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Qatar startup ecosystem sees notable rise in world rankings

By Peter Alagos
Business Editor

Qatar's startup ecosystem rose three places to 73rd in the Global Startup Ecosystem Index 2026 by StartupBlink, the country's highest position on record (90th in 2023), with an ecosystem growth rate of 43.5%.

The country also entered the Middle East and Africa top 10 for the first time, rising one place to 10th regionally, while holding fourth place within the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), the report stated.

Qatar scored 1.384 in the index, which tracks startup ecosystems across 1,556 cities and 100 countries using three sub-scores: Quantity, Quality, and Business Environment.

The report described both Qatar and Doha as among the fastest-growing startup ecosystems in the GCC. Doha rose 66 places to 358th globally with 77.5% growth, placing it among the top 10 fastest-growing cities in the Middle East.

Though the capital ranked 23rd overall among cities in the Middle East and Africa, it placed seventh

in the region in the 'Ecosystem Attractiveness Functional Category', which measures a city's ability to draw international business activity and talent, "outperforming its overall regional standing and reflecting strong international appeal."

Qatar also ranked 18th globally in the 'Startup Community Activity Functional Category', "outperforming its 73rd overall global position and indicating active ecosystem engagement."

On the business environment side, Qatar placed 59th in the 'Innovators Business Environment Index', above its overall ecosystem rank. The report stated that the ranking indicates that strong business conditions are already in place to support startup growth.

Qatar's ecosystem value stood at \$625mm, with the country ranked third in the GCC in the 'Ecosystem Brand Value Pillar', above its fourth-place overall GCC standing, reflecting strong international positioning.

Indica Amarasinghe, chapter director of Startup Grind Doha, said in the report that Qatar has moved past the infrastructure-building stage into what he called "ecosystem activation." **To Page 8**

Amir meets WADA president



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani met yesterday morning in his office at Lusail Palace, with World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) President Witold Banka and his accompanying delegation, who called on His Highness to greet him, following their visit to the country. During the meeting, the two sides discussed several topics of mutual interest. **(QNA)**

Shura Council reviews Kahramaa energy plans

By A Staff Reporter
Doha

The Shura Council yesterday reviewed Kahramaa's plans for securing electricity and water supplies, expanding solar power and modernising subscriber services, as the corporation set out its roadmap towards the Qatar National Renewable Energy Strategy 2030.

The regular weekly session, held in Tamim bin Hamad Hall and chaired by HE the Speaker Hassan bin Abdullah al-Ghanem, was attended by Kahramaa president Engineer Abdulla bin Ali al-Theyab and a number of the corporation's specialists, who briefed members on the electricity and water sectors, supply security, network efficiency, consumption rationalisation, digital transformation and subscriber services. Secretary-General HE Nayef bin Mohammed al-Mahmoud read out the agenda, and the council approved the minutes of its previous session. Al-Ghanem lauded the attention the state accords, under the directives of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani, to developing electricity and water infrastructure and entrenching sustainability as a core pillar of comprehensive development in line with Qatar National Vision 2030. **To Page 8**

Minbar app brings Friday sermon to digital age



By Tawfik Lamari
Staff Reporter

The Ministry of Endowments and Islamic Affairs (Awqaf), through its Department of Mosques, has unveiled "Minbar" – a smart application designed to lift the Friday sermon out of the confines of time and place and carry it, intact, into the rhythm of everyday life. The launch sits squarely within the ministry's wider digital transformation drive, an attempt to widen the reach of the mosque and let its message travel as freely as the people who receive it. Sheikh Abdulrahman bin Abdulaziz al-Thani, Director of the Department of Mosques, said the initiative reflects a commitment to delivering trustworthy, accessible Islamic content with the help of artificial intelligence. The aim,

he explained, is to turn the khutba from a fixed weekly event into a continuous, interactive companion that reaches worshippers wherever they happen to be. The app is built around a cluster of intelligent features. It renders sermons into English through AI-powered translation, offers multilingual summaries in Arabic and English, and provides simplified versions shaped for children. Interactive question-and-answer content, drawn directly from each sermon, is included to deepen understanding and encourage practical application. Users can also watch Friday prayers live, dip into a complete archive of past sermons, and move comfortably through a bilingual Arabic-English interface. The director said these tools are meant to make religious content both more engaging and more widely available. **To Page 8**

PM, Saudi, Iran FM's discuss de-escalation

HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani held separate phone calls with the foreign ministers of Saudi Arabia and Iran, with both conversations centring on efforts to mediate between the United States and Iran and to de-escalate regional tensions. In a call with Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan bin Abdullah al-Saud, the two sides reviewed co-operation between the two countries and ways to strengthen it, and discussed co-ordinating efforts to support mediation aimed at de-escalation in a manner that bolsters regional security and stability. The PM stressed the importance of all parties responding positively to the ongoing mediation, in order to pave the way for addressing the root causes of the crisis through peaceful means and dialogue, and ultimately reaching a lasting agreement that would prevent renewed escalation. In a separate call yesterday with Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi, the two sides reviewed the same mediation efforts as well as the latest developments in Lebanon. The PM reaffirmed Qatar's support for all efforts aimed at containing escalation and reaching a comprehensive agreement that would help strengthen security and stability and achieve lasting peace in the region. **(QNA)**



Iran, Israel halt strikes for now

Iran and Israel said yesterday they had halted attacks on each other after an appeal from US President Donald Trump that they immediately "stop shooting", though Tehran said it would resume strikes if Israel continued to hit Hezbollah in Lebanon. The wave of attacks over 24 hours were the most direct confrontation between Iran and Israel since an April ceasefire, threatening to wreck Washington's efforts to reach an agreement with Tehran to end their more than three-month-old war. A source briefed on the matter said Israel had also decided to halt its attacks on Iran. Tehran fired missiles towards Israeli territory late on Sunday, calling them retaliation for Israeli attacks on strongholds of the Iranian-backed Hezbollah militia on the outskirts of Beirut. Israel then hit a petrochemical plant in southwest Iran that it said was used to produce ballistic missiles. Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) said it had retaliated with a strike aimed at a similar Israeli plant in the city of Haifa. Iran's military said it had "delivered a painful response" against Israel for its attacks on Lebanon. "Accordingly, the operations of the armed forces are hereby declared halted; however, it is emphasised that if the aggressions and acts of mischief continue – including in southern Lebanon – much more severe and crushing actions than before will follow." Hours after Iran's announcement, sirens sounded in the Zar'it area of northern Israel when a projectile was identified as falling in an area of southern Lebanon where Israeli forces are operating.

Arts-track students get new route into science degrees

MoEHE, Academic Bridge open STEM pathway for humanities graduates

By Joey Aguilar
Staff Reporter

Qatar's high school graduates from the literacy and humanities track will now be able to cross into science, technology, engineering and mathematics degrees – fields long closed to them – under a new initiative unveiled by the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MoEHE) in partnership with the Academic Bridge Program, a member of Qatar Foundation.

Announced at a press conference held by the Higher Educa-

tion Affairs Sector at the ministry's headquarters, the scheme offers humanities students an accredited preparatory year that qualifies them to enrol in scientific disciplines, provided they meet admission requirements and complete the Academic Bridge's STEM track.

The programme is built around the academic foundations that science degrees demand: English-language proficiency, mathematics, and the core sciences of biology, chemistry and physics, alongside computing and programming. Its courses are designed so that learning outcomes align with the entry



standards of both local and international universities.

Crucially, the year a student spends at the Academic Bridge can be recognised within their wider university path, thanks to the programme's partnerships

with a number of prestigious institutions inside and outside Qatar. That recognition smooths the transition into demanding fields including medicine, engineering, computer science and the natural sciences. **To Page 8**

Sheikh Joaan meets Saudi, Indian ambassadors



HE the President of Qatar Olympic Committee (QOC) Sheikh Joaan bin Hamad al-Thani met separately yesterday with ambassadors Prince Saad bin Mansour bin Saad bin Saud bin Abdulaziz al-Saud (of Saudi Arabia) and Vipul (of India). During the meetings, bilateral relations between Qatar and the respective countries were discussed as well as ways to enhance co-operation in the sports sector. Opportunities to develop partnerships and exchange expertise in sports and Olympic fields in the coming period were also addressed. - **QNA**

Consultations on National Human Rights Action Plan continue

Consultative sessions on the National Human Rights Action Plan (2026-30) continued yesterday in Doha, organised by the National Committee for the Preparation of the National Human Rights Action Plan, chaired by HE the Minister of State for International Co-operation Maryam bint Ali bin Nasser al-Misnad. Yesterday's session was hosted by HE the Secretary-General of the National Planning Council Dr Abdulaziz bin Nasser bin Mubarak al-Khalifa. The session discussed topics relevant to the council's purview, along with suggestions to enhance the plan's alignment with national policies and legislation. - **QNA**



Minister, Dutch official discuss agricultural innovation, co-operation

HE the Minister of Municipality Abdullah bin Hamad bin Abdullah al-Attiyah met with the mayor of the Westland municipality, Bouke Arends, during his visit to the Netherlands. They discussed ways to strengthen co-operation in the fields of modern agriculture, agricultural innovation, and advanced agricultural technologies, as well as exploring opportunities for partnership and the exchange of expertise and knowledge to advance sustainable agricultural development and strengthen food security. They also addressed best practices and successful models in the agricultural sector and opportunities to benefit from them in supporting development and innovation efforts. Westland is one of the Netherlands' leading agricultural regions and is internationally recognised for its advanced greenhouse technologies and protected cultivation systems, making it a global model for innovative and sustainable agricultural production. - **QNA**



QF and DAAM sign pact to support 'Rasekh' initiative

The Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development (QF) and the Social and Sport Contribution Fund (DAAM) signed a funding agreement to support the QF's "Rasekh" initiative, with the aim of strengthening national partnerships that support high-quality international education that is connected to the Arabic language, firmly rooted in identity and values, and open to the world. "The agreement - signed on the sidelines of this week's Rasekh Strategic Forum held in Multaqa (Education City Student Centre), where the Rasekh Framework and Accreditation system was launched and its first participat-

ing schools were announced - will see DAAM's support strengthen Rasekh's efforts to ensure that language, identity, and values become a central element of the daily learning experience within QF schools and private international schools in Qatar and the region," the QF said in a statement issued yesterday. "The Social and Sport Contribution Fund (DAAM) is to provide Qatar Foundation's Rasekh initiative with financial support, reinforcing its efforts to establish high-quality international education that is connected to the Arabic language, rooted in identity and values, and open to the world," the statement added. "Rasekh is an educational framework

that seeks to align international education with local context by strengthening Arabic as a language of learning, thinking, and innovation; localising international curricula; integrating ethical values and citizenship into school life; and connecting knowledge with both local and global innovation," it continued. "The partnership with DAAM will support the development of Rasekh educational resources, building teaching capacity, the implementation of the Rasekh Framework and Accreditation system, and the expansion of schools' participation in the initiative," the statement added. The vice-president for Strategic Educational Initiatives at the QF's Pre-Universi-



ty Education (PUE), Sheikha Noof Ahmed bin Saif al-Thani, said: "Our partnership with DAAM confirms that investment in education begins with nurturing students who are confident in their language, identity, and values." "Through Rasekh, we work with schools to provide international education that remains connected to its community, drawing depth and strength from it, while empowering students to think, express

themselves, and innovate with confidence, and to engage with the world from a firmly rooted foundation," she said. "Our support for Rasekh stems from the Fund's belief in the importance of investing in young people and strengthening their connection to their national values and cultural identity, as they are the cornerstone of society's future," said DAAM programme director Hassan Yousef al-Obaidly. - **QNA**



Visit Qatar chief concludes China visit, signing deals with Fliggy and Huawei

As part of efforts to attract more visitors from China, Visit Qatar chief executive Eng. Abdulaziz Ali al-Mawlawi led an official delegation there, signing two memoranda of understanding (MoUs) with industry leaders Fliggy and Huawei, to elevate the visitor experience through advanced artificial intelligence (AI). On June 3, Visit Qatar partnered with travel platform Fliggy to enhance AI-powered travel services and destination branding. The collaboration will launch a "Smart Travel Guide to Qatar" and develop bespoke tourism packages, marking Fliggy's first deep AI integration

with an international tourism board. Following this, on June 4, an MoU was signed with Huawei Mobile Services to utilise AI and data technologies for seamless trip planning, navigation, and payments via platforms such as Petal Maps. This agreement builds upon Visit Qatar's milestone as the first international tourism board to launch services on Huawei's HarmonyOS. Together, these partnerships underscore Visit Qatar's commitment to leveraging cutting-edge digital technologies to deliver exceptional and innovative experiences for global travellers.



Doha 2026 Gulf Games organisers honour volunteers

The Organising Committee of the 4th Gulf Games Doha 2026 honoured 280 male and female volunteers during a ceremony held at the headquarters of the Qatar Olympic Committee (QOC) in appreciation of their contributions to the success of the event, which was hosted in Doha from May 11-22. The recognition reflects the pivotal role played by volunteers in supporting various organisational and operational aspects of the Games, contributing to the delivery of an exceptional edition that showcased Qatar's advanced sporting infrastructure and its leadership in hosting and organising major international sporting events. Opening the ceremony, Volunteers Committee chairman Ahmed al-Jaber

expressed his appreciation and gratitude to all volunteers for their dedication and commitment throughout the Games. He praised their vital contributions across a wide range of organisational and operational functions, from welcoming delegations and assisting athletes and spectators to supporting work teams at competition venues and sports facilities. Their efforts, al-Jaber said, helped deliver a seamless and memorable sporting experience for all participants. He emphasised that volunteers were among the key pillars behind the success of the Games and true partners in achieving its objectives. The official noted that their commitment, sense of responsibility, and positive spirit reflected the highest values of

volunteerism, teamwork, and community service. Speaking on behalf of the volunteers, Hassan al-Tamimi, a volunteer with special needs, expressed his gratitude to the organising committee for providing opportunities for all segments of society to participate in the Gulf sporting event. He noted that the volunteer experience contributed to the development of participants' administrative, organisational, and technical skills, while also enhancing their personal and professional experience. Al-Tamimi added that volunteers look forward to contributing to future sporting events and championships hosted by Qatar. Volunteer Iman Mohammed al-Fawzai,

a teacher at the Ministry of Education and Higher Education, described her participation in the Games as an exceptional experience that enriched her knowledge and broadened her personal horizons. She commended the high level of organisation and co-ordination that contributed to the success of the event. Al-Fawzai highlighted the opportunity to build connections with individuals from diverse nationalities and cultures through a volunteer framework that reflects the values of openness, inclusion, and social cohesion. Volunteer registration for the 4th Gulf Games Doha 2026 was conducted through the "Al Adaam" Volunteer Platform, launched by the QOC. The integrated and sustainable digital

platform is dedicated to managing volunteer programmes by registering volunteers, assigning tasks, and coordinating their roles across various sporting events hosted by the country. The platform represents one of the committee's strategic initiatives aimed at promoting a culture of volunteerism and advancing sustainability principles. It supports the organisation of major sporting events, including the 2026 Half Marathon, the 2027 FIBA Basketball World Cup, the 2029 FIVB Men's Volleyball World Championship, and the Doha 2030 Asian Games, ensuring effective volunteer workforce management and enhancing participant experiences in line with the highest organisational standards. - **QNA**

From turtles to whale sharks: Qatar's growing commitment to marine conservation

By Shaima Sheriff
Staff Reporter

As the world marks World Oceans Day, Qatar continues to strengthen efforts to protect marine biodiversity through conservation programmes, habitat restoration projects and initiatives aimed at safeguarding the Arabian Gulf's ecosystems.

