exhibitions, alongside the Tajjheezat Eid al-Adha Fair running until May 5, featuring products from more than 15 countries.

Galleria Al Hazm will host the

eight edition of the "Zeenah" exhibition from May 6-13, dedicated to fashion and women's products, while the Qatar Education Leadership Expo 2026 will take place at Radisson Blu Hotel on May 23-24.

Across Qatar Museums, exhibitions continue throughout the month, including "Resolutions: Celebrating 15 years of Mathaf at Mathaf: Arab Museum of Modern Art" until August 8; "Empire of Light: Visions and Voices of Afghanistan" at the MIA until May 30; and "A Sneak Peek at the Qatar Auto Museum Project" at the National Museum of Qatar (NMQ) will run until February 2, 2027.

At Fire Station: Artist in Residence, three exhibitions will continue until May 31 - "Ho Tzu Nyen: Hotel Aporia"; "Haroon Mirza: Everything Was, Is and Always Will Be"; and the solo exhibition "Chung Seoyoung: Endless Facts".

The MIA's Education Centre will also offer a series of art workshops, including Nasta'liq Calligraphy Workshop (intermediate level) from May 2-23, "Drawing for Adults" from May 10-13, and Mono-printing Work-



shop for Adults on May 16. For more information on Qatar Calendar 2026 events, visit www.visitqatar.com, download the Visit Qatar app, or follow @QatarCalendar on social media.

QCS concludes thyroid cancer awareness campaign

Qatar Cancer Society (QCS) has concluded its thyroid cancer awareness campaign, which ran throughout April as part of its ongoing efforts to raise community awareness and highlight the importance of prevention and early detection as essential pillars in reducing incidence rates and improving treatment outcomes.

Thyroid cancer is the third most common cancer in Qatar and affects women at three times the rate of men, according to the Qatar National Cancer Registry (QNCR 2021).

The campaign featured a series of in-person and virtual awareness activities targeting various segments of the community. It focused on promoting awareness of preventive measures, warning signs, and risk factors associated with thyroid cancer, while encouraging individuals to undergo regular medical check-ups as part of early detection efforts.

As part of the campaign, QCS organised a panel discussion at its headquarters titled "Thyroid Health Keys: What You Need to Know" in collaboration with Life Care Clinic and WellCare Pharmacies.

The session was moderated by Heba Nassar, head of Community



Health Awareness at QCS, and featured a distinguished group of speakers, including Dr Tania Jaber, consultant endocrinologist at Hamad Medical Corporation; Dr Mona Salem, dermatology and aesthetic specialist at Life Care Clinic; Dr Minas El-Sharkawy, integrative coach and behavioural change trainer; and Batool Ibrahim, clinical dietitian at QCS, who shared valuable insights on thyroid health from medical, nutritional, and behavioural perspectives.

The Society also reinforced the campaign through intensive media and digital outreach across multiple platforms, providing educational content and media coverage to expand reach and enhance public awareness. This integrated approach helped ensure that key health mes-

sages were accessible to a broader audience.

Mona al-Ashkanani, general manager of QCS, stated that organising such initiatives reflects the Society's ongoing commitment to promoting health awareness and emphasising the importance of early detection, which plays a crucial role in improving recovery rates, especially with the rising incidence of thyroid cancer.

She added that QCS continues to utilise diverse awareness channels and values partnerships with healthcare and media entities to achieve a sustainable impact in cancer prevention and awareness.

At the conclusion of the campaign, the Society reaffirmed the importance of regular medical check-ups as a key method for early

detection and improved recovery outcomes, urging community members to prioritise their health and adopt healthier lifestyles.

Nassar stated that thyroid cancer begins in the thyroid gland, which regulates vital body functions such as metabolism, heart rate, and body temperature, and emphasised the importance of paying attention to unusual changes in the body.

She noted that symptoms may include a lump or swelling in the front of the neck, pain that may extend to the ears, persistent hoarseness, difficulty swallowing or breathing, and an unexplained cough, stressing that consulting a doctor is essential even though these symptoms may be linked to other conditions.

She added that risk factors include gender, age, genetic predisposition, radiation exposure, overweight and obesity, and iodine imbalance, highlighting that maintaining a healthy lifestyle and balanced nutrition play a key role in prevention.

Nassar said treatment options vary depending on the case and may include surgery, radioactive iodine therapy, hormone therapy, radiation therapy, targeted therapy, and, in some cases, chemotherapy.

Retail fish prices stable due to abundant supply



By Ayman Adly
Staff Reporter

The local fish market has recently entered a period of relative price stability, supported by a notable increase in domestic catch and overall supply.

This abundance has led to a decline in prices for several fish varieties, while a few high-demand species have recorded only modest increases. In particular, Al Wakrah Fish Market has received large and diverse quantities of fresh fish in recent days, with a single day's catch reaching around two tonnes across multiple species.

According to official daily price bulletins, grouper remains among the most popular fish in the local market, with prices ranging from QR25 per kilogram for large sizes to QR33 for medium sizes. Kingfish is priced at QR42 per kilogram for large sizes and QR45 for medium sizes. Meanwhile, several commonly consumed varieties are available at more affordable levels. Rabbitfish is priced at QR20 per kilogram for large sizes and QR17 for medium sizes, while sheri fish stands at QR13. Other species include threadfin bream at QR54, trevally at QR19, and red mullet at QR20 per kilogram. Market workers said the

abundance of local production is the primary driver of current price stability. The resumption and intensification of fishing activities have significantly increased daily supply, helping bring down prices for many species. They added that the steady inflow of fish into markets improves flexibility and ensures consumer demand is met without shortages.

At the same time, traders noted that weather conditions continue to play a key role in shaping market dynamics. Seasonal winds and changing sea conditions can occasionally limit fishing operations, temporarily reducing supply and pushing prices up. However, once conditions improve, fishing activity resumes quickly, and the market stabilises.

Traders at Al Wakrah Fish Market said the market is currently experiencing a clear supply surplus, contributing to lower prices across many fish types. They noted that the slight increases in grouper and kingfish prices are largely driven by consistently strong demand and previously constrained supply.

Regular market visitors also expressed satisfaction, saying the abundance of locally sourced fish has made it easier to meet their needs. Many praised the quality, freshness, and variety currently available.

Steady supply of livestock expected over coming period

By Ayman Adly
Staff Reporter

As Eid al-Adha approaches, Qatar's livestock market is preparing for a substantial surge in supply, with traders anticipating an abundance of both locally produced and imported sheep sufficient to meet peak seasonal demand.

Officials from livestock-importing companies said that early contracting, supported by government facilitation and regulatory easing, has enabled them to secure large quantities of sheep in advance. These preparations are part of a co-ordinated effort to ensure market stability and adequate livestock availability. Estimates indicate that Qatari companies have collectively arranged to import around 100,000 head of sheep and other livestock for the season.

Market data show that Qatar's monthly sheep consumption typically ranges from 30,000 to 50,000 head. Demand, however, rises sharply during Ramadan and Eid, reaching approximately 100,000 head. This demand is met through a combination of local production and imports, with Widam Food Company playing a key role in maintaining a steady supply and



stabilising the red meat market.

Ibrahim Jassim al-Nahshali, owner of a livestock trading company, said his firm plans to import large quantities of sheep within a single week as part of an early supply strategy, in addition to his farm's local production of around 10,000 head. He also highlighted his participation in national initiatives to ensure the availability of sacrificial livestock.

Al-Nahshali explained that imported sheep include various types commonly marketed as "Syrian sheep," which are expected to significantly increase supply. He added that import procedures are conducted electronically through the Livestock Department to obtain approvals for shipments via land, sea, or air ports, stressing that early application is essential to ensure arrivals at least two weeks before Eid.

Nabil Ali al-Ajmi, a sheep breeder,

noted that while local production contributes to market supply, it does not fully cover peak seasonal demand. He said many breeders rely on their own stock to supply sacrificial animals while selling surplus livestock, helping ease market pressure. However, he emphasised the need for stronger support and development of the sector.

