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SCAN TO SHOP

Qatar most peaceful country in Mena: Index

By A Staff Reporter
Doha

The National Planning Council announced yesterday that Qatar ranked first in the Middle East and North Africa (Mena) region in the 2026 Global Peace Index, reinforcing its position as one of the region's most stable and secure countries despite a challenging global and regional environment. The results also showed an improvement in the Societal Safety and Security domain, with Qatar's score improving from 1.400 to 1.369 in 2026 – lower readings on the index denote greater peacefulness. The Council said the progress demonstrated the effectiveness of the country's institutions, national capabilities, and social cohesion in maintaining security, public safety, and stability. Published annually by the Australia-based Institute for Economics and Peace, the Global Peace Index measures the level of peace across countries by assessing 23 indicators grouped into three domains: societal safety and security, the extent of ongoing domestic and international conflict, and the degree of militarisation. It covers 163 countries and territories, accounting for the overwhelming majority of the world's population. Qatar's standing is notable against a deteriorating global backdrop. The 2026 index reveals a world struggling with the economic consequences of a record-high number of conflicts that are increasingly interconnected and difficult to resolve. The number of countries engaged in external conflict has nearly doubled, from 59 in 2008 to 103 in the latest edition, while the compilers note a broader geopolitical shift they term the "Great Fragmentation". The Mena region remains the least peaceful in the world – a position it has held for a decade – which makes Qatar's consistency a regional outlier. Qatar continues to lead the Gulf, placing ahead of Kuwait, Oman and the UAE, with its diplomatic mediation record and sustained investment in internal security cited as key factors.

In Spain, Tamim bin Hamad Chair



The University of Granada in Spain yesterday inaugurated the Tamim bin Hamad Chair for Arabic Language and Andalusian Culture, a Qatar-backed academic initiative aimed at reviving the intellectual legacy of Andalusia as a model of coexistence and intercultural dialogue. The ceremony was attended by Dr Khalid bin Fahd al-Khater, Director of Policy Planning at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, a member of the chair's board of trustees and President of New Ground Research, alongside Vice-President of the University of Granada Prof Margarita Sanchez Romero and the chair's co-directors Dr Jose Miguel Vilchez and Dr Ibrahim Mohamed Zein.

In remarks at the ceremony, al-Khater said the chair represented a serious academic initiative aimed at studying history and drawing lessons that can help shape the future. He described it as a milestone in cultural and academic relations between Qatar and Spain and a living embodiment of human ties that transcend geography and the passage of time. He noted that the chair was announced during the first Qatar-Spain Strategic Dialogue. Al-Khater said the chair sought to revive the intellectual legacy of Andalusia as a historical model of coexistence and intercultural dialogue. He added that Qatar's sponsorship of the initiative re-

flected its belief that knowledge and culture are fundamental pillars of cohesive societies, and underscored its commitment to supporting scientific research, preserving humanity's cultural heritage and promoting the Arabic language as a vehicle for thought and scholarship that has contributed to the development of human civilisation. He also announced that the New Ground Research foundation would provide support to translate and localise the University of Granada's website into Arabic. He added that the initiative would enable Arabic speakers to access the university's academic programmes, scholarly output and scientific heritage directly.

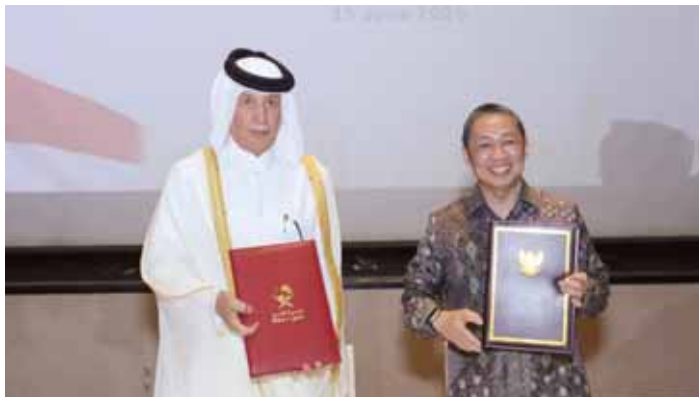
US-Iran deal: Qatar's quiet diplomacy shines again