Beneath the waters of the Arabian Gulf lies one of Qatar's most valuable natural assets – a rich marine ecosystem that supports coral reefs, seagrass meadows, mangroves, sea turtles, whale sharks and one of the world's largest populations of dugongs.

Amid World Oceans Day, which is observed on June 8, Qatar's growing commitment to protecting these ecosystems reflects a broader vision that places environmental sustainability and biodiversity

conservation at the heart of national development.

Over the years, the country has expanded efforts to safeguard marine life through a combination of scientific research, conservation programmes, habitat restoration projects and environmental awareness initiatives.

These efforts have become increasingly important as climate change, pollution and human activity continue to place pressure on marine environments worldwide.

Among the most significant initiatives is Qatar's long-running sea turtle conservation programme.

Earlier this year the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change (MoECC) launched the 2026 marine turtle nesting season project, focusing on protecting endangered hawksbill turtles along Qatar's northern coastline.

Researchers have emphasised the eco-

logical importance of these species.

According to Qatar University (QU)'s Environmental Science Centre, sea turtles are "an important partner in the ecological balance", playing a key role in maintaining healthy marine ecosystems.

For decades, scientists have monitored nesting sites, tracked populations and worked to improve survival rates for hatchlings.

Qatar has also emerged as a regional leader in coral reef conservation.

Through projects such as Restore and QatAREEF, researchers are developing techniques to rehabilitate damaged reefs and improve their resilience to environmental changes.

These habitats are critical nurseries for marine species and contribute significantly to biodiversity in the Gulf.

The country's waters are equally renowned for hosting one of the world's largest seasonal gatherings of whale

sharks, as well as the second-largest dugong population globally.

Their presence highlights Qatar's growing importance as a sanctuary for marine wildlife and underscores the need for continued conservation efforts.

Beyond species protection, authorities have intensified initiatives focused on pollution control, biodiversity monitoring and the preservation of critical coastal habitats, including mangrove ecosystems and seagrass beds.

As Qatar advances its environmental goals under Qatar National Vision 2030, marine conservation continues to gain momentum.

From protecting nesting turtles and restoring coral reefs to safeguarding whale sharks and dugongs, the country's efforts demonstrate a growing recognition that healthy oceans are essential not only for biodiversity, but also for the wellbeing and prosperity of future generations.

Awareness campaign on heat stress is launched

The Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) has launched an awareness campaign on heat stress as part of its efforts to reduce work-related injuries caused by high temperatures and to prevent occupational diseases and injuries associated with workplace conditions.

The campaign aims to highlight the symptoms of heat stress, provide effective measures, and raise awareness among occupational health and safety officers in Qatar.

This initiative supports the creation of safe and healthy working environments.

As part of the campaign, the MoPH has prepared awareness materials in several languages to be distributed in workplaces and shared via social media platforms and its official website, with the goal of reaching the widest possible segment of society, particularly workers.

The ministry is also conducting awareness lectures on heat stress, its prevention, and the specific responsibilities of both workers and employers.

These lectures are designed to promote healthy behaviour during periods of high temperatures and to encourage the adoption of preventative practices to protect health.

Additionally, in collaboration with the Ministry of Labour, the MoPH is organising training workshops addressing the risks of heat stress, preventive strategies, and emergency response procedures.

These workshops also provide essential health guidelines for maintaining safe working environments during the summer, discuss the effects of sunlight on ocular health, and outline the risks associated with exposure.

The importance of using protective equipment, such as safety glasses, for outdoor work is emphasised. – QNA



Chief of Qatar Media Corporation meets Oman's ambassador

HE the Qatar Media Corporation (QMC) chief executive Sheikh Khalid bin Abdulaziz bin Jassim al-Thani met yesterday with Oman's ambassador to Qatar Ammar bin Abdullah bin Sultan al-Busaidi. They discussed ways to deepen joint Gulf action and bilateral co-operation across a variety of media domains. – QNA

Landmark Group launches 'Shukran Millionaire - Shop and Win' campaign

Landmark Group, the region's leading retail and hospitality conglomerate, has officially announced the launch of its "Shukran Millionaire - Shop & Win" campaign in Qatar.

This initiative gives shoppers the opportunity to win 1mn Shukran points worth QR50,000.

To enter the e-Raffle draw, customers simply need to shop for QR250 or more at any participating Landmark Group brands.

Eligible brands include Centrepoint, Babyshop, Splash, Shoemart, Lifestyle, Max, Home Centre, Home Box, Shoexpress, Pablosky, and Emax.

Each qualifying purchase increases the chances of winning; more shopping means



more opportunities to win.

The campaign will run until June 30, with the e-Raffle draw scheduled for July 5.

Speaking on the launch, senior vice-president and country head Shumalan Naicker

said: "Shukran Millionaire - Shop and Win is more than just a campaign; it's our way of giving back to our valued customers and making their shopping experience truly rewarding."

MoECC preparing to launch Summer Environmental Club

The Ministry of Environment and Climate Change (MoECC) is preparing to launch the third edition of its Summer Environmental Club programme, themed "Guardians of the Environment", running from June 21 to July 2.

This initiative is part of the ministry's efforts to instill a culture of sustainability in young people and raise their awareness of environmental issues.

The club targets students aged 11-17 through programmes that combine theoretical knowledge with practical application, and is one of the MoECC's awareness initiatives aimed at preparing a generation more connected to environmental issues.

The director of the MoECC's Public Relations and Communications Department, Dr Farhoud Hadi al-Hajri, told the Qatar News Agency (QNA) that the third edition of the club has reached its full capacity of 20 students.

He also noted that the early registration reflects the ministry's success in reaching its

target demographic and demonstrates the growing public awareness of the importance of programmes that combine knowledge with the development of positive behavior among young people.

Dr al-Hajri said that the summer environmental club reflects the role of corporate communication in supporting environmental work, by transforming awareness messages into practical programmes close to the community.

He added that environmental awareness is no longer limited to media publication, but has become dependent on building interactive experiences that contribute to enhancing environmental responsibility among various groups, especially the youth.

The official added that the MoECC has prepared a comprehensive programme combining specialised workshops, interactive activities, and field visits, allowing participants to learn about environmental work in a simplified manner and understand the ministry's role in protecting the environment and preserving natural



resources in Qatar.

Dr al-Hajri said that this year's edition builds upon the successes of the previous two editions.

He emphasised that the club aims to build an early relationship between young people and the environment by translating environmental concepts into daily practices and instilling in them that environmental protection is a shared responsibility based on behaviour and commitment alongside knowledge.

The official expressed his confidence that the participants will become ambassadors of environmental awareness within their families, schools, and communities. – QNA

Souq Waqif hosting 3rd Indian mango exhibition from June 18

The "Third Hamba Indian Mango Exhibition and Its Products" will officially open on June 18 at the Eastern Square of Souq Waqif.

Organised by the Celebrations Committee of the Private Engineering Office, in co-operation with India's embassy in Qatar, the exhibition will run for 10 days until June 27, with expectations of attracting even larger crowds than previous editions.

The exhibition is being held for the third consecutive year after

establishing itself as one of the region's leading seasonal specialty events.

The second edition attracted more than 114,400 visitors and recording sales exceeding 130,000kg of mangoes of various varieties.

Visitors were also introduced to more than 54 varieties of Indian mangoes, along with a wide range of mango-related products, including pickles, sweets, and traditional food items, which proved highly popular among attendees.

This year's edition is expected to

be the largest since the exhibition's launch, with more than 35 major Indian companies participating, up from 30 in the previous edition.

Visitors will have the opportunity to discover mango varieties being introduced to the Qatar market for the first time, alongside innovative food products and culinary offerings.

Following the success of the previous editions and the extensive media coverage they received, the exhibition has become an important platform for Indian com-

panies seeking to introduce their products to consumers in Qatar and across the region.

"We are proud to see this event continue for a third consecutive year following the tremendous success of the previous editions," Khalid Saif al-Suwaidi (pictured), general supervisor of the Third Hamba Indian Mango Exhibition and Its Products, said in a statement.

"The original concept was to organise the exhibition as a one-time event; however, the overwhelm-

ing public response and remarkable achievements encouraged us to develop it into an annual event eagerly anticipated by visitors," he said.

"We expect this year's edition to surpass previous records in terms of visitor numbers and sales, particularly with the increase in participating companies, the wider variety of products on display, and the introduction of new mango varieties to the Qatari market for the first time, alongside an extensive selection of Indian foods, desserts,



and pickles," the official added.

A fully air-conditioned 3,000sqm exhibition tent has been set up at the Eastern Square of Souq Waqif, ensuring a comfortable experience for exhibitors and visitors alike.

The exhibition will welcome visitors daily from 4pm-10pm.

QNL opens applications for third Research Fellowship cohort

The Qatar National Library (QNL) has announced the opening of applications for the third cohort of its Research Fellowship Programme, following the success of the previous two editions and the academic interest that the programme has attracted since its launch.

The programme offers researchers and academics the opportunity to explore the library's specialised and rare collections and contribute to enriching distinguished studies and research on Qatar and the region.

The QNL organised an event during which Dr Mustafa Aqeel, professor of Modern and Contemporary History, former head of the Department of History, and director of the Centre for Doc-

umentation and Humanities Studies at Qatar University (QU), delivered a presentation on "Historical Writing: A Critical Perspective".

QNL director of National Collections and Special Initiatives Abeer al-Kuwari said that the programme's vision continues to grow, making it a prominent destination for academic research in the region.

She noted that the previous two cohorts reinforced the library's commitment to providing researchers with the support and comprehensive access to knowledge they need to explore Qatar's history and examine it from a sound scholarly perspective.

QNL National Collections manager Dr Eiman Saleh al-Shamari said that the

research projects completed by the first and second cohorts examine dimensions of Qatar's aviation diplomacy and the impact of monetary transitions, enabling researchers to benefit from direct and guided access to the library's specialised collections.

She added that the third edition of the programme will open the door to new and rich research avenues in Qatar's social and economic heritage.

The QNL invites researchers to submit project proposals for the third fellowship term, which will run from October 1 to March 30.

Project proposals must not exceed 2,000 words and should align with one of three themes: social history, economic history, or

natural resources management.

Selected fellows will receive a dedicated research space and access to the library's special collections.

Applicants must be Qatar citizens or residents throughout the duration of the programme and commit to in-person attendance at the QNL for no fewer than 20 hours per week.

Participants are also required to deliver a public presentation and submit a research paper of no fewer than 6,000 words within one month of the programme's conclusion.

The QNL has set July 30 as the deadline for applications to the third edition of the Research Fellowship Programme.

The library stated that the second co-

hort added three new areas to the range of disciplines covered by the fellowship, reflecting the programme's growing impact.

The director of legal affairs at Qatar Tourism and holder of a PhD in Gulf Studies from the QU, Hessa al-Mohannadi, is researching the impact of Qtel in Qatar during the 1980s.

Meanwhile, Jarmila Kodric, a conservator at Qatar Museums and a PhD researcher in Archival Studies, is conducting a heritage-based study examining the transition from the manuscript era to printed publications in Qatar.

Media researcher Kaoutar Chatioui is exploring the impact of monetary transitions on commerce and daily life in Qatar between 1959 and 1973. – QNA

Aamal Company QPSC, one of the region's leading diversified companies, has announced that its subsidiary, Advanced Pipes & Casts Co (APC) leading pipes manufacturing company in Qatar, has successfully launched the APC Maintenance Hub.

This innovative artificial intelligence (AI)-powered platform, designed to transform maintenance operations through advanced automation, intelligent analytics, and data-driven decision-making, was developed in-house by APC.

The platform integrates AI into day-to-day maintenance activities, enabling greater efficiency, enhanced asset management, improved troubleshooting capabilities, and streamlined inventory control.

The platform allows maintenance teams to manage machines, spare parts,

Aamal subsidiary APC launches AI-powered maintenance hub

maintenance records, and operational data through a unified digital environment.

Leveraging AI-powered functionality, users can generate engineering drawings from images or descriptions, automatically extract technical specifications from machine nameplates, analyse maintenance issues, identify potential solutions, and access real-time operational insights.

The platform also incorporates inventory management tools that automate the processing of delivery notes, invoices, and Excel-based records while helping

identify suitable local and international suppliers for spare parts.

In addition, its AI-powered analytics capabilities provide managers and engineers with actionable insights into machine performance, maintenance trends, inventory levels, and workforce scheduling, supporting more informed and proactive decision-making.

"The launch of the APC Maintenance Hub reflects Aamal's broader strategy of fostering innovation across its businesses and investing in technologies that enhance operational performance,

strengthen competitiveness, and support sustainable growth," said Aamal chief executive Rashid bin Ali al-Masoori.

The APC Maintenance Hub also features an AI Chat Assistant that enables users to obtain instant responses to maintenance, inventory, and operational queries based on live system data, improving accessibility to information and reducing response times.

"The APC Maintenance Hub was developed to address real operational challenges and empower our maintenance teams with smarter tools and actionable

insights," APC operations general manager Basil Awwad said. "By automating routine processes, improving access to information, and enabling predictive decision-making, the platform will help us enhance productivity, reduce downtime, and maintain the highest standards of operational excellence."