Al-Ajmi also highlighted the national subsidised meat initiative, which has helped ease financial burdens on citizens by offering sacrificial sheep at around QR1,000, compared with market prices ranging between QR2,000 and QR3,000.

Salah al-Kuwari, owner of a livestock import company, confirmed that early preparations are already in place to meet anticipated demand. He described the market outlook as reassuring despite regional challenges affecting supply chains. Im-

ports continue from key sources, including Syrian and Jordanian livestock, with Saudi Arabia serving as the main transit route for shipments entering Qatar land borders.

Al-Kuwari stressed that while local production remains an important contributor, it is insufficient on its own to meet total demand. He called for continued investment in the livestock sector through enhanced veterinary care, improved breeds, better feed availability, and expanded feed cultivation.

Meanwhile, Jassim Ibrahim al-Qattan, a livestock importer and breeder, said he has obtained permits to import around 30,000 sheep and 20,000 calves, bringing his total seasonal supply to approximately 50,000 head. These quantities are expected to play a significant role in strengthening overall market supply during the Eid season.

Al-Qattan also pointed to government initiatives to support the livestock sector, including the establishment of 10 specialised farms to boost domestic production and reduce reliance on imports. He highlighted his own project, launched in 2021, which spans about 70,000sq m and includes integrated facilities such as a modern slaughterhouse, veterinary clinic, and livestock display and sales areas.

MoECC launches research project to assess biodiversity in Rawdat Umm Al Jamajim

Represented by its Wildlife Development Department, the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change (MoECC) launched an integrated research project aimed at assessing the biodiversity in Rawdat Umm Al Jamajim, located opposite of Al Karaana area, as part of national efforts to protect and support the sustainability of the Qatari desert environment. The first phase of the project included organising a comprehensive field campaign on the site, in which specialists from the administration participated. It focused on cleaning the garden and inventorying its plant components, in preparation for collecting the data necessary to support the subsequent research phase. In this regard, Head of the Wildlife Development Department, Adel Mohammed al-Yafei, said that



the project represents a qualitative scientific step towards enhancing knowledge of the ecosystems in the meadows spread throughout the country, pointing out that the field campaign aims to assess the condition of the vegetation cover, identify local species, and develop

effective plans for rehabilitation and protection. The Ministry continues to enhance its research and field programmes that combine scientific and applied work, in line with the goals of Qatar National Vision 2030 in the area of environmental sustainability, al-Yafei added.

Army redeploys in southern positions: Lebanese military

A Lebanese military source said that the army has repositioned its forces across several sites in southern Lebanon, after previously evacuating them due to Israeli attacks. In an exclusive statement to Qatar News Agency (QNA), the source said that the army has redeployed in more than 15 positions south of the Litani River, including Al Qasimia, after it was forced to evacuate some of these sites due to security risks and the Israeli attacks.

The truce between Lebanon and the Israeli entity, which began on April 16, is no longer in effect and has lost its effectiveness on the ground, except for the ceasefire in Beirut, amid the continued attacks on southern Lebanon at a pace resembling the days of the conflict, the source added. The source stressed that the priority of the Lebanese army is to protect civil peace and stability, as well as to support the people and stand by them under all circumstances - whether during their return to their villages and towns, or by



assisting state institutions in providing basic services such as communications and electricity. He added in his statement to QNA that despite being forced to withdraw from some high-risk security areas in southern Lebanon-known as the "yellow line" - the Lebanese army has not abandoned its duties, noting its presence in a number of highly dangerous field missions, as well as its participation in search and rescue operations for victims in areas subjected to Israeli air strikes and shelling. - QNA



CRISIS

4,000 EgyptAir haj flights cancelled in crisis-struck Mali

EgyptAir has cancelled its haj flights to and from crisis-struck Mali, directly impacting more than 4,000 people, according to the country's pilgrimage-organising body. The cancellations come as the west African nation faces a dire security situation, with separatist and rebels targeting its authoritarian junta. The cancellation of the flights was due to "the cost difference related to the increase in kerosene prices, as well as the security situation in Mali", said the organising body. Acknowledging that the cancellation, it said discussions were "underway at a high level" to find a swift solution. (AFP)

ANNOUNCEMENT

Syria state TV: Jordan's strikes on rebel weapons storage

Syrian state TV reported Jordanian strikes on a drugs and weapons storage in the southern Druze-majority province of Sweida, of which many parts are outside the control of Damascus due to the presence of rebel groups. State television quoted local sources saying the Jordanian army "likely... targeted a headquarters containing weapons and drugs controlled by rebel groups in the village of Shahba in Sweida". Separately, the Jordanian army said it had "carried out a Jordanian deterrent operation targeting several locations used by arms and drug traffickers along the Kingdom's northern border". (AFP)

MISSING IN ACTION

Two US service members missing in Morocco

Two US service members taking part in an exercise in southern Morocco have gone missing, military authorities from both countries said yesterday, adding that a search was underway. The "African Lion 2026" military exercise began late last month in the southern city of Agadir, bringing together nearly 5,000 military personnel from more than 40 countries until May 8. Authorities have launched coordinated search and rescue operations involving ground, air and maritime assets," they added. US Africa Command announced: "The incident remains under investigation and the search is on-going." (AFP)

NATURAL DISASTER

Kenya death toll from floods, landslides rises to 18 people

The death toll from flooding and landslides following heavy rains in Kenya has risen to 18 people, the national police service said yesterday. Landslides were reported in Tharaka Nithi, Elgeyo-Marakwe and Kiambu counties in central and eastern Kenya following sustained heavy rainfall, Kenyan police said in a statement, adding: "The National Police Service has confirmed the loss of 18 lives as a result of these incidents, underscoring the grave danger posed by the ongoing weather conditions." The country is experiencing heavy downpours, which have damaged infrastructure and displaced many people. (Reuters)

Israel assault kills one in Lebanon



A family stands outside their tent at a temporary encampment for displaced people in Beirut. (Reuters)

AFP
Beirut

New evacuation warnings in Lebanon

Israel's military on Sunday issued new evacuation warnings in southern Lebanon for villages beyond the area it occupies, despite a truce with Lebanon intended to halt the fighting with Iran-backed Hezbollah. "For your safety, you must evacuate your homes immediately and move away from the villages and towns by at least 1,000 metres into open areas," the military's Arabic-language spokesman Avichay Adraee posted on X. The warning included more than 10 villages and towns as well as the city of Nabatieh, which lies several kilometres north of the Litani River, south of which Israel has stationed troops. (AFP)

Lebanon's state-run National News Agency reported a series of Israeli strikes across southern Leba-

non, including on towns not mentioned in the evacuation warning. The ceasefire text grants Israel the right to act against "planned, imminent or ongoing attacks". In the past week two soldiers and an army contractor have been killed by drone attacks in the area, with dozens of soldiers wounded.

Hezbollah has recently begun using cheap drones controlled by fibre-optic cable, making them largely immune to electronic jamming, to conduct daily attacks.

These drones have a range of several dozen kilometres, which puts Israeli troops in Lebanon and communities in northern Israel under threat. The group on Monday said it targeted Israeli troops in Bayada, southern Lebanon, with a drone in response to Israel's "violation" of the ceasefire.

The United States has called for direct peace negotiations between Lebanon and Israel, but Lebanese President Joseph Aoun called on Wednesday for Israel to fully implement the ceasefire before the talks can take place.



Security personnel escort Brazilian activist Thiago Avila to a court in Ashkelon yesterday. The flotilla of more than 50 vessels had set sail from France, Spain and Italy with the aim of breaking an Israeli blockade of Gaza and bringing supplies to the devastated Palestinian territory. (AFP)

Israel court extends Gaza flotilla activists' detention

AFP
Ashkelon

An Israeli court yesterday extended for two days the detention of two foreign activists from a Gaza-bound flotilla, who were brought to Israel for questioning, a rights group representing them said.

The flotilla was intercepted by Israeli forces in international waters off Greece early on Thursday, with Israel saying it had removed some 175 activists — two of whom were taken to Israel for questioning. Spanish national Saif Abu Keshek and Brazilian Thiago Avila appeared before a court in the southern city of Ashkelon yesterday. "The court extended their detention

by two days," Miriam Azem, international advocacy coordinator at the rights group Adalah, told AFP. Adalah said the state attorney had presented a list of suspected offences committed by the pair, including "assisting the enemy during wartime" and "membership in and providing services to a terrorist organisation". But Adalah's lawyers challenged the state's jurisdiction, arguing against the "unlawful abduction" of the two activists in international waters.