Awwad expressed his appreciation to all employees who contributed to the development and implementation of the Maintenance Hub, commending the significant efforts made over the past months.

He extended special thanks to Eng. Amr Mousa, the head of the Maintenance Department at APC, in recognition of his efforts, continuous follow-up, and commitment to completing the development of the application and successfully launching it.

Justice minister meets Georgia's ambassador



HE the Minister of Justice and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Ibrahim bin Ali bin Issa al-Hassan al-Mohannadi has met Georgia's ambassador to Qatar Varlam Avaliani. Their discussions centred on ways to deepen legal and judicial co-operation between the two countries. - **QNA**

Qatar takes part in meeting of GCC undersecretaries



Qatar participated in the first extraordinary meeting of the Committee of Undersecretaries of Ministries of Social Affairs and Development in the Gulf Co-operation Council (GCC) countries, held yesterday via video conference.

HE the Undersecretary of the Ministry of Social Development and Family Khalifa bin Issa al-Kubaisi represented Qatar at the meeting. The meeting discussed a host of topics, most notably the activation of the "Unified Package of Benefits for Persons with Disabilities in the GCC Countries" and its implementation mechanisms, in accordance with the resolutions issued by the 11th meeting of the Committee of Ministers of Social Affairs and Development, held in Kuwait in September. - **QNA**

مؤسسة قطر
Qatar Foundation

INVITATION TO TENDER

Tender Reference	Description	Tender Fee (QAR)	Tender Bond Value (QAR)	Bid Closing Date
QF-RFQ-1325	Consultancy for EdTech Testbed Global Consortium	500.00	N/A	June 30, 2026, 2:00 PM
QF-RFQ-1326	Provision of Digital Stack Management Services to QF Communications on Call-off basis for 3 years with option to extend up to 1 year	500.00	N/A	July 2, 2026, 2:00 PM
CO-RFQ-493	Design, Supply, Installation, Testing, Commissioning, Centralization and handover of a new Parking Guidance System (PGS - Hikvision) for the West Car Park	1,000.00	N/A	June 30, 2026, 2:00 PM
CO-RFQ-495	Replacement of Cracked Curved Glass Panel	500.00	N/A	June 30, 2026, 2:00 PM

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

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

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

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

Tender Fee Payment Dates: Payment of Tender Fee online will be from 9th to 15th June 2026.
- All bidders, who are registered and have paid the required tender fees online to QF, will then be granted access to download the Tender Document.
- Technical and commercial bids need to be submitted and attached online in QF Supplier Portal as per instructions provided in the "Supplier Portal" work instruction.
 - The commercial bid must be valid for 180 days from Bid Closing Date.
 - The commercial bid must be accompanied by a bank guarantee (tender bond) issued by a local bank in Qatar and should be valid for 180 days from the bid closing date (where applicable as per the Tender documents).
 - The successful tenderer will be required to submit a performance bond as prescribed in each of the above tender documents.
 - Qatar Foundation special qualifications, terms and conditions shall apply as stipulated in the tender document.

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

Qatar joins preparations for 6th Arab-European ministerial meeting



Qatar participated yesterday in the Arab co-ordination meeting at the level of permanent delegates to the Arab League, which was held at the General Secretariat's headquarters in Cairo to discuss and follow up on the preparations underway for the 6th Arab-European ministerial meeting, scheduled to be held in Amman on June 22-23.

Qatar's delegation was led by Qatar's ambassador to Egypt and Permanent Representative to the League of Arab States Sheikh Jassim bin Abdul Rahman bin Mohammad al-Thani. - **QNA**

Katara screening *Maria Montessori* documentary

By **Tawfik Lamari**
Staff Reporter

Katara Cultural Village, in collaboration with the Italian embassy in Qatar, will host a screening of the *Maria Montessori* documentary on June 11 at the Drama Theatre.

This screening of the documentary is part of a series of cultural and artistic activities that help to promote cultural exchange between the two countries and highlight influential figures in human history.

The film explores the life of renowned Italian physician, educator and scientist Maria Montessori (1870-1952), who revolutionised early childhood education.

She is best known for developing the Montessori Method, a child-centred educational approach based on scientific observation of natural learning processes.

Montessori was also one of the first female physicians in Italy.

She initially specialised in psychiatry and paediatrics, working with "uneducable" children (those with learning difficulties), observing their hidden potential.

Montessori later used scientific methods to study typical child development.

She determined that core educational principle education begins with the senses, then the intellect.

Montessori found that children learn best in a prepared environment, with students given freedom of movement and choice of activity.

Under her method, teachers act as guides rather than traditional lecturers, and mixed-age classrooms encourage peer learning and mentorship.

Montessori opened the first Casa dei Bambini (Children's House) in 1907.

She was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize three times.

Today her methods are used globally in public and private schools, while the Association Montessori Internationale preserves her legacy.

The documentary sheds light on the challenges Montessori faced throughout her career, as well as the ideas and principles that contributed to the spread of her educational method worldwide.

The documentary offers a humanistic and cultural perspective on Montessori's journey, showcasing the impact of her educational philosophy on successive generations and its role in reshaping the teacher-student relationship within the educational environment, thus linking her name to one of the most renowned and globally recognised educational approaches.

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TENDER ANNOUNCEMENT

The Tender Committee of QAFAC invites qualified local suppliers to participate in the following Tenders in accordance with QAFAC tendering procedures:

NO.	TENDER NO.	DESCRIPTION	COLLECTION FEE Qrs.	TENDER BOND Qrs.	BID CLOSING DATE
1.	QTC/047/26	Supply of Alumina Balls for Converter Catalyst	300/-	40,000/-	29 th June 2026
2.	QTC/053/26	Supply of Natural Gas (NG) Metering Skid and Panel along with Commissioning assistance at QAFAC Plant Site, Mesaieed	300/-	180,000/-	6 th July 2026

Interested companies are invited to collect the above tender documents as follows:

- Collection Date :** From **Tuesday, 9th June 2026** (QAFAC working days from Sunday to Thursday only)
- Collection Time :** 08:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m
- Location :** The Gate, Bay Tower 2, 13th Floor, West Bay, QAFAC
- Tender Fees :** As shown above, (**Non-refundable**) can be paid at QAFAC Doha Office
- Validity :** Offers must be valid for 120 days from closing date.
- Bid Bond :** Offers must include a Bid bond issued from a local bank and valid for 120 days from closing date.

Authorization : Tenders will be issued to authorized company personnel with the following:

- Official authorization on Company Letter Head.
- Proper Identification.
- Copy of valid Company's Commercial Registration.
- Focal Point of Contact (Name, Telephone, Mobile & Email)

الهلال الأحمر القطري
Qatar Red Crescent

Qatar Red Crescent – Medical Affairs Division

Tenders Announcement: -

Sr. #	Tender No.	Description	Temporary Tender Bond	Documents Fees (Non-Refundable)	Closing Date
1	QRC/EMS/07-2026	Purchase of four ambulance golf cart in Accordance with the Required Specifications	15,000 Q.R	500 Q.R	02-07-2026
2	QRC/EMS/08-2026	Purchase and supply of Two Mobile Clinic Vehicle according to the conditions and specifications	40,000 Q.R	500 Q.R	02-07-2026

The documents can be collected from Medical Affairs Division, Ain Khalid Area, Sunday to Thursday from 09:00 am to 02:00 pm till the closing date or by sending email along with the requested documents below.

Required Documents:

- Authorization letter to receive tender documents + ID copy of the person will be receiving the documents.
- Company's Commercial registration copy with the business activity clearly specified therein.
- Bank deposit voucher with the value of documents not refunded & account details:
 - Account Name: Qatar Red Crescent.
 - Bank: Al Rayan.
 - Account Number: 0003-100689-200
 - IBAN Number: QA09MAFR000000000003100689200

For more information: please call: (50044554), or Email: whc.tenders@qrcs.org.qa

Second Qatar-Korea AI forum begins in Doha

QNA
Doha

The second Qatar-Korea Artificial Intelligence Forum commenced yesterday in Doha under the theme "New Horizons and Business Opportunities". The event is organised by the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology (MCIT) in co-operation with the Embassy of the Republic of Korea in Doha and the Korea Trade-Investment Promotion Agency (KOTRA), with the participation of officials and experts from both countries.

The forum featured discussions focused on the future of artificial intelligence (AI) and ways to strengthen bilateral co-operation in digital technologies and innovation.

In her opening remarks, Assistant Undersecretary for Digital Industry Affairs at MCIT, Reem Mohammed al-Mansoori described the forum's second edition as an important platform for deepening co-operation and expanding partnership opportunities between Qatar and the Republic of Korea.

She noted that discussions have evolved beyond the exchange of ideas toward practical collaboration and the development of actionable initiatives with tangible impact.



Al-Mansoori emphasised that AI has become a key pillar of global competitiveness and that Qatar has placed AI at the heart of its digital transformation agenda, in line with the Qatar National Vision 2030 and the Digital Agenda 2030.

She added that the country seeks to contribute to the development of a regional ecosystem built on trust, innovation, and high-

value partnerships.

She highlighted Qatar's strong performance in digital infrastructure, noting that the country has achieved leading international rankings, including first place globally for secure infrastructure in the 2025 Innovation Index and second place worldwide in mobile internet speed.

She also pointed to the United

Nations' recognition of Qatar's Digital Agenda 2030 as an international best-practice model.

For his part, Assistant Undersecretary for Infrastructure and Operations Affairs at MCIT, Sami Mohammed al-Shammari said that digital infrastructure, artificial intelligence, and digital sovereignty constitute the core pillars of the next phase of digital trans-

formation. He noted that Qatar has entered a new stage focused on translating national strategies into measurable and practical outcomes. Al-Shammari stated that Qatar has built a strong foundation in digital infrastructure, cybersecurity, data governance, and government services over recent years, enabling the large-scale deployment of AI applica-

tions across the public sector. He added that the ministry is working to enhance AI readiness among government entities and aims to develop more than 50 AI use cases within the government sector by 2029, with the objective of improving service quality and operational efficiency.

He further noted that AI applications are already delivering tangible benefits through process optimisation, automation, and enhanced operational performance. He stressed that the successful adoption of artificial intelligence depends not only on technology, but also on institutional readiness, trust, and effective governance frameworks.

Al-Shammari underscored that the partnership between Qatar and the Republic of Korea represents a significant model for international co-operation in the field of artificial intelligence. He noted that Korea brings extensive expertise in semiconductors, digital platforms, and cybersecurity, while Qatar offers a strategic vision and substantial investment in digital infrastructure.

He added that the bilateral co-operation spans several key areas, including AI infrastructure, smart government services, cloud computing, and smart mobility solutions.

MoECC conducts inspection tours of natural resource extraction sites

The Ministry of Environment and Climate Change (MoECC), represented by the Wildlife Development Department, conducted field inspection tours of a number of natural resource extraction and processing sites, including sand, clay, and limestone quarries, as well as cement plants and sand-washing facilities.

Through these tours, the ministry aims to monitor the status of these sites and ensure that activities are being carried out in accordance with the applicable environmental laws and regulations, in addition to recording technical observations and taking the necessary measures regarding any violations detected, in co-ordination with the

relevant authorities. The assistant director of the Wildlife Development Department, Dr Dhafi Haidan, said that these tours are part of the MoECC's periodic inspection and monitoring programmes targeting quarries, crushers, cement-mixing plants and their derivatives, and sand-processing facilities.

They also reflect the ministry's commitment, he said, to ensuring the rational use of natural resources and monitoring the compliance of entities operating at natural material extraction sites with the environmental requirements specified in their permits.



Through its specialised teams, Dr Haidan continued, the department works to ensure the soundness of the procedures followed in the extraction and transportation of natural materials and to monitor any practices that may affect the soil, surrounding habitats, or

environmental components at these sites. He noted that periodic inspections are not only intended to detect violations, but also contribute to regulating activities, raising the level of compliance among entities operating in this sector, and

ensuring that operations continue in accordance with controls that meet development requirements while preserving the country's environment and natural resources.



Dr Haidan called on all owners and operators of quarries, crushers, cement plants, and sand-processing facilities to comply with environmental requirements and adhere to the regulations governing the extraction and transportation of fill material and natural resources, in order to ensure environmental protection, conserve natural resources, and limit any negative impacts resulting from the operation of these sites. — QNA

CORRIGENDUM

With reference to the L&T AGM advertisement published on 6 June 2026, it is clarified that, in the Anti-Submarine Warfare Shallow Water Craft programme, L&T executed its scope in a contracted role for Garden Reach Shipbuilders & Engineers (GRSE), which is the design authority for the project.

We regret any unintended ambiguity and confusion caused.

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T&C apply

The Diplomatic Club... Your Ideal Destination This Summer

The Diplomatic Club is considered one of the pioneering hospitality institutions in Qatar and among the leading founders of this sector. Over more than twenty years since its establishment, the club has maintained a remarkable record of success and continuous development. Despite the entry of many international companies into the industry, the club has remained committed to preserving the highest standards of service and hospitality, while continuously expanding its areas of expertise beyond entertainment, food and beverage services, banquets, events, spa facilities, and beauty salons to also include facilities management services for governmental and private institutions and companies.

The Diplomatic Club is distinguished by its exceptional location in the heart of West Bay, offering breathtaking sea views, tranquility, and privacy inspired by its clear vision of preserving authenticity while combining luxury and quality. It has become the perfect destination for guests seeking leisure or dining experiences with family, friends, or business associates. It is the ideal venue to experience sophistication and elegance while savoring exquisite dishes and meals at any of its four restaurants, event halls, or through its premium outdoor catering services. The possibilities are endless, and the choices are diverse. Guests can indulge in delicious Lebanese cuisine and fresh seafood at Al Sayyad Restaurant with its unique setting and stunning views, experience the exceptional sushi menu at Nassayem Qatar Restaurant, enjoy fine international cuisine in the Members' Lounge where luxury, calmness, and privacy prevail, or simply relax by the swimming pool while enjoying light and flavorful meals. In addition, the club offers magnificent event halls for various occasions, as well as luxurious outdoor catering services for anyone wishing to organize events and celebrations while experiencing the finest levels of hospitality and culinary excellence.

For adventure seekers and activity enthusiasts, the Diplomatic Club offers the opportunity to plan a full day of enjoyment across its diverse facilities. Guests can unwind at the outdoor swimming pool, choose from a variety of



exciting water activities, or engage in fitness routines at the gym or through the wide range of sports classes organized by the club's professional trainers. After an active day, guests can relax in the jacuzzi, sauna, and steam rooms, followed by a professional massage session selected from an extensive menu of body treatments tailored to suit individual needs.

The Diplomatic Club's services extend even further, offering a haven for those seeking



skincare, beauty enhancement, and personal rejuvenation. The club provides hair styling, coloring, and cutting services, skincare treatments, nail care, and many other premium beauty services designed to deliver complete satisfaction and relaxation. Men are also catered to through the dedicated gentlemen's salon, where they can enjoy specialized skincare, hair, and beard grooming services, ensuring that all personal care needs are fulfilled seamlessly and professionally in one place.

In addition, and in response to the growing market demand for high-quality and efficient facilities management services, the Facilities Management Department at the Diplomatic Club has focused on meeting these needs with excellence. Since its establishment, the club has been recognized for its pioneering role in delivering business solutions, making its services highly sought after across both governmental and private sectors. Consequently, the Facilities Management Department has concentrated on providing institutions and companies with world-class services. The department has proven its excellence in operating cafeterias, catering services, entertainment solutions, office support, cleaning services, reception operations, telephone switchboard management, and many other services. The club employs a team of highly experienced professionals known for their exceptional

craftsmanship, precision, and dedication to quality execution. Furthermore, the Facilities Management Department covers nearly all the requirements and needs of establishments, institutions, and buildings, including routine, preventive, and emergency maintenance, as well as essential and sensitive services such as pest control, waste management, and security services. All operations are supervised by a specialized team distinguished by high productivity and guaranteed efficiency in executing all types of work.

Finally, it is important to highlight the exceptional experiences prepared by The Diplomatic Club for this summer, including unique water activities, distinguished spa and salon services, and an exciting summer camp specially organized for children to enjoy a perfect holiday filled with fun, joy, and adventure. Guests can also watch the FIFA World Cup 2026 matches live at Al Sayyad Restaurant and Garden, where premium service and giant screens create an exciting atmosphere for this global event, while enjoying specially curated food and beverage menus designed exclusively to enhance the summer experience.



Virginia Commonwealth University School of the Arts in Qatar announces Summer Art & Design Programs for Young Learners



Virginia Commonwealth University School of the Arts in Qatar (VCUarts Qatar), a Qatar Foundation partner university, has opened registration for its 2026 Summer Art & Design Programs offering preparatory courses for students aged 16-18, alongside programs for middle school students.

"Early exposure to interdisciplinary art and design education plays a critical role in how students understand their creative potential and future pathways. These programs are designed to mirror the academic depth and exploratory nature of our undergraduate experience, giving participants the opportunity to engage with both traditional practices and emerging technologies," explained Rasha Alkasab, Program Manager for Community and Continuing Education at VCUarts Qatar. "By building technical skills alongside critical thinking and creative confidence, we are helping students make more informed decisions about pursuing a creative education at a university level."

Held at the VCUarts Qatar campus from July 12–August 6, the four-week programs offer a wide range of techniques, including 3D modeling and printing, digital artwork, virtual reality spatial design, visual storytelling and portfolio development.

For students aged 16-18, week one introduces participants to the fundamental principles of art and design, such as drawing, model-making, illustration, and art artistic expression. Students will also learn about VCUarts Qatar's four core majors: Graphic Design, Interior Design, Painting and Printmaking, and Kinetic Imaging.



In the following weeks, students will explore a discipline of their choice through coursework modeled on the University's art curriculum. The program provides firsthand experience of campus life and studio-based practice. An optional fourth week focuses on portfolio development for university applications.

For students aged 11-15, the Summer Children's Program features two courses: Creative Chronicles and Beyond the Layer: From Digital Models to Physical Artifacts.

The courses bridge traditional visual storytelling and artmaking with contemporary creative tools through foundational technical

instruction and problem-solving. In Creative Chronicles, participants will learn to develop fictional characters, storylines, and digital artworks, before transforming their ideas into immersive Virtual Reality (VR) experiences using tools such as Tilt Brush and Open Brush. Throughout the program, participants will learn spatial drawing, 3D sketching, environmental design, and mixed-media artmaking techniques to create immersive virtual spaces. The course concludes with participants presenting their projects through VR walkthroughs, recorded experiences, and short presentations explaining their creative process.

The second course, Beyond the Layer, introduces the fundamentals of 3D modeling and printing, guiding students in transforming digital ideas into physical artifacts through hands-on experimentation. Participants will learn to create original 3D designs using beginner-friendly modeling software, prepare files for printing with slicing tools such as Cura and PrusaSlicer, and explore techniques including mold-making, resin casting, clay impressions, sanding, and material finishing. Throughout the course, students develop creative problem-solving skills while experimenting with the relationship between digital design and tactile making.

Introduced in its current format in 2020, the Community Education summer programs were developed as part of VCUarts Qatar's mission to challenge stereotypes surrounding art and design education in Qatar and the wider region. The programs aim to introduce children and youth to a broader understanding of art and design as disciplines that exist across all aspects of everyday life, culture, technology, and creative problem-solving.

For more information on the Summer Art & Design program running from July 12–August 6, 2026, visit qatar.vcu.edu/community-education or contact vcuqcommunity@vcu.edu.

Genomics in Internal Medicine: The Handbook Bringing Genomics to Everyday Medicine

Medicine is entering one of the most transformative periods in its history. The era when diseases were understood purely through symptoms, imaging, and routine laboratory findings is gradually giving way to a deeper molecular understanding of human health. In this evolving landscape, *Genomics in Internal Medicine*, written by Dr. Vinod Scaria, stands out as a timely, visionary, and exceptionally practical contribution to modern medical literature. More than a textbook, this handbook serves as a bridge between classical clinical medicine and the emerging world of precision healthcare.

Published as part of The Blue Handbook Series, the first edition arrives at a critical moment when genomic medicine is transitioning from specialized research laboratories into everyday clinical practice. What makes this handbook particularly important is its ability to translate complex genomic science into language and reasoning that practicing internists can genuinely apply at the bedside.

From the very beginning, the book distinguishes itself through its narrative style. Instead of opening with technical jargon or molecular diagrams, Dr. Scaria begins with a profoundly moving clinical story: the sudden death of a young cardiologist fellow caused by an undiagnosed pathogenic LMNA gene variant associated with dilated cardiomyopathy and sudden cardiac death. This introduction establishes the philosophical foundation of the book. Genomics is presented not as abstract science, but as a tool that can save lives, identify familial risks, and uncover diagnoses hidden beneath apparently normal clinical investigations.

The emotional and clinical power of this opening chapter immediately captures the reader's attention. It reminds clinicians that medicine often encounters cases where traditional frameworks fail, patients who do not respond to expected therapies, diseases that behave unpredictably, or family histories that silently hint at inherited pathology. Dr. Scaria argues convincingly that genomics offers "a new layer beneath the surface," capable of refining diagnosis, improving therapeutic precision, and transforming preventive medicine.

One of the book's greatest strengths is its balance between scientific sophistication and clinical practicality. The handbook does not attempt to turn internists into molecular geneticists. Instead, it seeks to provide what the author calls "fluency, not expertise." Many clinicians are intimidated by genomics because it is often presented in highly technical language. Dr. Scaria removes this complexity by focusing on practical clinical questions, including when to suspect a genetic basis of disease, which genomic test

is appropriate, how reports should be interpreted, and what implications findings may carry for patients and families. By consistently framing genomics within everyday clinical reasoning, the book becomes approachable even for physicians with limited prior exposure to molecular medicine.

The author explains how community specific carrier frequencies influence the prevalence of disorders such as beta-thalassemia, sickle cell disease, Wilson's disease, and inherited cardiomyopathies. He also highlights a critically important challenge in genomic medicine: the limited applicability of Western genomic databases for interpreting variants in other populations. This insight alone makes the handbook highly relevant



for clinicians practicing in South Asia.

Equally impressive is the book's emphasis on cost-conscious genomic medicine. In many healthcare systems, genomic testing is often dismissed as expensive and impractical. Dr. Scaria challenges this misconception with compelling logic. He argues that the real economic burden frequently arises not from testing itself, but from delayed diagnosis, repeated hospital visits, ineffective treatments, and prolonged "diagnostic odysseys."

The handbook's "Jargon Explained" sections are among its most effective teaching features, simplifying complex concepts such as penetrance and variable expressivity without oversimplifying the science. At the same time, Dr. Scaria thoughtfully addresses the ethical and social dimensions of genomic medicine, including privacy, family screening, discrimination, accessibility, and counseling, with relevance to South Asian healthcare. Together, these strengths make the book

highly valuable for postgraduate trainees, practicing physicians, and medical educators alike.

In many ways, Genomics in Internal Medicine represents the democratization of genomic medicine. It reassures clinicians that one does not need to become a bioinformatician or molecular biologist to use genomics meaningfully. Rather, physicians need enough understanding to recognize patterns, order appropriate tests, interpret reports sensibly, and communicate implications effectively to patients and families.

Dr. Vinod Scaria deserves immense appreciation for producing a work that is scientifically rigorous, clinically relevant, educationally accessible, and socially meaningful. This handbook has the potential to become an essential reference not only for internists, but also for cardiologists, endocrinologists, oncologists, neurologists, family physicians, laboratory professionals, medical students, and healthcare policymakers.

Dr. Vinod Scaria is internationally recognized for his pioneering contributions to genomics, precision medicine, rare disease research, and pharmacogenomics. He played a landmark role in sequencing the first Indian genome and has significantly contributed to initiatives such as the GUARDIAN rare disease program, pioneering genetic epidemiology initiatives in the MENA region, and advancing early genomics and pharmacogenomics landscapes in Qatar and other Middle Eastern populations. He currently serves as the Chief Data Scientist at Karkinos Healthcare and is associated with the Precision

Diagnostics initiatives at Micro Health Laboratories.

Scientifically rigorous yet remarkably readable, *Genomics in Internal Medicine* succeeds in democratizing genomic medicine for everyday clinical practice. It is not merely a handbook for today's physicians, but an important roadmap for the future of medicine itself.

For a complimentary copy of the paper-bound edition of this book (for physicians and genomic scientists of Qatar), please write to us at

info.pdx@microhealthcare.qa
+974 5206 0407

The book is now also available through leading online bookstores and e-book platforms including Amazon, Notion Press, Flipkart, and Pothi

Book Review by
Dr. Noushad CK
Global CEO of Micro Health Laboratories

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Sidra Medicine, Zula Wellness sign MoU to elevate programmes

Sidra Medicine and Zula Wellness Resort by Chiva-Som, members of Qatar Foundation, officially signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to collaborate on developing integrated wellness and preventive health programmes.

The signing ceremony on June 1 was attended by Mohammed Khalid al-Mana, acting CEO and a member of the Board of Governors at Sidra Medicine; and Ammar Samad, general manager of Zula Wellness Resort by Chiva-Som.

The collaboration aims to combine Sidra Medicine's clinical expertise with Zula Wellness Resort's holistic wellness approach to create medically supported wellness and holistic well-being programmes for Sidra Medicine's patients.

Through this partnership, both organisations will explore opportunities to introduce wellness-focused programmes supported



Ammar Samad (left) and Mohammed Khalid al-Mana at the MoU signing.

by clinical oversight, lifestyle and nutrition initiatives, diagnostic and preventive health services, and professional education and training programmes.

As the first wellness resort dedicated to Traditional Arabic and Islamic Medicine (TAIM), the partnership with Zula Wellness Resort will also seek to create a personalised range of wellness, therapeutic, and lifestyle-enhancement treatments, incorporating TAIM's heal-

ing wisdom with Sidra Medicine's state-of-the-art health services and therapies.

In a press statement, al-Mana said: "Our partnership with Zula Wellness Resort by Chiva-Som represents an important step in integrating clinical excellence with wellness innovation. By working together, we can further enhance patient and family wellbeing through comprehensive and personalised care experiences."

The first phase of the programme, part of an expansion of Sidra Medicine's Women's Services, will include postpartum recovery experiences, mental and preventive health services, wellness education, referral pathways, and in-hospital wellness offerings.

Samad said: "This collaboration reflects our shared vision of elevating wellness and preventive healthcare through a holistic and evidence-based approach, aligned with the goals of Qatar National Vision 2030. Together with Sidra Medicine, we aim to create meaningful wellness experiences that support long-term well-being for our guests and the wider community."

The MoU marks the beginning of a strategic collaboration focused on advancing wellness, recovery, and preventive healthcare offerings in Qatar while supporting innovation across both medical and wellness sectors.

Minister receives phone call from Estonian FM

HE the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Sultan bin Saad al-Muraikhi received a telephone call yesterday from Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Estonia Margus Tsahkna. During the conversation, they discussed avenues for deepening and expanding bilateral cooperation, along with a range of issues of mutual interest. (QNA)

MoI correctional dept celebrates graduation



The Penal and Correctional Institutions Department at the Ministry of Interior (MoI) celebrated the graduation of the first cohort of inmates from correctional and rehabilitation institutions who completed their studies and obtained a Diploma in Business Administration from the Community College of Qatar. The graduation comes as part of the MoI's efforts to strengthen rehabilitation and reform programmes and expand educational opportunities for inmates, contributing to their academic and professional qualifications and enhancing their chances of positive reintegration into society. It also reflects the ongoing co-operation between the Penal and Correctional Institutions Department and the Community College of Qatar in supporting inmates' educational development. The ceremony was attended by a number of Their Excellencies and state officials, in addition to the MoI officers and members of the Permanent Committee for Penal and Correctional Institutions. (QNA)

Arts-track students get new route into science degrees

From Page 1

Assistant Undersecretary for Higher Education Affairs Dr Hareb Mohamed al-Jabri described the initiative as a strategic step that widens students' academic options and channels them towards the scientific specialisations the country needs. It supports the national drive towards a knowledge-based, innovation-led economy, he said, and helps prepare qualified Qatari talent in priority fields.

Director of the Academic Bridge Program Dr Saheim Khalaf al-Tamimi voiced pride in the partnership, calling it a reflection of a shared commitment to flexible, comprehensive learning pathways. The programme's courses, he added, equip students with the skills in English, science, mathematics and computing needed to move confidently into university study.