Its lawyers told the court Avila and Abu Keshek had testified to "severe physical abuse amounting to torture, including being beaten and held in isolation and blindfolded for days at sea".

Israel's foreign ministry rejected claims that the men were

subjected to physical violence.

"We argued that ... they were part of a humanitarian mission that aimed to provide humanitarian aid to the civilians in Gaza, and not to any other organisation, whether terrorist or not," lawyer Hadeel Abu Salih said after the court hearing.

"We deny all the accusations that were presented... and demand these two men be released immediately," she said.

Spain's government has called for Abu Keshek's "immediate release". Israel's foreign ministry said the pair were affiliated with the Popular Conference for Palestinians Abroad (PCPA) — a group accused by Washington of "clandestinely acting on behalf of" Palestinian group Hamas.

One killed in Israel's West Bank raid: Palestinian officials

Palestinian health officials yesterday said a Palestinian man was killed during an Israeli raid in the West Bank city of Nablus. The occupied West Bank has been gripped by almost daily violence since the start of the Gaza war in October 2023, involving both Israeli troops and settlers. The Ramallah-based Palestinian health ministry identified the victim as 26-year-old Nayef Firas Ziad Samaro. "He was killed and four others were injured by live ammunition during an incursion by Israeli forces in the city of Nablus," the ministry said. The Rafidia hospital in Ramallah confirmed Samaro's death. "He was brought in critical condition, and doctors' attempts to save his life failed," Fouad Nafaa, the director of Rafidia hospital, told AFP. Eyewitnesses said troops entered several neighbourhoods in the city centre and began searching shops, then left briefly before returning. Clashes broke out when a handful of youngsters started throwing stones at the army vehicles, with the troops responding with tear gas and live bullets, they said. (AFP)



Areej al-Saafin, who lost her eye as a result of an Israeli military strike, uses charcoal to draw on the wall of her home in the Bureij Palestinian refugee camp in the central Gaza Strip. (AFP)

Drone strike in Sudan kills nine relatives of militia chief

AFP
Khartoum

A paramilitary drone attack hit the family home of an army-aligned commander accused of atrocities, killing nine of his relatives, two sources within the militia he leads told AFP yesterday.

The sources said the Saturday's strike hit the family house of Abu Aqla Kaykal, commander of the Sudan Shield Forces, in the village of al-Kaheli, around 40 kms (25 miles) east of Wad Madani, the capital of Al-Jazirah state in central Sudan. They blamed the attack on the Rapid Support Forces (RSF), which have been at war with Sudan's army since April 2023. Among those killed were two of Kaykal's brothers, Azzam and Haidar, a relative, Siddiq Bakhit — a com-

mander in the Sudan Shield Forces — and six children from the family, the sources said. The house and several neighbouring homes were also damaged, they added.

Kaykal previously served as the RSF's commander in Al-Jazirah state, where he has been accused of besieging entire villages. He defected to the army's side in October 2024, after which his fighters joined military operations that helped the army recapture key areas of central Sudan, including Al-Jazirah and the capital Khartoum. Both the RSF and the Sudan Shield Forces are accused of committing atrocities during Sudan's ongoing conflict.

Kaykal has been accused of abuses against civilians both during his time with the RSF and since aligning with the army. The RSF and the Sudanese army have not commented on the attack.

Hezbollah pays steep price in battle to reverse its fortunes

Reuters
Beirut

Hezbollah has paid a heavy price for going to war with Israel: Israel has occupied a chunk of southern Lebanon, displaced hundreds of thousands and killed as many as several thousand of its fighters. The move has brought severe political consequences, too. In Beirut, opposition has hardened to its status as an armed group, which domestic rivals see as exposing Lebanon to repeated wars with Israel.

In April, Lebanon's government held face-to-face talks with Israel for the first time in decades, a decision Hezbollah firmly opposed.

However, more than a dozen Hezbollah officials told Reuters they see a chance to reverse deteriorating fortunes by aligning with Tehran in its war with Israel and the US.

The calculations of the group — founded

by Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps in 1982 — are based on the assessment that its participation would force Lebanon onto the agenda of US-Iranian negotiations, and that Iranian pressure can secure a more robust ceasefire than one that took effect in November 2024 following a conflict sparked by the war in Gaza, the officials said.

Hezbollah was mauled in the last war, which killed its leader, Hassan Nasrallah, along with some 5,000 fighters, and weakened its long-dominant hold over the Lebanese state.

Rearmed with Iranian help, it has used new tactics and drones, surprising many with its capabilities after a fragile 15-month truce during which Hezbollah held fire, even as Israel continued to kill its members. Hezbollah lawmaker Ibrahim al-Moussawi denied the group was acting on Iran's behalf when it re-

sumed hostilities, as alleged by opponents. He acknowledged losses and damage in southern Lebanon but said "you don't go into making calculations of how many are going to be killed" when "pride and sovereignty and independence" are at stake.

Yezid Sayigh, a senior fellow at the Carnegie Middle East Center in Beirut, said Hezbollah had "shown more resilience than many thought possible, but that was not a strategic gain in itself". "The only thing that will contain Israel is a comprehensive US-Iran deal," he said. "Without a deal, there's going to be a lot of pain for everyone. At best, a hurting stalemate."

A diplomat who has contact with Hezbollah described its decision to enter the war as a big gamble and a survival strategy. It has yet to be seen if the gamble will pay off.

Tehran has demanded that Israel's campaign against Hezbollah be included in any deal on the wider war.



Smoke rises after an Israeli strike in central Beirut's Bachoura neighbourhood, following an escalation between Hezbollah and Israel, amid the US-Israeli conflict with Iran, in Beirut. (Reuters/File Photo)

Japan eyes slice of rising global defence spending

AFP
Tokyo

Long-pacifist Japan has shed its self-imposed ban on lethal weaponry exports, gunning for a prominent place in the global defence trade – a challenging feat that analysts say could take years to achieve.

Under Japan's once-strict stance adopted following its World War II surrender and the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, it has generally restricted arms exports in recent times to non-lethal categories like rescue, transport and surveillance.

Prime Minister Sanae Takachi's government scrapped these constraints last month, allowing firms to supply lethal weaponry to any of the 17 countries where Japan has defence cooperation agreements.

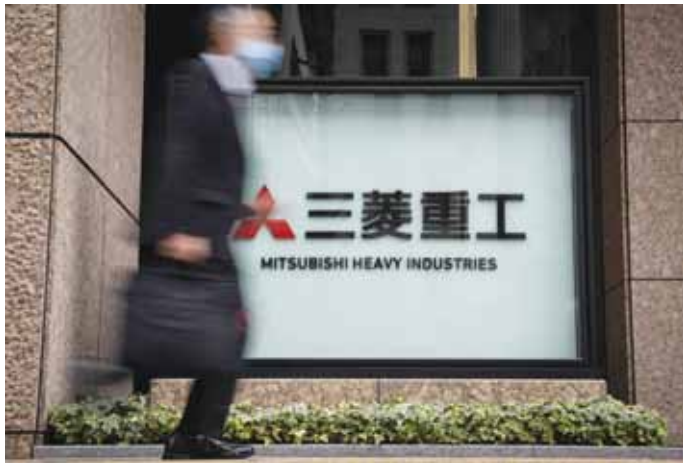
Prohibitions on sales to nations at war remain but can be circumvented under special circumstances.

Five Japanese firms, including Mitsubishi Heavy Industries and Kawasaki Heavy Industries, are already in the top 100 global defence companies, according to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI).

But they have largely lived off domestic demand from Japan's military, often in cooperation with US defence firms.

Analysts say a focus on high-tech sectors could help the transition, but caution that it could take years for defence exports to become a big contributor to economic growth, hampered by capacity and workforce shortages.