Applicants must hold a high school diploma with a minimum grade of 70 percent, submit an IELTS certificate or equivalent scoring at least 4.5, and pass placement tests in English and mathematics before completing the formal admission process.

The initiative forms part of the MoEHE's broader effort to open flexible, innovative routes through higher education that keep pace with the labour market – and to ready a generation able to compete in vital sectors in support of Qatar National Vision 2030.

Shura Council reviews Kahramaa energy plans

From Page 1

He said securing supplies, raising service quality, upgrading billing and meter-reading systems, and expanding conservation programmes were central to improving public services and ensuring the optimal use of resources.

In his presentation, al-Theyab said Kahramaa was continually developing transmission and distribution networks to meet rising demand and connect the national grid to vital projects, with networks managed round the clock through control centres.

He outlined the grid's readiness and emergency framework – combining monitoring and control systems, emergency centres and specialised technical teams – to ensure swift responses to faults and outages.

On renewable energy, he said the national strategy aimed to build a sustainable, cost-effective energy system and raise the share of renewables in the energy mix by 2030, with a particular focus on solar photovoltaic power and distributed solar-generation solutions. Integrating renewables with highly efficient conventional generation, he stressed, was key to maintaining grid stability while meeting growing demand and reducing emissions.

Turning to water, al-Theyab reviewed round-the-clock management of transmission and distribution, the replacement of ageing networks, the rollout of smart meters, and the work of the National Water Control Centre

in monitoring pumping, storage, distribution and water quality. He said the corporation adhered to local and international health and environmental standards through automated quality-monitoring systems, and detailed efforts on strategic reserves, groundwater management, water-harvesting wells and underground storage to bolster water security in emergencies.

He also addressed the district-cooling services policy, regulations governing electrical connections and water installations, billing accuracy and meter-reading efficiency, digital services, awareness campaigns on rationalising consumption, and partnerships with the private sector in electricity, water and renewable-energy projects.

Members commended Kahramaa's role in developing services and enhancing network efficiency, and urged continued investment in infrastructure to keep pace with urban and population growth. They called for the expansion of renewable-energy projects, particularly solar, and welcomed progress on the national strategy and grid readiness to accommodate new sources.

The council discussed expanding district cooling in high-density areas, intensifying awareness on the rational use of electricity and water, safeguarding the marine environment to protect seawater used in desalination, and strengthening water security and monitoring systems. Members also pressed for greater billing and meter-reading

accuracy and better mechanisms for handling subscriber feedback.

They raised concerns over electricity and water tariffs for the commercial and service sectors and their bearing on economic activity, calling for policies that balance efficiency, sustainability and support for business. Members further flagged delays in connecting services to certain areas and residential plots, urging completion of infrastructure on schedule, and discussed improving supplies to farms and desert areas. They also addressed the safe use of centralised gas systems in homes and complexes, and the wider deployment of smart systems and artificial intelligence in network management and subscriber services.

Responding, al-Theyab affirmed that Kahramaa was pressing ahead with its plans to develop the sectors, enhance network efficiency and support sustainability and renewable-energy programmes, and said members' observations would be reflected in the corporation's development plans. Al-Ghanem thanked the president and his delegation, reaffirming the council's commitment to supporting supply security and the efficient use of resources.

In a separate item, the council reviewed the report of the Health, Public Services and Environment Affairs Committee on the proposed law on the digital protection of children. Acting under Article 106 of its Rules of Procedure, it approved referring the proposal to the government as draft legislation for further review.

Minbar app brings Friday sermon to digital age

From Page 1

The audience, he stressed, is deliberately broad: non-Arabic speakers, children, women, travellers and those whose circumstances keep them from the mosque, alongside anyone simply wishing to grasp the Friday message more fully. The app also opens a door for non-Muslims to learn about Islamic values and teachings from a reliable source.

According to the ministry, "Minbar" tightens the bond between the mosque's voice and the digital platforms now central to daily life, supporting the spread of authentic religious knowledge and the promotion of moderation and awareness through modern means. Future updates, it added, will introduce AI-based audio translation and further interactive features guided by user feedback.

Qatar startup ecosystem sees notable rise in world rankings

From Page 1

"Qatar's startup ecosystem is entering a defining phase – where strong government backing is now being matched by a growing, connected founder community. Over the past few years, we've seen a clear shift from infrastructure building to ecosystem activation, with more investment funds operating in Qatar, international founders coming to Qatar, communities collaborating, sharing knowledge, and engaging globally.

"The next wave of growth is driven not just by capital, but by deeper partnerships, access to international markets, and sustained community engagement. This collective momentum is what's positioning Qatar as a competitive and globally relevant startup hub," he stated in the report.

In a LinkedIn post, he continued: "The task ahead is clear: maintaining this momentum by increasing startup density, scaling successful ventures globally, attracting more private capital,

and continuing to strengthen the community-led initiatives that transform infrastructure into innovation outcomes.

"The foundations are in place. The next chapter will be defined by execution, international connectivity, and the ability to produce globally competitive startups from Qatar."

According to Amarasinghe, entities like Startup Qatar, Qatar Development Bank (QDB), Qatar Investment Authority (QIA), Invest Qatar, Qatar Financial Centre (QFC), the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology (MCIT), Qatar Science & Technology Park (QSTP), and the Qatar Research, Development and Innovation (QRDI) Council "have been driving this change with policy and tangible initiatives in Qatar over the past few years."

He added: "Community programmes, such as the Young Entrepreneurs Club (YEC) and Startup Grind Doha, among others, have contributed to the rise we see in the global top 20 rank in community activity."

QC provides dialysis machines to Somalia hospital

Supported by benevolent donors in Qatar, Qatar Charity (QC) has delivered kidney dialysis machines to a major hospital in the Somali capital, Mogadishu, as part of its ongoing efforts to enhance healthcare services and ease the suffering of patients in need. The initiative comes at a time when Somalia's health sector faces a severe shortage of dialysis equipment amid a growing number of patients requiring regular treatment. High treatment costs—estimated between \$500 and \$600 per month per patient—continue to limit access to life-



saving care for many families.

Tahir Mohamed Haj, programmes director at QC's Somalia branch, stated that the support included 10 dialysis machines and 10 fully

equipped medical beds, which were provided to the Recep Tayyip Erdoğan Hospital in Mogadishu. He explained that the intervention is a direct humanitarian response to

the rising number of kidney failure cases, stressing the urgent need for greater international efforts to reach all those in need nationwide. He expressed his deep appreciation to donors in Qatar whose continued generosity made the delivery of this life-saving equipment possible. For his part, Dr Yusuf Çokay, director general of the Recep Tayyip Erdoğan Training and Research Hospital, lauded the Qatari support, describing it as a "key cornerstone" for launching the hospital's kidney department expansion project.

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Barzan Youth Centre organises Gulf Trails Challenge

By Tawfik Lamari
Staff Reporter

Barzan Youth Centre organised the "Gulf Trails Challenge," a unique sporting event held in celebration of Gulf Youth Day under the theme "One Promising Gulf Youth."

The event attracted wide participation from young people across the Gulf Co-operation Council (GCC) countries, creating an atmosphere that reflected the spirit of brotherhood, solidarity, and Gulf unity.

Participants representing the six GCC member states competed in a series of challenging sporting activities that tested their physical fitness, speed, endurance, and ability to overcome obstacles while achieving the fastest times. The competition was marked by sportsmanship, teamwork, and fair play.

At the conclusion of the event, the



Officials honouring a winner.

Qatari team secured first place, followed by Saudi Arabia in second place and Oman in third.

Sheikh Abdulaziz bin Saud al-Thani, vice-chairman of Barzan Youth Cen-

tre, emphasised the importance of investing in young people, stating: "The youth of the Gulf represent the true wealth of our nations and are the cornerstone of achieving sustainable de-

velopment and shaping the future."

He noted that the event aligns with the centre's vision of empowering youth and strengthening the bonds of brotherhood among GCC countries. He added that Gulf Youth Day serves as an important occasion to celebrate the talents and achievements of young people while highlighting their vital role in building a brighter future for the region.

Affiliated with Qatar's Ministry of Sports and Youth, Barzan Youth Centre was established on August 31, 1994. The centre is dedicated to nurturing creativity, enhancing the capabilities of Qatari youth, and strengthening their cultural awareness, skills, values, and loyalty to the nation through a wide range of targeted programmes. Its activities span diverse fields, including water sports, athletics, photography, mind games, digital gaming, camping, and outdoor excursions.

Major quake off Philippines kills at least 35

AFP
General Santos

A 7.8-magnitude earthquake in the southern Philippines yesterday killed at least 35 people, according to provincial authorities, after toppling buildings and sparking tsunami warnings across the region.

National disaster authorities said at least a dozen people were still missing, while 134 had sustained injuries.

Philippine authorities urged people in affected coastal regions to move to higher ground after the offshore quake hit south of General Santos, a city of about 720,000, where the death toll was now 12, according to the tally at a local command centre.

A series of powerful aftershocks rocked the area from about two hours after the first quake, according to the US Geological Survey, with the largest measuring magnitude 6.5.

As night descended, AFP journalists watched as rescue workers



Responders assess a collapsed building after a 7.8 magnitude earthquake in General Santos City yesterday. (AFP)

in General Santos used their hands to dig through the rubble of a popular grocery store chain in a desperate bid to reach two employees buried beneath.

Morphy Angcad, a 35-year-old security guard, told AFP he was not ready to accept that his sister, one of the two, was dead.

"We received a call this morning telling us that she was one of the trapped there," he said, adding he had refused a hotel room so he

could stand watch. "I don't want to leave this until I see the body of my sister... (but) I'm hoping against hope that she is still alive."

Dioslinda Deluvio told AFP her son Joey, the other employee, had come to visit her just weeks earlier, asking: "Ma, what is your plan for your life? Are you OK?"

"All I can do is cry now, imagining the good things he did in the world," she said.

A few kilometres away, others were preparing to spend the night on a sidewalk.

"I'll be sleeping here outside even if it's uncomfortable, because I'm scared there will be an after-shock," 34-year-old sales clerk Johnson Alerta told AFP. "I feel safer here."

Rene Punzalan, disaster chief for hard-hit Sarangani province, told AFP 14 people had died in Glan municipality alone when a landslide buried their homes at the foot of a mountain.

"The landslide happened immediately after the earthquake, so many lives were lost," he said, adding that some areas had yet to report if they had sustained casualties.

"The greatest challenge is communication. The power was cut, so it's hard to get updates," Punzalan said.

Videos posted to social media and verified by AFP showed a shopping centre with a Jollibee fast food restaurant reduced to rubble in General Santos, while a school building that officials said was unoccupied crumpled in another.



A worker walks near a collapsed building following the magnitude 7.8 quake in General Santos, yesterday. (Reuters)

In another video verified by AFP, young schoolchildren could be seen screaming in the arms of their teachers as the quake violently swayed them back and forth on the ground.

Sarangani's Punzalan told AFP that more than 2,000 people evacuated due to a morning tsunami warning were now awaiting a green light to return to their homes.

"(Authorities) are still assessing the situation now if it will be OK to send them home," he said.

A notice from the Pacific Tsunami Warning Center had said tsunami waves were possible along

the coasts of the Philippines, Indonesia, Palau, Taiwan and Papua New Guinea.

But by mid-afternoon, the Philippines and other countries had cancelled their warnings.

Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos, who suspended classes across Mindanao island on what was to have been the first day of school, had called on residents in coastal areas to evacuate immediately.

"Move to higher ground now. Do not wait," he said. "Your life is more important than anything left behind."

Xi vows unwavering support for North Korea in rare visit

Reuters
Seoul/Beijing

China will not swerve from its commitment to safeguarding common interests with North Korea or waver in its support for Kim Jong-un, President Xi Jinping told Pyongyang's leader yesterday during a rare summit.

The neighbours should strengthen strategic ties and firmly protect their sovereignty, security, and development interests, Xi told Kim, an official Chinese summary of the meeting showed, as Beijing looks to draw Pyongyang closer.

Xi's two-day visit, his first in seven years to China's reclusive neighbour, comes at a time when its economy, strengthened by growing trade and military ties to Russia, could boost Kim's confidence in talks.

"I am deeply pleased and also feel a special sense of closeness," Xi told Kim on his first international trip this year.

No matter how the international situation changed, he reaffirmed to Kim, China would continue to highly value its traditional friendship with North Korea, the summary showed.

"The firm support for Comrade General Secretary Kim Jong-un's leadership of the DPRK socialist cause will not change, and the firm determination to safeguard common interests and good strategic environment... will not change," Xi added.

He was referring to the North's formal name, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

The Chinese leader arrived to a red-carpet welcome from Kim and wife Ri Sol Ju, alongside a guard of honour, while children presented bouquets of flowers, video from Chi-



Chinese President Xi Jinping and North Korean leader Kim Jong-un watch a march-past as Kim holds a welcome ceremony for Xi at Kim Il Sung Square in Pyongyang, yesterday. (Reuters)

nese state media showed.

A 21-gun salute was fired at the capital's Kim Il Sung Square, a site of military parades and state celebrations, as spectators dwarfed by huge portraits of the leaders chanted slogans and released balloons, the Xinhua news agency said.

Ties were at a "new historical starting point", Xi said earlier, before urging stronger exchanges in areas from diplomacy, law enforcement and the military to agriculture, trade, technology and construction.

Xi had called on Kim to "oppose hegemony, authoritarianism and all attempts and conspiracies to revive militarism that endangers regional security and stability" in remarks published in the North's state media yesterday.

"The Xi-Kim summit is a reminder that Beijing still sees Pyongyang as a strategic asset," said Craig Singleton, a senior China fellow at the Foundation for Defence of Democracies.

The neighbours, along with Russia and Iran,

share an interest in blunting US power and straining its alliances, he added.

Xi also pledged to work with North Korea to promote fair and orderly multilateralism and inclusive economic globalisation, with long-term regional peace and stability a common pursuit.

"His visit is about keeping the tradition alive in very different conditions than his last trip," John Delury, a senior fellow of the Asia Society, said in a post on X.

Flags of both countries lined the main avenues of the North Korean capital in a video issued by Xinhua.

Xi is accompanied on the state visit by his wife Peng Liyuan, de facto chief of staff Cai Qi, Foreign Minister Wang Yi, Defence Minister Dong Jun and Commerce Minister Wang Wentao.

Both should capitalise on the restored links as "an opportunity to expand people-to-people exchanges," Xi told Kim during their meeting.

'Korea should not give up on North's denuclearisation'

AFP
Seoul

Republic of Korea should not give up on North Korea's denuclearisation, President Lee Jae-myung said yesterday, as China's President Xi Jinping arrived in Pyongyang for a two-day visit.

Lee made the remark at a press conference marking his first year in office, which he took after months of political upheaval triggered by his predecessor's martial law declaration.

"We should not give up on the goal of denuclearisation because we cannot pursue nuclear armament ourselves," he said.

Xi makes the trip to the North after hosting US President Donald Trump and Russia's Vladimir Putin separately in Beijing recently and as North Korea's nuclear talks with Washington remain deadlocked.

China, Washington's chief geopolitical rival, has been North Korea's main trading partner and a key source of diplomatic and economic support for the country, hit by multiple international sanctions.

The White House said last month that Xi and Trump "confirmed their shared goal to denuclearise North Korea" during their summit in Beijing.

However, leader Kim Jong-un's powerful sister said on the eve of Xi's arrival that North Korea's



Korean President Lee Jae-myung attends a press conference to mark the first anniversary of his inauguration at the Blue House in Seoul yesterday. (AFP)

nuclear weapons programme was "the line of no retreat".

Lee said Seoul should not seek to acquire atomic weapons to counter Pyongyang's nuclear drive because of potential domino effects in the region.

"If Republic of Korea were to pursue nuclear armament, do you really think Japan would stand still? Or Taiwan?" he said.

"Everyone would end up going nuclear, and the entire region would turn into a nuclear flash-point."

He said given Republic of Korea's heavy reliance on exports, they could not withstand severe global sanctions for attempting to go nuclear in violation of international rules.

"We simply cannot afford to become like North Korea," he said. "We cannot survive under such sanctions."

School closures in Japan city as bear roams streets

AFP
Tokyo

A bear roaming the streets of a Japanese city for three days forced the closure of nearly 100 schools yesterday, as dozens of hunters and officials searched for the animal.

The city government of Utsunomiya, north of Tokyo, closed all 94 public primary and junior high schools in the area after receiving more than 10 reports of bear sightings since Saturday - including in a shopping arcade. "We have vehicles out to areas where a bear was seen

to make people aware and to urge people to stay indoors or in vehicles," a city official told AFP, adding that dozens of hunters, police and local officials have been looking for the animal. It was not clear whether there is one bear or more, he said, speaking on the customary condition of anonymity. In recent years, Japan has seen an increasing number of bear sightings and attacks, especially in urban areas.

A record 13 people were killed by bears in Japan last year, and there has been a jump in encounters as the animals emerge hungry from hibernation. In the last year to March, bear sightings nation-

wide topped 50,000 - more than double the previous record set two years earlier, according to official data. In Utsunomiya, a regional capital and home to 510,000 residents, there were just two unconfirmed bear sightings in the previous year.

The bear now being hunted was first spotted Saturday morning, north of the city centre, and was described as being around one metre (three feet) long.

A series of sightings followed, including in a residential neighbourhood that day, at a shopping arcade on Sunday, and at a park, a high school and a junior school.

Starmer set to ban 'harmful' social media for U-16s

Reuters
London

British Prime Minister Keir Starmer is set to announce a ban on "harmful" online platforms for children under 16 while maintaining access to some safer forms of social media, the Times newspaper reported yesterday.

Starmer, who is due to make a speech later yesterday, is said to have decided to proceed with restrictions after speaking to bereaved parents and considering evidence from Australia, which brought in a ban for under-16s last December.

Asked about the report, a source at Downing Street said: "The prime minister is not afraid about taking on the tech companies and their bosses to protect young people."

A source close to the matter said a formal ban was unlikely to come this week.

Worries over the impact of social media on mental health and online safety prompted Britain to hold a consultation on children's access to social media earlier this year, with curfews, time limits and curbs on addictive design features, all under consideration.

France, Denmark and Poland are also considering tightening rules around social media use for

children, while Greece in April announced it would ban access to those under the age of 15 from January 2027.

Starmer is expected to focus on how the government can ensure technology brings positive change when he speaks later yesterday, according to a statement released by his office on Sunday.

Britain's online safety law already requires social media companies to take measures to protect children from illegal and harmful online content.

Experts are divided on how effective a total ban would be, while a group of young people in London recently told Reuters they were opposed to restrictions.

India deports 5,000 Bangladeshis

India has deported nearly 5,000 Bangladeshi citizens since Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Hindu-nationalist party swept to power in West Bengal last month, according to official statistics. Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) won a sweeping victory in elections in the eastern border state of more than 100 million people, promising to "detect, delete and deport" illegal migrants.

India shares a long and porous border with Muslim-majority Bangladesh, where migration has historically been driven by economic hardship and longstanding family links. On taking power, the new West Bengal government ordered the establishment of detention centres

for undocumented Bangladeshis and Rohingya refugees, a mainly Muslim people who fled persecution in Myanmar. State Chief Minister Suwendu Adhikari, speaking in the capital Kolkata on Sunday, said nearly 5,000 Bangladeshi citizens had been deported across the border. "We have started the work of deporting Bangladeshi infiltrators who do not fall under the purview of the Citizenship Amendment Act," Adhikari said, saying the government had "established holding centres in all districts of the state" in May. "From these centres, 4,800 Bangladeshi infiltrators have already been deported so far," he added. "Another 836 people are currently

in the holding centres... we are making arrangements to deport the 836 soon," Adhikari said. The deportation campaign comes against a backdrop of longstanding political tensions over immigration in the border state.

Top Indian officials have referred to migrants as "termites" and "infiltrators". Critics say the BJP's rhetoric and policies have added to the unease and marginalisation of India's more than 200 million Muslims, accusing the party of conflating religious identity with illegal migration.

Rights groups have previously accused India of also pushing hundreds of Bengali-speaking Muslims into Bangladesh without due process. (AFP)

Labour lawmakers urge Britain to ban trade with Israeli settlements

More than a third of lawmakers from Britain's governing Labour Party signed a letter yesterday calling on the British government to end trade with Israeli settlements in the occupied West Bank. Prime Minister Keir Starmer has had to balance Britain's historic position as a close ally of Israel and the United States with pressure from within his centre-left party to take a firmer line over Israeli actions towards Palestinians. "There is an urgent need for accountability and concrete consequences in response to Israel's violations against Palestinians in the occupied West Bank and East Jerusalem, which are spiralling by the day," said the letter. "We believe ending trade with

settlements is a vital next step." It was signed by 137 Labour lawmakers, more than a third of the party's 402 members of the 650-seat House of Commons. Israel's governing coalition has enabled a rapid expansion of settlements, with some ministers openly calling for the annexation of the West Bank, land that Israel captured in a 1967 war, where Palestinians hope for a state. Most countries consider settlements there a violation of international law. Settler violence against Palestinians in the West Bank has also surged since the Gaza war began in October 2023.

Last year, Spain became the first EU country to announce a ban on imports of goods from Israeli

settlements, and other European countries such as Ireland and the Netherlands are considering similar steps.

Asked about the letter and the call for a trade ban, a spokesperson for Britain's Foreign Ministry did not comment directly but said Britain had "strongly and repeatedly condemned settler violence and the expansion of illegal settlements".

"We continue to call on the Israeli authorities to clamp down on all those who are seeking to inflame tensions, and to tackle the unacceptable violence and destruction of property that is being committed by settler groups against Palestinian communities," the spokesperson said. (Reuters)



Nvidia's AI PC push banks on unproven demand beyond niche users

Nvidia's entry into the AI PC market with its RTX Spark superchip last week is less a breakthrough for regular users than a high-stakes bet that a largely unproven concept can find wider appeal, analysts said.

At the Computex trade show in Taiwan, the chipmaker pitched a future where laptops run large AI models locally and act as personal digital agents, no cloud needed. It's a claim that PC makers HP and Dell have made for nearly three years now, only to be met with skepticism from Wall Street and consumers, with high prices outweighing tangible benefits.

Nvidia, though, appears to be

selling a different version of the AI PC than what exists today, one aimed more at developers and content creators who have long favoured Apple's high-end MacBook Pros. Six companies -- Microsoft, Asus, HP, Lenovo, Dell, and MSI -- will make PCs using the chip. These stocks surged after Nvidia's announcement on June 1.

"RTX Spark doesn't make traditional PCs obsolete. It creates a new category between the workstation and the AI server," said Kevin Hein, analyst at Tirias Research. The chip combines a central processor, graphics engine and up to 128 gigabytes of unified

memory, making it capable of running large AI models locally, something current AI PCs cannot do at scale. Nvidia says it could reshape how people interact with computers, with AI agents handling tasks such as generating videos or debugging code.

Existing AI PCs, marketed heavily over the past two years, have centered on modest features like transcription or image editing and have failed to drive meaningful sales for the device manufacturers and their partners such as Arm and Qualcomm.

A premium price and a memory chip crunch, which has already driven up device cost, are likely to

limit RTX Spark devices to niche adoption, analysts said.

The cost "won't deter all the big computer makers from working with Nvidia on this, but the bulk of PC sales for the next several years will still be more traditional Windows-based PCs with chips from Intel, AMD and Qualcomm," said Bob O'Donnell, president at TECHanalysis Research.

HP and Dell stock had been climbing even before the launch of Nvidia's superchip, up 18% and 223%, respectively, so far this year. But that rally has been driven less by AI PCs and more by a wave of corporate upgrades to Windows 11, as well as booming demand

for AI infrastructure, particularly for Dell. In its latest quarter, HP warned of a sharp decline in the PC market in the latter half of the year. The company did note strong demand for AI PCs, especially from enterprise customers, although the overall PC business recorded shrinking sales. The outlook for PC sales looks dour this year, with IDC estimating global PC shipments to decline 11.3% in 2026.

It is unclear if devices powered by the Nvidia chip will outperform Macs. Nvidia said details on battery life and other metrics would be shared closer to the launch of the products this

fall. Still, the Nvidia-powered laptops could make Windows machines competitive with Macs for the first time on memory bandwidth, a key bottleneck for AI software that constantly shuttles data back and forth between a machine's processor and memory, adding latency.

That brings it closer to Apple's in-house chips, which have bundled unified memory since 2020.

"I expect some companies will take the leap to test out the long-term viability of on-device inferencing," said Tom Mainelli, a group vice president at IDC.

— Reuters

Surprise visit



Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan shaking hands with Venezuela's Interim President Delcy Rodriguez at the Dolmabahce Presidential working office in Istanbul. Rodriguez met with Erdogan after arriving in Istanbul on a surprise visit, officials said. Rodriguez, who has led Venezuela since US forces captured former socialist president Nicolas Maduro in January 2026, arrived in Istanbul after a five-day visit to India. (AFP)



AI debate moves past ability — to who carries the can



By Kamran Rehmat

Earlier this year, a US senator sat down to interview a piece of software. Bernie Sanders put it to Anthropic's chatbot, Claude, whether it might endorse a moratorium on building the very data centres that give it life — as though consulting a defendant on the wisdom of its own trial.

The scene was absurd, and instructive. It distilled, in a single tableau, the confusion now gripping the world's response to artificial intelligence: we cannot decide whether we are dealing with a tool, a colleague, an oracle, or a rival species — and our policy lurches accordingly.

Survey the field and the incoherence is total. At one pole stands Argentina's Javier Milei, who has pledged to impose no rules whatever on what algorithms may do, and to mint a new legal creature — the "non-human corporation," a firm run entirely by machines. Peter Thiel, a German-American entrepreneur and venture capitalist — one of the most influential and ideologically distinctive figures in Silicon Valley — has reportedly decamped to Buenos Aires, drawn by the promise of a regulatory blank cheque.

Even Donald Trump's White House, no enemy of the industry, has lately edged

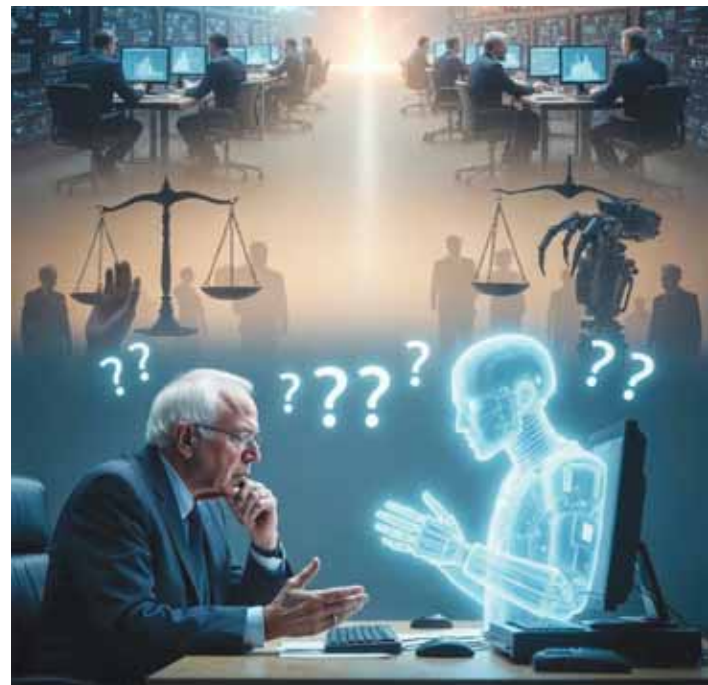
towards leashing the most powerful models before they are loosed on the world. At the other pole sits Pope Leo, who welcomes technology that might, in his words, "serve integral human development and the care of our common home." His warning lands elsewhere.

Leo's insight is the most underrated contribution to the entire debate, precisely because it refuses the terms on which the debate is usually fought. The danger, he argues, lies not only in what these systems are built to achieve, but in the vision behind them and in what we ourselves become along the way — not merely the "what," but the "why" and the "how."

Machines may one day eclipse us in raw intelligence, yet intelligence is not the same as understanding. An algorithm, the pope observes, does not know "from within what love, work, friendship or responsibility mean"; its learning "does not imply inner growth." He reserves his sharpest caution for the transhumanist creed that treats human limitation as a defect to be engineered away — when, as he counters, we often flourish not despite our limits but through them.

Some sceptics felt the pope pulled his punches. One critic likened calling AI a valuable tool requiring vigilance to recommending that cocaine "be snorted with a pinch of salt."