Bloomberg Intelligence analyst Ian Ma said it was a "transition from a domestic, ministry-led procurement model to a normal



A man walks past a Mitsubishi Heavy Industries (MHI) logo outside the company's headquarters in Tokyo. (AFP/File Photo)

practice which companies could drive business opportunities just like other global companies are doing."

He added that as newcomers on the global market, Japanese firms should focus on "higher-tech niches" like naval and propulsion systems, advanced missiles, sensors and electronics.

No 'immediate impact'

With conflicts raging around the world, the international defence market is huge and fast growing, soaring by 41% between 2016 and 2025 to almost \$3 trillion, according to SIPRI.

While Japanese firms may only export to 17 countries, those include some of the world's biggest defence spenders like the United States, Germany, India and Britain.

Evolutions in technology and the way wars are fought – notably with drones – are also making the global arms market more diffuse, which could benefit Japan, according to analysts at the Stimson Center.

Along with a steep decline in

Russian arms exports, Washington's "increasingly unpredictable, extractive, and at times confrontational approach" has also pushed importers to seek alternatives to the United States, the Stimson Center said in a research note.

"Though the trend remains nascent, for Japan, the wandering eyes of traditional US defence partners could add to the demand for the sorts of sophisticated capabilities Tokyo is well-prepared to offer."

Even before the new changes, Japan has been no slouch.

Last year Mitsubishi Heavy Industries won a landmark order for 11 warships from the Australian navy.

Japan is also developing a new fighter jet with Britain and Italy, and countries in Southeast Asia are reportedly interested in acquiring used Japanese submarines and warships.

But Mitsubishi Electric, which supplied a radar system to the Philippines and may soon make air-to-air missiles

with US partners, told AFP that the new rules would not have a "significant immediate impact on our business".

Rival IHI said that the changes "will not lead to an immediate acceleration of our defence equipment business", but "will have a significant impact on creating a market environment that accelerates international cooperation".

'Homework'

Ma cautioned that Japan has "homework" to do, including on production capacity, skilled labour, second and third-tier suppliers, certification, testing, maintenance support and the ability to "deliver on time".

Beyond the economic stakes, deepening security ties is also a strategic necessity for Japan, said Heigo Sato, a professor at Takushoku University, in a region where China is flexing its muscles and home to nuclear-armed North Korea.

"When it comes to defence industry cooperation, Japan is by no means a country with the world's most advanced weaponry; therefore, we must actively work to build relationships with other nations," Sato told AFP.

The Japanese public is not at all comfortable with the new strategy, with 55% of respondents in a recent Nikkei poll saying that they were opposed to the expansion of arms exports.

Days after Takachi announced the new rules, dozens of protesters rallied in Tokyo.

In World War II, "Japan committed acts of aggression, and in turn suffered enormous damage from the atomic bombs," demonstrator Yura Suzuike told AFP.

Japan's pacifist constitution that followed had been drafted "with the resolve that we must never again wage war or kill people," she said.

QU hosts Creative Industries Summit

Qatar University (QU), represented by the Core Curriculum Programme (CCP), hosted the second edition of the Creative Industries Summit, featuring more than 20 innovative student projects developed within a multi-disciplinary, practice-based learning environment.

The summit, which forms part of the Spring 2026 course outcomes for "Introduction to Creative Industries (UNIV 210)", aims to link academic knowledge with real-world application and advance the concept of the creative economy in Qatar.

The showcased projects reflected a diverse range of outputs, including digital innovations, interactive experiences, design concepts, and cultural products.

These projects demonstrated students' ability to integrate technology, media, and design to address real-world challenges while highlighting Qatari cultural identity.

Dr Saba Qadhi, dean of the QU's College of General Studies, stated that the projects developed in the "Introduction to Creative Industries" course clearly demonstrate students' ability to transform ideas into impactful creative products that combine innovation, cultural expression, and modern technologies.

She added that such experiences go beyond developing technical skills, helping prepare a generation capable of strengthening cultural identity through contemporary approaches.

CCP director Dr Ali Hamad Fetais said that the summit reflects the programme's goal of creating a learning environment that encourages innovation, where students move from simply learning information to creating valuable solutions using practical learning methods.

Dr Abdelhamid Ahmed, the course co-ordinator for "Introduction to Creative Industries (UNIV 210)", said that the projects are models that can be expanded and show a good understanding of how creative industries help the knowledge economy in Qatar.

From the students' perspective, Maha al-Omoudi, a psychology major with a minor in entrepreneurship and innovation, said that her project focuses on developing an integrated educational platform supported by smart glasses designed for visually impaired users.



Dr Ali Hamad Fetais



Dr Saba Qadhi

She highlighted that the course enabled her to further develop and expand her concept.

Similarly, Hanouf al-Jassim, a mass communication (radio and television) major with a minor in entrepreneurship and innovation, described her team's project "Gear Shift", which utilises 3D printing technologies to produce customised car modification moulds, enabling innovative designs at a lower cost.

The summit featured other projects, including "Sougha", which offers customised souvenirs reflecting Qatari identity, and an edible cups initiative that provides an environmentally sustainable solution to reduce waste, enhance the user experience, and support the Environmental Development pillar of Qatar National Vision 2030.

The summit reflects the core philosophy of the "Introduction to Creative Industries" course in bridging academic knowledge with practical application and empowering students to develop implementable, innovation-driven projects.

It also reinforces the QU's role in fostering entrepreneurship and creativity within an interactive educational environment that contributes to sustainable development in Qatar.

Merz not 'giving up' on Trump

AFP
Berlin

German Chancellor Friedrich Merz said yesterday he would not give up on working with US President Donald Trump, despite a spat between the leaders over the war in Iran.

"I am not giving up on working on the transatlantic relationship," Merz told public broadcaster ARD in an interview set to air Sunday night. "Nor am I giving up on working with Donald Trump."

Merz sought to downplay any tensions with Trump, arguing for instance that an abrupt public announcement that the US would pull 5,000 troops from bases in Germany was not surprising and should not be seen as retaliation.

"It may be being exaggerated a bit, but it's not new," Merz told talk show host Caren Miosga.

Criticism of the US-Israeli war against Iran from Merz and other European leaders has clearly aggravated Trump. The latest rift came after Merz on April 27 said that Iran was "humiliating" Washington at the negotiating table.



President Donald Trump and German Chancellor Friedrich Merz reach to shake hands as they meet in the Oval Office. (Reuters/File Photo)

That provoked a series of angry responses from Washington, including Trump's comments that Merz was doing a "terrible" job as chancellor.

Merz on Sunday said the US decision on troops had "no connection" with the recent disagreements.

Important partners

The chancellor also appeared to confirm that a planned deployment of US long-range Tomahawk cruise missiles to Germa-

ny – announced by former US president Joe Biden – was being called off, at least for the time being.

He cited depleted arsenals because of the wars in Iran and Ukraine as the reason.

"The Americans themselves don't have enough at the moment," he said.

"Objectively speaking, there is hardly any possibility from the US of relinquishing weapons systems of this kind."

But he insisted the "train has not departed" for possible cooperation in the future, and that European NATO powers could continue deterring Russia without those particular missiles or US forces.

Trump's criticism of European leaders has not been confined to Merz.

He previously ridiculed British Prime Minister Kier Starmer, and on Thursday told reporters that "Italy has not been of any help to us and Spain has been horrible, absolutely horrible".

But Merz insisted that he still shared Trump's goal of ensuring Iran never obtains an atomic weapon, even if he has criticised the US handling of the conflict.

"We have a different view of this war. That's no secret," Merz said in the interview. "I'm not the only one who feels that way."

Merz insisted that Trump respects his right to hold differing views – though perhaps "a little less for the moment".

"But that does not alter the fact that I remain convinced that the Americans are important partners for us – our most important partners in the North Atlantic alliance," Merz said.

US 'suffocating' Iran with blockade: Treasury chief

AFP
Washington

Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent yesterday said that the United States was "suffocating" Iran's leadership through an "economic blockade" launched alongside the US military offensive.

"This began with the order last March from President Trump on max pressure, and three weeks ago the President gave the order to Treasury myself to begin Economic Fury," Bessent said in a Fox News interview, referring to his department's initiative to supplement the Pentagon's "Operation Epic Fury."

"We are suffocating the regime, and they are not able to pay their soldiers. This is a real economic blockade, and it is in all parts of government – all hands on deck," he told the "Sunday Morning Futures" program.

Both Iran and the United States have imposed restrictions on ships passing through the Strait of Hormuz, a crucial passageway



A woman walks past an anti-US billboard depicting US President Donald Trump and the Strait of Hormuz, in Tehran. (Reuters)

for the energy industry exporting hydrocarbons from the Gulf.

While Iran has blocked most shipping in the passageway, the US Navy says it is blocking all ships heading to or from Iranian

ports. Both sides are said to be negotiating as a fragile ceasefire holds.

Bessent said his department was imposing economic measures "on anyone trying to remit money

into Iran to help the IRGC," Iran's elite military force.

"They are a corrupt institution. They have been stealing from the Iranian people for years. They have money offshore. We have tracked that down. We will continue to track that down, and we are going to preserve those assets for the Iranian people on the other side of this conflict," Bessent said.

On Saturday, describing the Iranian leadership as "rats in a sewer pipe," Bessent wrote on X that "the BLOCKADE will continue, until there is pre-February 27 Freedom of Navigation," in the Strait.

In the same post he said that "food and gasoline rationing are in place" in Iran.

Meanwhile on CBS's "Face the Nation," Director of the National Economic Council Kevin Hassett echoed Bessent on Sunday, saying that Iran had "an economy that's really on the precipice of extreme calamity."

"They are having a hyperinflation," he added. "They're starting to have hunger."

QM unveils programmes for May across museums

Qatar Museums (QM) has announced its May 2026 programme of public activities, featuring a curated selection of workshops, talks, and family-focused sessions across its museums and creative spaces.

Offering a series of programmes focused on calligraphy, creativity and environmental awareness, the Museum of Islamic Art (MIA) will host:

- Calligraphy workshops: Nasta'liq Intermediate for Children and Youth, (May 2, 9, 16 and 23), in addition to Ruq'ah Intermediate for Women, (from May 3-6).

- Planet Kids Club: Space, (May 19), a monthly programme combining storytelling and craft activities, encouraging children to learn about sustainability and creative reuse.

The National Museum of Qatar (NMQ) will continue to highlight the nation's heritage through programmes that connect audiences with traditional crafts, history and archaeology. These include:

- Al Naqda Embroidery for Women, (from May 3-5), a hands-on course introducing participants to the cultural importance of Naqdah embroidery.

The sessions focus on traditional techniques using silver threads and authentic methods, supporting the preservation of this heritage craft.

- Architecture in the Old Palace Forum (May 10), held as part of the museum's 50th anniversary, this forum convenes experts to discuss the architectural and historical significance of the Old Palace.

Meanwhile, Mathaf: Arab Museum of Modern Art's May programme supports artistic development through practical sessions and discussions inspired by modern Arab art. These include:

- Art Lessons with Ismail Azzam (Every Sunday and Tuesday), weekly sessions on portrait techniques using a range of materials, encouraging skill-building and creative exchange.

- Archiving Folds, (May 3, 6, 9 and 10), a structured course combining gallery-based learning with hands-on sculptural work, encour-

aging participants to translate ideas into material form.

- She Curates: Panel Discussion during International Museum Week (May 21), a creative course for teens aged 13-18 at Mathaf that teaches upcycling, customisation, and self-expression through the art of fashion.

As for M7, its May programme focuses on fashion, design and creative practice, creating opportunities for both emerging and established designers.

- Designers Weekend: Renaissance Renaissance and Late for Work (May 8-9), a programme featuring discussions, mentorship and collaborative sessions with leading designers.

- Crafting and Communicating Fashion Narratives Masterclass (May 10-13), a four-day course focused on developing strong brand narratives and communication strategies within contemporary fashion.

- Shape Your Style: A Body Morphology Workshop (May 19), an interactive session helping participants understand body shape and refine personal styling approaches.

Liwan Design Studios and Labs presents four creative workshops spanning ceramics, digital fabrication, pottery, and experimental printing.

These are: Design Your Own Eid Set for Gifting (May 12); Intro to Digital Fabrication: Design and Make Your Own Table Lamp (from May 17-21); Poetical/Friendship Quotes on a Mug and Plate Set (May 20); and Seasoning Prints – A Multitone Anthotype Workshop (May 27-28).

The QM's Archaeology Department public sessions will be presenting recent archaeological achievements and upcoming projects at the NMQ.

In turn, 3-2-1 Qatar Olympic and Sports Museum (3-2-1) continues to provide engaging activities for families and children, linking creativity with sport and storytelling through the Golden Medal Design Workshop (May 15), and the Storytelling Programme in English (May 29) and Arabic (May 31). (QNA)



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GULF TIMES

Gulf plans to bypass Hormuz still far off

The war in the Middle East has forced the Gulf monarchies to rethink their oil and trade routes, but rerouting them will be no simple task, experts say.

Faced with the closure of the Strait of Hormuz, the only maritime entry point to the Gulf, the region's Arab nations are looking for ways to bypass Tehran's stranglehold on their exports.

Badr Jafar, the UAE's special envoy for business and philanthropy, wrote in the *Financial Times* in early April that the Gulf states would never "return to a posture of strategic dependence on a narrow strait controlled by an unpredictable neighbour".

He insisted that new pipeline and port capacity would be built and "the power grids, water systems and trade corridors connecting the region's economies... formalised".

Economics, politics and regional diplomatic rivalries are likely to get in the way, however, experts told AFP.

While Kuwait, Qatar and Bahrain have no coastline outside the Gulf and no alternative to the strait for seabound oil and gas, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates both have pipelines allowing them to ship at least some of their output from ports beyond Hormuz – and plan more.

Nevertheless, these pipelines only cover a fraction of the two nations' pre-war exports and would need to be expanded if either country wanted to completely end their reliance on the Strait of Hormuz.

Robert Mogielnicki, of the Arab Gulf States Institute in Paris, said that building new pipelines "will take time" and such infrastructure would "still possess vulnerabilities".

Diversifying energy export supply routes will be crucial

"Diversifying energy export supply routes is nevertheless going to be crucial in the years ahead," he added.

For liquefied natural gas (LNG), of which Qatar is by far the dominant producer in the region, the dependency on Hormuz is even greater.

Yet, as Frederic Schneider, a senior fellow at the Middle East Council on Global Affairs, explained, building alternative natural gas infrastructure would likely prove economically unattractive.

"The idea of a trans-Arabian gas pipeline has occasionally been floated but never progressed," he said. "The distances, political complexity, and cost make it unattractive against LNG tankers in normal conditions, and normal conditions are what pipeline economics are built on."

The Gulf's major container ports are mostly located on its southern shores, including Dubai's Jebel Ali, the region's main logistical hub.

With the Strait of Hormuz off limits, ships have been diverted to Oman and Saudi Arabia's Red Sea coast with containers then shipped onwards overland.

However, overland capacity is limited while costs are "significantly higher" said Schneider.

One possibility for boosting land-based transport capacity would be the Gulf Co-operation Council (GCC)'s planned rail network.

Yet the project, which is supposed to link all six member states by 2030, has been plagued by delays.

Another possibility could be the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor project, launched in 2023, which partially aimed to bypass both the Strait of Hormuz and the Suez Canal, using rail links across the Middle East to connect European and Indian shipping routes.

However, the idea remains "tenuous, if not hypothetical" said Schneider, not least because the project would involve linking Saudi Arabia with Israel at a time when Riyadh has cooled on establishing diplomatic relations with Israel.

While Gulf governments talk about integration, analysts warned that their own self-interest may get in the way.

"Tensions around the strait will generate some tailwinds supporting regional integration projects, but these will also have to contend with some serious economic headwinds and governments that will be super focused on their domestic fronts," said Mogielnicki.

The budgetary pressures created by the war, which have not only halted oil and gas exports but also hit tourism, aluminium and fertiliser production, may also make co-ordination less likely.