Yet a papal summons to mass resistance would have misjudged the hour. It is at once too late — the technology has already woven itself through too much wealth, infrastructure and institutional life to be ripped out — and too early, because human beings reform a technology only once its harms turn undeniable. We acted on nuclear weapons after Hiroshima, not before; the revolt against children's smartphones could not have been conjured in 2010. The honest path for the critic, then, is not to lament the age but to name its specific sins:



US Senator Bernie Sanders put it to Anthropic's chatbot, Claude, whether it might endorse a moratorium on building the very data centres that give it life — as though consulting a defendant on the wisdom of its own trial.

the student who cheats, the novelist who quietly outsources a chapter, the lonely user who

mistakes a chatbot for a beloved. Here the metaphysics meets the spreadsheet. A new study from MIT's Mert Demirel and colleagues tracked coders before and after they adopted AI, and the numbers tell a humbling story. At the top of the funnel, output exploded — nearly 300% more files written or edited. By the review stage the gain had halved to 150%; by the count of actual software releases it had collapsed to roughly 30%.

The dramatic uplift drains away precisely as work passes through the human checkpoints of judgment, review and release. More apps now ship, yet downloads have not budged: a flood of creation, a trickle of value. Even Uber, having torched its annual AI budget in a single quarter, is retreating to cheaper models and rationing the frontier tools.

The lesson is not that AI is hollow. It is that value lives in the bottleneck — in the human discernment that decides what is worth shipping at all. As with electricity, whose real productivity boom arrived not when factories swapped a giant steam engine for a giant electric motor, but decades later when engineers rebuilt the workshop around small motors at every

bench, the gains will come only when we redesign our institutions around the tool, not merely bolt it on. Today's modest returns measure the friction between a powerful instrument and structures unfit to wield it.

This brings us to the scramble over ownership and blame. President Trump now muses about taking government stakes in the leading AI firms — "It almost becomes a partnership with the American public," he says — even as Sanders presses a rival vision of a sovereign wealth fund and board seats. Sam Altman, for his part, floats donating a slice of his company to a public fund. The investor David Sacks recoils, warning that "nationalisation of AI will accelerate the corporate-government fusion we're already sliding toward."

Strip away the ideology and a single anxiety pulses beneath every scheme: the public is gloomy — more than seventy per cent of Americans think the technology is moving too fast — and everyone is groping for a way to locate the proceeds, and the responsibility, somewhere.

That word — responsibility — is the thread that stitches these quarrels together. The encyclical, the productivity funnel, the sovereign wealth fund and the senator's strange interview are all, at bottom, arguments about accountability: who keeps judgment, who carries the can, who answers when the machine produces injury without redress. No society, as both scripture and science fiction agree, will long tolerate harm without someone to hold to account.

So the real question is not how clever the machines will become. It is how much of our own judgment we are willing to surrender for the sake of convenience — and how much we insist on keeping, knowing that whatever we hand to the algorithm, the bill, when it falls due, will still be addressed to us.

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DETENTION

Israel releases detained Palestinian woman footballer

Israeli authorities yesterday released a Palestinian national women's football team player after six days in detention. Wissam Halawani said Israeli police released her daughter Rand Halawani, 20, on Sunday evening, with an order to remain under house arrest for five days. An Israeli police spokesperson stressed that "this ruling does not indicate or determine the outcome of any future legal proceedings." Police had said last week that Halawani was arrested along with an 18-year-old man following an incident in Jerusalem in which objects were allegedly thrown at demonstrators marching on a street below. (AFP)

COVID-19

After activist death, US visa restrictions on Nicaraguans

The US State Department announced yesterday that it will restrict visa access for over 100 Nicaraguan officials and their family members following the death of a detained Indigenous leader. Brooklyn Rivera, a renowned 73-year-old head of the Miskito people and former member of congress, was arrested in September 2023 by the left-wing, authoritarian government of President Daniel Ortega. It never stated publicly what the charges were. Rivera's death was announced May 31 by the Nicaraguan health ministry, which said his health failed because of a bacterial infection caused by the Covid-19 virus. (AFP)

APPEAL

UN rights chief urges US to lift tough Cuba sanctions

The UN rights chief Volker Turk yesterday urged Washington to immediately lift tough sanctions imposed on Cuba this year, warning they were causing widespread suffering and endangering lives. While Cuba has been under a US trade embargo since 1962, President Donald Trump has drastically ramped up pressure in recent months, cutting off its fuel supplies and threatening to take over the island. "The fuel restrictions imposed since early 2026 and recent tightening of extraterritorial sanctions, taken together, are directly harming Cubans, especially the most vulnerable," Turk said in a statement. (AFP)

SOCCER

New York to show World Cup final in Central Park

The World Cup final on July 19 will be broadcast in Central Park for about 50,000 people, the mayor of New York and the state governor announced yesterday. "The most iconic match of the most iconic tournament in the world deserves to be watched in the most iconic park in the world," Mayor Zohran Mamdani told reporters. Tickets will be free and allocated via a lottery system. Governor Kathy Hochul said the state has allocated \$6 mn to finance the watch party. The final will be played just outside the city at the MetLife Stadium, rebranded the New York New Jersey Stadium during the World Cup. (AFP)

US demands Iran give access to UN watchdog

AFP
Vienna

The US is demanding Iran provide "precise" information on its enriched uranium stockpile and give the UN nuclear agency access "without delay", according to a draft resolution seen by AFP yesterday.

The draft resolution is expected to be submitted for a vote this week to the board of governors of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) that started meeting yesterday.

Last week, the IAEA in a confidential report reiterated that the lack of access to nuclear sites in Iran constituted a "proliferation concern".

The draft resolution affirms that it is "essential and urgent" that Iran "without delay" provides the agency with "precise information on nuclear material accountability and safeguarded nuclear facilities in Iran".

Tehran must also "grant the agency all access it requires to verify this information", it adds.

To be passed, the draft resolution needs to be submitted and approved by the 35-member IAEA board of governors.

In a press conference after opening the board of governors' meeting, IAEA head Rafael Grossi said he had "sporadic contacts with the foreign minister (of Iran) and others, but basically the



IAEA's Rafael Grossi on the opening day of his agency's quarterly Board of Governors meeting in Vienna, Austria yesterday. (Reuters)

channel of communication is broken".

"Of course, when you have active shelling or bombing, inspections are not possible, but there are many things that can be done. And the important thing is this dialogue," he said.

The IAEA has not had access to some key nuclear facilities in Iran since Israel, joined by the US, launched a 12-day conflict in June 2025 that included strikes on nuclear sites.

Nuclear facilities have also been hit in the latest war, which erupted on February 28. The IAEA has repeatedly urged access.

Prior to US strikes in June 2025, the IAEA calculated that Iran pos-

essed approximately 440 kilograms (970 pounds) of uranium enriched to 60%.

This is close to the 90% needed to make a bomb and well above the 3.67% limit set by a now-defunct 2015 agreement with Iran.

The fate of this stockpile is uncertain. Israel and the US have long accused Iran of wanting to build a nuclear weapon.

Tehran has repeatedly denied having any military ambitions, insisting on its right to the technology for civilian purposes.

On Saturday, Iran denounced as a "tool of political pressure" the report by the IAEA expressing concern over its lack of access to Iranian nuclear sites.

France, Germany abandon joint fighter aircraft project

AFP
Berlin

France and Germany have agreed to abandon a joint fighter jet programme due to disagreements between the companies involved, Berlin said Monday in a blow to European efforts to boost defence co-operation.

The Future Combat Air System (FCAS) programme was launched in 2017 to replace France's Rafale jets and the Eurofighter planes used by Germany and Spain.

The project was seen as a key test of European efforts to work more closely on defence as they seek to present a united front in the face of a hostile Russia at a time of souring ties with the US.

But the multi-billion-dollar programme was beset by disagreements between the firms involved - France's Dassault Aviation and Airbus, which represents Germany and Spain.

A German government official told AFP that Chancellor Friedrich Merz and French President Emmanuel Macron had "reached the shared assessment that the companies will not be able to come together on building a joint combat aircraft. "They acknowledge this reality."

The official however said other parts of the wide-ranging project will continue.



Tornado fighter jets are parked at the Hamburg Airport. (Reuters)

"The actual core of FCAS is to be continued as a European system," the official said, describing it as a "nervous system that networks aircraft, drones and other components into an integrated whole".

The French and German defence ministries are set to draw up a plan for defence co-operation "focused on a few realistic and relevant projects" at a forthcoming meeting, the official added.

The news comes despite calls for Europe to integrate its fragmented militaries more closely as geopolitical turmoil worsens.

Russia's war against Ukraine in its fifth year, while European countries are increasingly worried about US security commitments to the continent under President Donald Trump.

There had been last-ditch ef-

orts to salvage FCAS. In March two mediators - one from France and one from Germany - were tasked with coming up with proposals to rescue the initiative.

But they were unable to do so, while the head of Dassault Aviation continued to insist that the firm could go it alone on the project and was not in favour of it being "co-managed".

The project's demise comes despite both Merz and Macron insisting publicly they were determined for it to succeed.

The German leader had said earlier this year that he would "do everything in my power, and fight until the very last moment, to get joint European projects off the ground here, and above all German-French projects".

Macron - speaking in April after talks with Merz - had denied then the project was dead.

US judge asked to bar UFC fight at White House

Reuters
Washington

A federal judge in Washington has been asked to block President Donald Trump's plan to host an Ultimate Fighting Championship mixed martial arts bout at the White House next week and to halt construction of the metal arena structure called "the Claw" on the South Lawn of the iconic executive residence.

Two Washington-area residents in a court filing on Sunday asked US District Judge Amit Mehta to issue a temporary restraining order halting the event, scheduled to coincide with Trump's 80th birthday on June 14. Mehta yesterday asked the lawyers in the case to propose a schedule to hear the emergency request.

Dubbed "UFC Freedom 250", the event is set to feature fighting inside the 92-foot-tall (28 meters), octagon-shaped cage with weigh-ins at the nearby Lincoln Memorial. The lawsuit, filed on Saturday, alleges that authorisation of the program by the National Park Service and Interior Department was unlawful and should be set aside. "This nation's public



Construction continues for the UFC event. (Reuters/File Photo)

monuments should not be loaned out for private exploitation," the plaintiffs said.

In a statement, the White House called the case an "obstructionist, baseless, and dilatory lawsuit" and said the event "is no different than the various other White House-hosted events on the South Lawn and properly permitted events on the Ellipse and National Mall throughout the year."

The lawsuit contends the event violates rules barring sporting

events on the South Lawn and at the Lincoln Memorial, and that construction of the large arena structure requires congressional authorisation.

Trump is facing other lawsuits over construction projects on the White House and elsewhere in the capital, including his plan to build a 90,000-square-foot ballroom on the site of the demolished East Wing, and his proposal to renovate and close The John F Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts.

Russian strikes kill four in Ukraine

Russian strikes along the Ukraine war front line yesterday killed four civilians, including a 71-year-old man riding a bicycle, and wounded over 30, authorities said. Two women were killed and four children aged between five and 12 were among 18 wounded in an attack on a residential building in Zaporizhzhia, the regional governor Ivan Fedorov said.

Fedorov showed on his social media account pictures of bodies under covers and a smashed up building in the centre of the city, which is about 25 kilometres (15 miles) from Russian lines. In the northeast region of Sumy, governor Oleg Grigorov reported a Russian attack with mortars and drones on the Serehdyna-Buda district.

"As a result of the enemy attack, a 71-year-old local resident who was riding a bicycle was killed," he said.

Another Russian attack targeted an apartment block, a bank and a store in Nikopol, in the Dnipropetrovsk region, the



The site of a Russian drone strike in Zaporizhzhia. (Reuters)

head of the local military administration Oleksandr Ganzha said.

"One person has been killed and four wounded," he announced. At least seven people were wounded in strikes at Sloviansk in the Donetsk region and three more in the Odessa region, local authorities said.

Daily Russian attacks that claim civilian lives have intensified in recent months, and Ukraine has hit back with its own drone strikes further into Russian territory, saying these

are mainly against military and energy facilities.

According to a UN estimate published in April, at least 15,850 civilians have been killed in Ukrainian zones since Russia's invasion was launched in February 2022.

Over 2,800 civilians have died in Russian-controlled zones, according to the UN toll, which added that more than 44,800 have been wounded in Ukrainian and Russia-occupied zones. (Reuters)

Armenia PM wins vote, cementing Westward tilt

AFP
Yerevan

Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan's party won parliamentary elections, according to preliminary results yesterday that signalled a victory endorsing the nation's pro-Western shift after threats from Moscow and claims of Russian interference.

Pashinyan's push to move Armenia out of the orbit of its former imperial ruler has angered the Kremlin - which claimed the West swayed the result and authorities had pressured the opposition.

Pashinyan claimed a "historic victory" in the election that came after years of turmoil since he was swept to power in a 2018 street revolution.

The small Caucasus country is still haunted by Azerbaijan's 2023 military takeover of the Karabakh region, which ended decades of

territorial conflict and prompted the exodus of the enclave's 100,000-strong ethnic Armenian population.

Pashinyan framed the vote as a choice between lasting peace with Azerbaijan and a return to war.

His ruling Civil Contract party secured 49.8% of the vote, comfortably ahead of the 23.3% of Russian-Armenian billionaire Samvel Karapetyan's Strong Armenia alliance, the Central Election Commission said. The turnout was 59%.

In Yerevan, voters greeted Pashinyan's victory with a mix of relief, hope and unease - some seeing it as a mandate for peace, others warning that Armenia's future remained uncertain.

"I am very glad that our people trusted Pashinyan again. What did some people think, that the people would go and elect those corrupt Russian puppets?" 58-year-old welder Aram Mnat-sakanyan told AFP.

Sargis Harutyunyan, 81, said he feared post-election unrest, warning that opposition street protests "would not be the right thing in this geopolitical situation".

European Union chief Ursula von der Leyen congratulated Pashinyan on his win, telling him: "Armenia can count on us."

"The spirit of the Velvet Revolution you led in 2018 is alive and well," she said on social media.

French President Emmanuel Macron said the result would boost "momentum toward closer ties with Europe".

Pashinyan has drifted from Moscow since 2023, with Armenia criticising Russia not coming to its aid when Azerbaijan recaptured Karabakh.

He froze participation in a Russia-led security bloc, signed a strategic partnership agreement with Washington, and set Armenia on a path toward possible EU membership.