Previous conflicts in the Gulf, Schneider pointed out, did not lead to more regional integration, even if there were bilateral deals.

While the shock of closing Hormuz is much greater, he said, "I would be cautious about treating a geopolitical shock as a substitute for the political will and institutional capacity that have been missing so far". – AFP

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Marsh like home



An aerial photograph shows a fishing boat moving in the Al-Chibayish Marshes following recent rains, near the town of Al-Chibayish close to the Euphrates River in Dhi Qar governorate, southern Iraq. The Al-Chibayish Marshes are part of the larger Mesopotamian Marshes system between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, and the largest wetlands in southwest Asia. They are important wetlands for migratory birds, endemic birds, fish, and buffalo breeding and also home to the Marsh Arabs. – AFP

Journalists in conflict zones increasingly being targeted

QNA
Doha

Journalists are increasingly becoming direct targets in conflict zones rather than mere witnesses, amid an unprecedented rise in violations against them while the world marks the World Press Freedom Day under escalating risks to media workers.

Attacks by Israeli occupation forces against journalists have intensified in Palestine and Lebanon, as well as during incursions into southern Syria.

The direct targeting of journalists has escalated alongside the expansion of Israeli military operations in the region, to the point that it has become a deliberate pattern.

According to the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ), Israel has become the government entity most responsible for the deliberate killing of journalists. Data from the CPJ, based on a long-term methodology, shows that Israeli forces have killed five journalists and media workers in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, in addition to eight journalists and media workers in Lebanon since the beginning of this year.

Various other violations have also been recorded, including raids on their homes, interrogations, and the use of live ammunition and tear gas against Syrian journalists during military incursions.

CPJ's regional director for the Middle East and North Africa (Mena) Sara Qudah affirmed that they have documented 47 cases of journalists killed worldwide last year due to their work, 81% of whom were killed by Israel.

In an interview with the Qatar News Agency (QNA), she said that since the events of October 7, 2023, the CPJ has verified that at least 64 journalists and media workers were directly targeted and killed by Israeli forces in retaliation for their work.

Qudah added that investigations are ongoing into many other suspected cases of deliberate targeting, noting that over a 22-year period, the CPJ has documented the killing of at least 20 journalists by Israeli army fire, describing it as a "deadly pattern".

She pointed out that severe restrictions imposed on Gaza – including Israel's ban on foreign media access, the destruction of communications infrastructure, mass displacement, and widespread casualties – have made verification of information extremely difficult.

Qudah suggested that the total number of deliberate killings is likely much higher, especially given the destruction of substantial evidence, which may mean the true number of deliberately targeted Palestinian journalists in Gaza may never be known.

The CPJ's documentation shows that Israel has killed eight journalists and media workers in Lebanon this year alone, she said, confirming the motives behind the killing of four of them and classifying them as victims of deliberate assassination by Israeli fire.

In Syria, particularly in Quneitra and areas near the occupied Go-

lan Heights, the CPJ documented incidents involving journalists who reported that Israeli forces obstructed their work, detained and interrogated media workers, and in some cases destroyed their equipment or forced them to leave the areas they were covering.

Qudah stressed that the prevailing culture of complete impunity enjoyed by Israel is a direct factor in the continued targeting of journalists without deterrence, alongside evasion of international legal obligations and the failure to conduct transparent and credible investigations.

In Lebanon, Minister of Information Paul Morcos said that nine journalists were killed in direct attacks by Israeli entity over the past two months, with three others injured.

He told the QNA that from October 2023 to January, 20 Lebanese journalists were killed by occupation fire.

Morcos noted that the ministry has initiated legal action to compile a case on the targeting of journalists, co-ordinate with the United Nations and international rapporteurs, and submit formal complaints to international bodies, including Unesco and the Human Rights Council.

He added that the ministry has intensified meetings with international officials from the United Nations, the European Union, and the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), aiming to build international pressure to halt these violations.

Morcos also highlighted co-ordination with the Bar Association and Journalists Syndicate to strengthen the legal case being prepared, including drafting a legal study aimed at prosecuting Israel over the systematic destruction of civilian infrastructure across Lebanese cities and towns, and exploring ways to enhance accountability and ensure necessary protections for journalists.

The minister condemned the repeated and direct targeting of journalists by Israeli forces while performing their professional duties, most recently the killing of journalists Zeinab Faraj and Amal Khalil.

Morcos stressed that such acts constitute a grave violation of international humanitarian law, particularly the provisions of the 1949 Geneva Conventions and their 1977 Additional Protocols, which guarantee the protection of journalists during armed conflicts.

He called for an independent and transparent international investigation into these



Sarah Qudah



Paul Morcos



Omar Nazzal

crimes and for deterrent measures against Israel to stop the targeting of journalists, affirming that such attacks will not deter Lebanese journalism from fulfilling its role in conveying the

truth, while placing responsibility on the international community.

Meanwhile, the deputy head of the Palestinian Journalists Syndicate, Omar Nazzal, said that the reasons that previously drove the Israeli occupation forces to target journalists were to deter the press and media from conveying the facts and details of the crimes committed against the Palestinian people, and to try to cover up those crimes, as they feared for their image in front of the world.

However, he continued, after the events of October 7, 2023, the matter became different and took a different direction; the main battle became the battle of narrative and storytelling between the occupation and its allies in the world, which declined and crumbled globally, in contrast to the ability of Palestinian journalists to convey the Palestinian narrative about the right of the landowners to defend their rights.

Nazzal told the QNA that, in light of the battle over narratives in Palestine, the Israeli occupation saw this critical situation as an incentive to target Palestinian, Arab, and foreign journalists, conveying the message that anyone who

continues to work in the Palestinian territories in a manner that reinforces the Palestinian narrative will pay the price, whether through arrest, killing, being prevented from reporting, or even having their family targeted.

About 600 members of journalists' families were killed during the last war, he said, which serves as a deterrent message to Palestinian journalists that their continued work in journalism may affect their families, which aims to stop coverage completely.

Nazzal stressed that incitement had reached its peak on the political and military levels, and even among some Israeli journalists at various levels, to the point of describing it as a crime punishable by death against Palestinian journalists.

He pointed to an escalating pattern of Israeli attacks against Palestinian journalists, which witnessed a significant rise after the events of October 7, 2023, affecting the entire Palestinian,

Arab, and foreign media body, until there became an Israeli system working to stifle and kill journalists who only want to convey one narrative.

He also touched upon the prosecution of the

Israeli occupation for its crimes against Palestinian journalists.

Nazzal said that the Syndicate has submitted a number of cases to the International Criminal Court since the killing of journalists Ahmed Abu Hussein and Yasser Murtaja in 2018 in Gaza, in addition to the bombing of about 50 media headquarters in the sector and other cases, but the court has not taken any action in these cases or opened a serious investigation.

In Syria, during the Israeli incursions into its territory, attacks on journalists continue in the same context, through the firing of live ammunition, preventing coverage, raiding their homes and arresting them, as confirmed by journalist Muhammad Fahd, Syria TV correspondent in Quneitra.

He stated that a force from the Israeli occupation army, consisting of 50 members and four military vehicles, stormed his house in March at dawn in the town of Jubata Al-Khashab in Quneitra Governorate, southwest of Syria, and terrorised his family members.

Fahd told the QNA that the occupation forces brandished their weapons immediately upon him opening the door, and despite informing them that his family members were in the house, they did not respect the sanctity of the home, and searched all the contents of his work, including cameras, his personal devices and his phone, and subjected him to interrogation for a full hour inside his home.

He indicated that the Israeli occupation forces threatened him with taking action against him if he continued to film the occupation army patrols that had entered the governorate, which led to his work being restricted later, as he no longer filmed what was happening in terms of Israeli attacks inside his country, especially since the questions focused on his work in monitoring Israeli incursions and filming army patrols.

Fahd believes that what happened to him has been repeated in various incidents with his colleagues in other media outlets, which directly affected their work. He stressed that this constitutes a clear violation of press and media freedom.

The targeting of journalists in conflict zones is no longer merely collateral damage of war, but has become a systematic pattern that threatens the very essence of journalism and the world's right to know the truth.