In the weeks before the vote,

Russia banned the import of several Armenian products.

The Kremlin was widely accused of online misinformation, hacking and pumping out Kremlin-friendly narratives portraying Western co-operation as dangerous.

The Russian foreign ministry blasted the vote, alleging it was marked by "Western interference" and "unprecedented pressure" on the opposition.

It said the results showed Armenian society was divided and that Pashinyan's support was declining. International monitors from the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe said "elections offered voters a genuine choice among political alternatives in a well-run process".

"Direct pressure from abroad, in the form of escalating (Russian) trade restrictions and security threats were observed during the campaign, aimed at unduly influencing voters in favour of the opposition," they said in a statement.

PM Rama vows to push on with Kushner-linked resort

Albania will plough on with a luxury resort planned by Donald Trump's son-in-law Jared Kushner on a remote stretch of Balkan coast despite persistent protests over its environmental impact, Prime Minister Edi Rama told Reuters yesterday.

Thousands of people have taken to the streets of the capital Tirana and on the southern coast where the resort has been proposed, calling for the project to be scrapped because of the impact on a protected wetland home to flamingoes, seals and sea turtle nesting sites.

The flamingo has emerged as the movement's symbol: protesters hoist inflatable pink birds and signs saying "Flamingo Revolution".

Rama is unmoved, telling Reuters that the developers will "stun" onlookers with their plans in the coming months and that parts of the resort could be open to the public before the end

of the decade. "I'm telling you, it's going to be a beautiful project and we're going to do it and we're going to be proud to contribute to Europe," Rama said during an interview in his office, a few metres from where nightly demonstrations against the project have taken place.

"I was voted in to make these things happen. I'm not voted to be led by people that have a different idea of how to develop the country".

Rama, 61, a former basketball player and artist who took office in 2013 and aims to bring Albania into the EU.

He takes pride in presiding over the modernisation of a country that had languished for decades under a particularly stifling communist dictatorship until the 1990s.

The resort development he champions is the brainchild of Kushner and his wife, Ivanka Trump. (Reuters)

HMC, QU strengthen research partnership

Hamad Medical Corp (HMC) and Qatar University (QU) have signed a new agreement establishing a joint research funding Initiative aimed at strengthening collaboration between the two institutions and supporting research that addresses national health priorities.

The new funding initiative is designed to support collaborative research projects that align with the strategic priorities of both organisations and contribute to Qatar's broader research and healthcare objectives.

The initiative will also complement existing internal research funding programmes within both institutions.

Dr Jassim al-Suwaidi, chief of Scientific, Academic, and Faculty Affairs at HMC, said: "This initiative represents an important step in further strengthening cooperation between Hamad Medical Corp and Qatar University. By supporting collaborative, institution-led research, we are creating new opportunities for clinicians, researchers and academics to work together on projects that address national health priorities and contribute to the advancement of healthcare in Qatar. Through this joint funding initiative, we aim to foster innovation, build research



Dr Jassim al-Suwaidi



Prof Aiman Erbad

capacity and generate evidence that supports improved patient outcomes and informs future healthcare delivery."

Prof Aiman Erbad, vice president for Research and Innovation at Qatar University, stated: "This agreement reflects the depth of the cooperation between Qatar University and Hamad Medical Corp and underscores our shared commitment to advancing the research and innovation ecosystem in ways that address national health priorities. The joint research funding Initiative provides an important platform for fostering interdisciplinary collaboration among researchers, clinicians, and academics, while facilitating the translation of scientific knowledge into practical solutions that enhance population health and improve the quality of healthcare services."

The new agreement – expected to support more than three collaborative research projects annually – will see the establishment of a joint HMC-QU committee to oversee the initiative and ensure that funded projects deliver meaningful impact. The committee will be responsible for identifying and reviewing annual research priority areas, evaluating research proposals, selecting projects for funding, and monitoring the progress and outcomes of funded research.

The agreement further strengthens collaboration in developing the country's healthcare workforce and research environment. HMC and QU have collaborated extensively to provide clinical education and training opportunities for students across medicine, pharmacy, health sciences and related disciplines.

Qatar Museums showcases future vision in architecture, sustainability

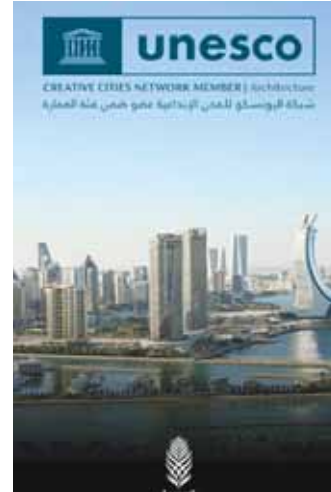
By Tawfik Lamari
Staff Reporter

Qatar Museums (QM) is participating in the annual meeting of the Unesco Creative Cities Network 2026 from June 8 to 11, hosted by Berlin and Frankfurt, Germany.

Representatives from creative cities around the world are taking part to exchange experiences and visions on the role of design and innovation in building more sustainable, inclusive, and resilient cities that can meet the challenges of the future. Qatar is represented by the cities of Doha and Lusail.

The meeting, which is running until June 11, serves as an international platform for dialogue and cooperation among member cities of the Unesco Creative Cities Network. Its sessions addressed a range of issues related to urban design, cultural identity, sustainability, and innovation, and showcased best practices and inspiring experiences for developing urban environments and enhancing quality of life.

QM participates in the meeting by presenting its vision for the future in architecture and sustainability. Lusail City, which recently joined the Unesco Creative



Poster of Unesco Creative Cities Network 2026.

Cities Network in the field of design, is scheduled to participate in the session for new member cities, where it will showcase its development experience, future vision, and its growing role in the global dialogue on the future of cities.

Lusail stands out as an urban model that blends modernity with cultural identity. At first glance, it appears to be a city designed with a comprehensive vision for the future, taking advantage of a unique opportunity

to reimagine architecture, sustainability, and urban life from scratch.

However, this modern city also rests on deep historical roots; the land on which it stands holds a part of the country's memory and heritage, passed down through generations.

Today, Lusail continues to build this bridge between the past and the future by adopting the latest concepts in innovation and urban planning while preserving its cultural identity, embodying Qatar's vision, which balances sustainable development with the preservation of national heritage.

The participation of Doha and Lusail in the annual meeting also provides an opportunity to enhance the presence of the country's Creative Cities Network on the international stage and to open new horizons for co-operation and knowledge exchange with the network's member cities. This supports creative initiatives and consolidates Qatar's position as a regional and international hub for culture, design, and innovation.

Unesco established the Creative Cities Network in 2004 to support cities that rely on culture and creativity as key drivers of development.

Awsaj Academy celebrates graduation of 360 students

Awsaj Academy, part of Qatar Foundation's Pre-University Education, celebrated the graduation of 360 students from its Prime Programme Class of 2026 during a ceremony held at the Qatar National Convention Centre, attended by graduates, their families, and members of the academy's academic and administrative staff.

The Prime Programme is an evening education initiative launched by Awsaj Academy to support high school students facing challenges in their educational journeys in government and private schools. Through a flexible and supportive learning environment, the programme helps students achieve their academic goals and prepare for future academic and career pathways.

Hamza Dhaini, principal of the Prime Programme at Awsaj Academy, said: "This graduation marks a significant milestone in the lives of our students and their families. It is the result of years of perseverance, hard work, and overcoming challenges. It also reflects the confidence families have placed in their children's abilities and their unwavering support throughout their journey to reach this moment, where we proudly celebrate their achievements."

"Throughout their time in the programme, we have witnessed inspiring stories of growth, resilience, and achievement. Many of our students joined facing academic challenges or learning difficulties, yet their determination and perseverance, combined with the support of our dedicated educational team, enabled them to make remarkable progress and reach this well-deserved milestone." Dhaini explained that the programme goes beyond developing core academic skills, placing equal emphasis on personal and life skills such as effective communication, teamwork, problem-solving, and responsibility. This holistic approach helps prepare students to pursue further education or enter diverse career pathways with confidence and independence.



Hamza Dhaini

"Today, our graduates embark on a variety of pathways that reflect their aspirations and strengths, whether in higher education, vocational and professional training programmes, or the workforce. Most importantly, they

leave the program equipped with the skills and foundations needed to continue learning, growing, and thriving throughout their lives.

Jamla Rashid al-Jassim, the 25-year-old graduate of the Prime Programme, said: "I would encourage anyone facing challenges in completing their education not to give up and to continue pursuing their goals. Awsaj Academy provided me with a supportive learning environment and accessible teaching approaches that helped me succeed and continue my educational journey with confidence."

Meanwhile, Faisal Abdullah Issa, the 24-year-old graduate of the programme added: "Graduating today marks an important turning point in my life and reflects years of hard work and perseverance. Throughout my academic journey, I faced a number of challenges, but the support I received from my teachers and the encouragement of my classmates helped me overcome them and achieve success."

QSTP opens applications for season 18 of Stars of Science

Qatar Science & Technology Park (QSTP), a member of Qatar Foundation (QF), has opened applications for season 18 of *Stars of Science* – QF's flagship innovation platform dedicated to supporting the next generation of Arab innovators and entrepreneurs.

Applications are now officially open for aspiring entrepreneurs, engineers, scientists, designers, creators, and problem-solvers aged 18-35 from across the Arab world and the global Arab diaspora. Applications will remain open until June 26, continuing QSTP's mission to spotlight and support Arab innovation on a global stage.

Over nearly two decades, *Stars of Science* has championed Arab innovation, entrepreneurship, and scientific advancement on an international stage, supporting generations of innovators whose ideas have evolved into ventures, technologies, and solutions that address real-world challenges.

This season, the opportunity extends far beyond the screen. Marking the platform's most ambitious evolution yet, season 18 introduces an updated format



with a stronger focus on venture-building, emerging technologies, innovation storytelling, and the next generation of Arab innovators shaping the future.

The winner will receive a fully supported venture-building experience in Qatar designed to help transform their idea into a real company, including mentorship, strategic guidance, office space, operational support, access to interns, and immersion within one of the region's leading innovation ecosystems.

"*Stars of Science* opens its doors wider than ever this season to young innovators across the Arab world and its diaspora," said Rama Chakaki, president of QSTP. "Anyone with an idea can apply, regardless of access to re-

sources or networks. We want to give ambitious youth the tools to turn bold ideas into real ventures using science, technology, and AI to build startups that create lasting impact."

This new season positions *Stars of Science* at the intersection of innovation and entrepreneurship, spotlighting a new generation of Arab innovators and founders shaping the future from the region to the world.

Applications are encouraged from innovators, creators, builders, founders, engineers, and entrepreneurs working across AI, gaming, robotics, climate innovation, health-tech, fashion-tech, digital design, engineering, and future-focused entrepreneurship.

UDST highlights inclusive education

University of Doha for Science and Technology (UDST) marked Global Accessibility Awareness Day through its annual film festival, highlighting the importance of inclusive education and ensuring equal access for all.

Attendees were invited to vote for their favourite films and engage in discussions on inclusion, accessibility, and empowerment. The programme also provided a platform for dialogue between students and faculty, reinforcing the importance of creating environment that embrace diversity and equity. Dr Salem al-Naemi, president of UDST, said: "At UDST, we believe inclusion is at



the core of a thriving academic community. By highlighting real experiences and challenges, we empower our students, faculty, and staff to learn from one another, leverage empathy, and contribute to a campus environment where everyone feels valued, supported, and inspired to achieve their full potential."

Through this initiative, UDST continues to promote a culture of inclusion, understanding, and empathy, equipping its community to advance accessible practices in education and society. The festival highlights the university's commitment to diversity, social responsibility, and global citizenship.

Positive psychology can ignite everyday wellbeing: Researchers

By Joseph Varghese
Staff Reporter

A couple of researchers from Weill Cornell Medicine (WCM-Q) have highlighted the importance of positive psychology in nurturing people's wellbeing and how small little things in everyday life can help promote it.

They suggest that it is important to promote positive psychology to navigate various challenges, including busy schedules, constant change, and global uncertainty in the current times.

According to Dr Amit Abraham and Dr Sohaila Cheema, researchers from WCM-Q, positive psychology is often described as the science of understanding what enables individuals and communities to flourish. "Rather than focusing on what drains us, positive psy-

chology invites us to focus on what sustains and strengthens us: our capacity for connection, meaning, joy, and growth. It offers a hopeful lens through which we can support our mental health and overall quality of life, even during challenging times," said the researchers in a recent article.

They have highlighted that the benefits of positive psychology extend well beyond simply feeling happier in the moment, and positive emotions and strong social relationships are closely linked to creativity, problem-solving, and innovation. When people feel optimistic and supported, they are more likely to stay motivated, build trust with others, and experience greater satisfaction and engagement in their work and daily lives.

"Positive psychology is not about being happy all the time. It is about developing the skills and



Small little things in everyday life promote human wellbeing.

habits that support emotional and mental wellbeing through life's ups and downs. By cultivating positive emotions, nurturing meaningful relationships, and strengthening a sense of purpose, positive psy-

chology enhances not only how we feel, but how we function, helping individuals and communities thrive in sustainable, lasting ways," they explain.

Human flourishing refers to a

state of wellbeing that emphasises positive emotions, supportive relationships, resilience, a sense of purpose, and personal accomplishment. "From this perspective, wellbeing is not the absence of difficulty, but the presence of inner resources that help us navigate life with greater balance and confidence. At its core, positive psychology encourages us to notice strengths, cultivate gratitude, and recognise moments of meaning, no matter how small," pointed out the professors.

They also note that the benefits of positive psychology extend well beyond simply feeling happier in the moment, and positive emotions and strong social relationships are closely linked to creativity, problem-solving, and innovation. When people feel optimistic and supported, they are more likely to stay motivated, build

trust with others, and experience greater satisfaction and engagement in their work and daily lives.

"Adopting the principles of positive psychology can also influence our physical wellbeing. Individuals who cultivate positivity, purpose, and self-awareness are more inclined to engage in healthy behaviours such as nourishing nutrition, regular physical activity, and restorative sleep. Over time, these habits reinforce both mental and physical resilience," highlighted the officials.

The researchers have also shared tips for incorporating positive psychology into daily routines. They include: writing down thoughts and feelings; engaging in activities or hobbies that balance challenge and enjoyment; practising kindness; counting blessings, sharing a laugh, celebrating others, and nurturing relationships with others.