Between Gaza, Lebanon, and southern Syria, testimonies and facts intersect to confirm that the battle is no longer just military, but is also a battle over the narrative, in which force is used to silence the voice that conveys reality as it is.

World Press Freedom Day is supposed to be an occasion to promote the protection of journalists but violations present the international community with a real test: either to implement international laws into effective accountability mechanisms, or to accept the continuation of impunity.

Meanwhile, journalists continue their work on the front lines, driven by the responsibility to convey the truth, whatever the cost.



Snapshots from the ceremony at the QNCC.

HBKU marks graduation of Class of 2026

Hamad Bin Khalifa University (HBKU), a member of Qatar Foundation for Education, Science, and Community Development (QF), celebrated the graduation of its Class of 2026 yesterday in the presence of HE the Vice-Chairperson of the QF and Chairperson of the HBKU Board of Trustees Sheikha Hind bint Hamad al-Thani.

The ceremony, held at the Qatar National Convention Centre (QNCC), was attended by HE the Speaker of the Shura Council Hassan bin Abdullah al-Ghanim and HE the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Defence Affairs Sheikh Saoud bin Abdulrah-

man bin Hassan al-Thani, along with a number of sheikhs, ministers and senior officials, as well as college deans, staff and faculty, and graduates' families.

Comprising more than 300 graduates from 36 programmes, the Class of 2026 features undergraduate and graduate students from across six of the HBKU's colleges: the College of Islamic Studies (CIS), College of Humanities and Social Sciences (CHSS), College of Science and Engineering (CSE), College of Law, College of Health and Life Sciences (CHLS), and College of Public Policy (CPP).

In his keynote address during the ceremony, HE Sheikh Saoud

said: "The State of Qatar has chosen to be at the forefront, leveraging its knowledge base and commitment to nurturing conscious, capable, and responsible individuals."

He stressed that high-quality education is the foundation upon which national strength and sustainable progress are built.

"Hamad Bin Khalifa University serves as a hub for knowledge and the development of talent capable of navigating the rapid changes in our world," HE Sheikh Saoud stated. "The role of our graduates extends beyond their academic specialisation; you are part of a comprehensive national ecosystem, contributing your knowledge to strengthening the country's resilience, enhancing its readiness, and advancing its future vision on a strong scientific foundation."

Reflecting on the significance of this year's graduation and contribution of the Class of 2026 to academic inquiry and innovation, HBKU president Dr Ahmad M Hasnah said: "This moment reminds us of what can be achieved through education, and we are entrusted with this responsibility."

"Our graduates leave the classroom equipped not only with technical knowledge, but also in-



tellectual and cultural awareness and a commitment to serving their communities," he said. "As they take their next steps, they do so with experience and a deep sense of their goals and how to achieve them with dedication and responsibility."

Speaking on behalf of the graduates, Nayef Jassim al-Nama, a graduate of the College of Law, declared: "What we celebrate today is not the end of our journey, but rather its beginning."

"Our homeland Qatar's progress has never been accidental, but a result of clear vision and investment in people," he said. "We have been raised to understand that

knowledge is not a luxury, but the foundation of progress and the pillar of the future."

The ceremony also featured the annual Hamad Bin Khalifa University Excellence Awards, celebrating outstanding faculty achievements from the past academic year.

HE Sheikha Hind and Dr Hasnah presented awards across three categories: the Service Excellence Award was given to College of Science and Engineering associate professor Dr Dena Ahmed al-Thani, the Teaching Excellence Award was received by College of Science and Engineering professor and associate dean of Undergradu-

ate Studies and Quality Assurance Dr Mohamed Mahmoud Abdallah, and the Research Excellence Award was given to Qatar Computing Research Institute principal scientist Dr Muhammad Imran.

The Class of 2026 reaffirms the HBKU's role as a national research university and catalyst for knowledge creation and application, with graduates contributing to innovation across sectors including health, technology and sustainability, while working with partners across government, industry and academia to strengthen Qatar's position as a global hub for research and innovation. - QNA

By Shaima Sheriff
Staff Reporter

Graduates urged to lead with resilience and purpose

Resilience, adaptability and a strong sense of purpose defined Hamad Bin Khalifa University (HBKU)'s Class of 2026, as graduates were celebrated for overcoming challenges and preparing to address complex global issues.

University leaders and faculty said the group showed strong resilience amid regional and global uncertainty, adding that they are well prepared to face an increasingly complex world.

Logan Cochran, acting dean of the College of Public Policy, emphasised that the university's mission extends beyond academic achievement.

"The College of Public Policy is committed to supporting future leaders," he said. "We want our graduates to bring not only knowledge and skills,

but also ethics and principles, courage and humility... so they can respond to the rapidly changing challenges around the world and do so serving the greater good."

Cochran noted that the graduating semester had been particularly demanding.

"Our students persevered... they were dedicated to their studies despite the challenges they faced," he said, adding that graduates leave with "traits of resilience" that will guide them throughout their lives.

Echoing this sentiment, Provost Prabhajit Hajela described the cohort as "remarkable" in the face of adversity.

"We are all aware of the problems that we have faced both regionally and globally over the last several months," he said. "This cohort has demonstrated a resilience that is really remarkable... in



Aisha Muthanna al-Malsouk

spite of everything that's going on."

Hajela underscored the importance of adaptability and critical thinking, noting that students have learned how to navigate uncertainty.

"You now know how to think," he told graduates. "Stay true to your values..."

go out and create momentum and bring change to the world."

He underlined the HBKU's distinctive academic environment, describing it as "an ecosystem... unparalleled" with strong interdisciplinary opportunities and a focus on applying knowledge to real-world challenges.

From a faculty perspective, Sultan Barakat stressed that continuous learning remains central to the university's philosophy.

"Hamad Bin Khalifa is a learning university; we're continuously updating ourselves and striving for the best," he said, noting that each cohort builds on the experience of the last.

Barakat pointed to the broader context shaping this year's graduates.

"This year has been particularly challenging because of the geopolitics around us," he said. "I'm very proud

of what the students have been able to achieve under relatively difficult circumstances."

He outlined key lessons for graduates, including "the importance of remaining resilient" and "the importance of learning continuously". He added that "there is no time where you can stop learning".

For students, the journey has been equally transformative.

Aisha Muthanna al-Malsouk, who graduated with a Master's degree in Public Policy, highlighted the importance of self-belief.

"I would say believe in yourself, listen to the voice inside you, and just follow your dreams," she said. "As long as you have a big goal, you will achieve it."

Reflecting on her experience, she described her orientation day as a defining moment.

"It was that day when I was 100% sure that this is what I want to do," al-Malsouk said.



Dr al-Marri signing the agreement.

New books on labour law to launch at DIBF

By Tawfik Lamari
Staff Reporter

Al-Watad Publishing and Distribution House announced on its Facebook account the signing of an agreement with Dr Mabkhout al-Bufarih al-Marri to publish two books: *A Summary of Remote Work Contracts and *Artificial Intelligence within the Scope of Labour Law.

This collaboration aims to support legal knowledge and keep pace with transformations in the work environment and modern legislation.

Dr al-Marri said his book *Artificial Intelligence within the Scope of Labour Law offers an

in-depth study of the radical transformation the world is witnessing in the labour market's structure as a result of the rapid development of artificial intelligence (AI) technologies.

It analyses the impact of these modern technologies on employment patterns, performance evaluation, and professional decision-making.

He also noted that the book discusses emerging legal challenges, such as algorithmic bias, the legal liability of intelligent systems, and workers' rights in the face of non-human decisions.

Regarding *A Summary of Remote Work Contracts, Dr al-Marri said that it comprises a collection of legal articles published in the Arabic daily *Al-Raya that address various

topics in Qatari labour law in a clear and direct manner.

He noted that he focused on highlighting key legislative developments and discussing contemporary issues, such as remote work contracts, the relationship of subordination, wages, and legal liability.

Dr al-Marri added that the book combines legal depth with a simplified approach, making it suitable for both specialists and non-specialists.

The two publications are scheduled to be available at the Doha International Book Fair (DIBF) as part of Al-Watad Publishing House's commitment to supporting cultural and intellectual development and promoting legal awareness among diverse groups.

Qatar's resilience: The art of staying calm

From Page 1

The result was a quieter form of resilience, operating largely in the background while daily life carried on.

Public spaces told the story most clearly: Families lingered along the Corniche at sunset, cafes in Souq Waqif filled up as usual, and cultural venues kept drawing visitors.

Ordinary scenes - but in the context of regional tensions, freighted with symbolic weight.

This soft resilience is akin to a society's capacity to absorb external shocks without visible rupture.

In Qatar's case, that resilience appears to have been actively produced, not passively endured.

The implications stretch beyond the immediate crisis: as geopolitical risk becomes a fixture rather than an interruption, the capacity to sustain normalcy may emerge as a defining marker of governance in the region, particularly for states balancing openness with security.

For now, Qatar's experience offers a quiet lesson: calm, when carefully managed, can serve as a stabilising force at home and a signal of reliability abroad - a reminder that in moments of uncertainty, the most effective response is not always the most visible one.

Gas contracts power Qatar's projects market in first quarter

From Page 1

However, according to MEED data, there are currently \$2tn in upcoming projects in the GCC, of which Saudi Arabia has nearly 50%, followed by the UAE with 27.5% of the upcoming projects in the region.

In terms of a sectoral view of the GCC projects' outlook, the GCC construction sector is poised to receive the lion's share of the upcoming projects (39.7%), followed by the transport sector at 16.3%, and the power sector, which is expected to receive 15.7%.

The majority of the GCC's upcoming projects are currently in the design stage,

representing a total value of \$841.5bn worth of projects, followed by the study stage (\$554.1bn), and the bid evaluation stage, which encompasses \$220.4bn worth of projects.

The GCC projects market saw a slowdown in Q1-2026 as a direct consequence of regional instability.

According to MEED Projects, the total value of contracts awarded across the GCC declined by 9.7% y-o-y in Q1-2026, reaching \$61.2bn against \$67.8bn in Q1-2025.

"This contraction was driven largely by a substantial downturn in contract awards within Saudi Arabia and the UAE, which represent the two largest projects

markets in the region," it said, adding in contrast, Kuwait, Oman, and Qatar recorded growth in project awards during the same period.

According to MEED Projects, the number of contract awards in the GCC fell from 84 in January 2026 and 80 in February to 25 in March, with the corresponding value of contract awards dropping from \$20.5bn and \$26bn in January and February, to only \$11.8bn in March.

"The war has already impacted many aspects of life and business in the GCC countries, including supply chain delays resulting from shipping disruptions in the Strait of Hormuz, as well as the crea-

tion of negative sentiment in some of the region's key industries, such as real estate and tourism," it said.

Finding that energy exports serve as the primary revenue generators for the GCC countries, it said consequently, any disruption in the production and export of oil and gas would have a "significant negative" impact on the ability of GCC countries to fund projects.

Already, the closure of the Strait of Hormuz and attacks on energy infrastructure has resulted in sharp oil price rises and the cessation of production in several hydrocarbon producing complexes, it added.

Labour ministry holds workshop for Nationalisation Award judges and evaluators

In alignment with its commitment to advancing national workforce development, the Ministry of Labour (MoL) convened a specialised technical introductory workshop for evaluators and members of the judging panel of the inaugural Qatar Private Sector Nationalisation Award.

The workshop forms a key component of the ministry's institutional preparedness framework, aimed at aligning evaluation methodologies, standardising adjudication criteria, and upholding the highest standards of transparency, integrity and professionalism throughout the assessment process.

Assistant Undersecretary for National

Manpower Affairs in the Private Sector, Khames Mohammed al-Naimi, reaffirmed the ministry's dedication to establishing a robust and credible evaluation system founded on international best practices and the principles of fairness, objectivity, and institutional excellence.

He highlighted the award's strategic role in incentivising private sector entities to invest in, attract, and empower Qatari national talent, thereby fostering innovation, enhancing productivity, and promoting sustainable organisational performance. This initiative supports broader national objectives related to workforce development and labour market competitiveness.

The ministry is actively enhancing the expertise of evaluators and judges through advanced assessment methodologies and evidence-based tools, ensuring consistent, reliable outcomes that reinforce the award's significance within the framework of the National Workforce Development Strategy 2024-30.

During the workshop, participants engaged with detailed presentations on the Award's strategic objectives, which align with the national "Empowering Qatar" agenda aimed at encouraging the private sector to adopt leading practices in national talent development and contribute to sustainable economic growth.

The session encompassed comprehensive briefings on award categories - both core and sector-specific - as well as eligibility criteria and evaluation standards.

The entire Award process was outlined, from application submission to multi-phase assessment, adjudication, and announcement of awardees.

Ministry's specialists elaborated on the evaluation framework, including desk reviews, document validation, field visits, and structured interviews with participants to ensure the accuracy and integrity of information submitted.

The workshop further clarified the responsibilities of evaluators and judges,

underscoring the critical importance of confidentiality, impartiality, and evidence-based assessments anchored by approved performance indicators to guarantee fairness and credibility.

This initiative reflects the ministry's ongoing commitment to institutionalising excellence in award governance and embedding international best practices within evaluation mechanisms, thereby supporting private sector nationalisation and aligning with the human development pillar of Qatar National Vision 2030.

The deadline for document submission and registration across all Award categories is 9 May 2026. - QNA

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QR 10

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QR 10

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QR 10

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Chicken Burger 2 pcs



QR 25

يوك حبة كريمي ٥٠٠ جم - ١ حبة
Puck Organic Glass Jar Cheese
500 gm x 1 pc



QR 10

ساديا ناغيتس دجاج ٧٥٠ جم - ١ حبة
Sadia Chicken Nuggets 750 gm x 1 pc



QR 10

ساديا نفاق دجاج غير مدخنة ٣٤٠ جم - ٣ حبة
Sadia Chicken Franks Non Smoked
340 gm x 3 pcs



QR 25

روعة عصير مشكل ٢٠٠ مل - ٢٤ حبة
Rawa Juice Asrtd. 200 ml x 24 pcs



QR 25

جورمية ستريپس دجاج حار
عادي ٢٥٠ جم + ١ حبة
Gourmet Chicken Strips
Regular/Normal 1 kg + 250 gm x 1 pc



QR 25

أرز ثالي جولد سونا ماسوري ٩ كجم - ١ حبة
Thali Gold Sona Masoori Rice 9 kg x 1 pc



QR 15

دقيق قمح كامل من كابتين كوك ٥ كجم - ١ حبة
Captain Cook Whole Wheat Atta 5 kg x 1 pc



QR 15

ميتلوب كومبلان ٤٠٠ جم - ١ حبة
Complan Drink 400 gm x 1 pc Asrtd.



QR 10

مربى سانت أمور ٢٧٥ جم - ٢ حبة
Saint Amour Asrtd. Jam 275 gm x 2 pcs



QR 10

قهوة برو الأصلية ١٠٠ جم - ١ حبة
Bru Coffee Original Asrtd. 100 gm x 1 pc



QR 20

شوكولاتة فيريرو روتشي ٢٠٠ جم - ١ حبة
Ferrero Rocher T-16 Chocolate
200 gm x 1 pc



QR 20

أورو الأصلي ٣٦.٨ جم - ٢٤ حبة - ١ عبوة
Oreo Original 36.8 gm x 24 pcs x 1 pkt



QR 20

فستق سادة أمريكي ٤٥٠ جم
Pistachio Plain USA 450 gm



QR 30

لوز صغير ١ كجم
Almond Small 1 kg



QR 10

لين مجفف حبل باكستاني ٥٠٠ جم
Dry Fig Rope Pakistan 500 gm



QR 10

صابون لوكس ١٢٠ جم - ٦ حبة
Lux Soap Asrtd. 120 gm x 6 pcs



QR 20

شامبو بانتين ٤٠٠ مل - ٢ حبة
Pantene Shampoo 400 ml x 2 pcs Asrtd.



QR 30

أحذية رياضية رجالية مشكل
Mens Sports Shoes Asrtd.



QR 30

الم مثقاب كهربائي
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QR 30

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