Qatari diplomacy, working in close co-ordination with several regional and international parties, has helped narrow the gaps between the United States and Iran and bring their positions closer, paving the way for a framework memorandum of understanding (MoU) on outstanding issues between the two sides, including freedom of navigation in the Strait of Hormuz. The breakthrough caps weeks of intense diplomatic activity, including direct contacts between Doha, Washington, Tehran and Islamabad – the main mediator in the crisis – along with a number of influential capitals, aimed at reducing escalation and securing maritime safety and the continuity of global energy and supply chains. The framework MoU is consistent with the pillars of Qatar's



foreign policy, which prioritises political settlements over wars and military confrontations that drain resources and hinder development, and consistently calls for disputes to be resolved through negotiation and comprehensive political settlement. It also underscores the centrality of Qatar's diplomatic work in regional and international efforts to calm tensions, through an active political movement combining high-level contacts, consultations and continuous meetings with the relevant parties. **To Page 3**

Qatar, Indonesia sign MoU for political consultations



Qatar and Indonesia have signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) to establish political consultations between the two countries' foreign ministries. The first round of political consultation between the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of Qatar and Indonesia was held yesterday in Jakarta, Indonesia. HE the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Sultan bin Saad al-Muraikhi led Qatar's side, while Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs Muhammad Anis Matta led the hosts. The first round of political consultation discussed the co-operation between the two countries, along with ways to support and strengthen it. It also discussed regional and international developments, in addition to a number of topics of common interest. **(QNA)**

Erdogan, Starmer laud Qatar's role

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and British Prime Minister Keir Starmer have welcomed the memorandum of understanding (MoU) reached between the US and Iran, with both leaders praising Qatar's role in supporting the diplomacy that produced the agreement. In a post on X, Erdogan thanked the leaderships of the US and Iran as well as Pakistan for their mediation efforts, and voiced appreciation for the backing provided by Qatar and Saudi Arabia for the diplomatic initiatives. He described the MoU as an important development in consolidating regional peace and stability, expressing hope that it would help create lasting security and reassurance. Erdogan urged restraint in the period before the deal is formalised. **To Page 3**

Trump: Prelim Iran agreement to end the war already signed

Reuters
Evian-Les-Bains, France

US President Donald Trump said yesterday a preliminary agreement to end the war in the Gulf has already been signed by the United States and Iran, though details have yet to be made public. "The deal's all signed," Trump said after he arrived in France for a summit of the G7 group of big economies, adding that Vice-President JD Vance would attend a formal signing ceremony in Geneva on Friday. The agreement would reopen the blockaded Strait of Hormuz and extend a ceasefire for 60 days, allowing negotiators to tackle difficult issues like the future of Iran's nuclear programme. Oil prices fell to their lowest level since March 10, shortly after the conflict cut off one-fifth of the world's oil supply. The deal is the most significant step yet to resolve the conflict, which has killed at least 7,000 people, mostly in Iran and Lebanon, and upended global energy markets. But much about the agreement remains unknown. US and Iranian officials say it could eventually deliver substantial economic benefits to Iran by lifting sanctions, unfreezing foreign assets, and setting up a

\$300bn reconstruction fund, paid for by neighbouring Gulf allies. US officials, speaking on condition of anonymity, said Iran would have to satisfy US demands never to build a nuclear weapon and cut off support for Hezbollah in order to get those benefits. Details will be released sometime over the next two days, US officials said. Trump appears to have achieved little of what he set out to do when he launched strikes on Iran with Israel on February 28. Iran's theocratic government remains in place, while his demands that Tehran dismantle its ballistic missile programme and end support for Hezbollah remain unmet. It also does not resolve the fate of Iran's uranium stockpile. Iranian officials, who have always denied intending to build a nuclear weapon, say they have given up little. While the deal lifts Iran's chokehold on the Strait of Hormuz, that only restores the prewar status quo and shippers say navigation will only restart once safety is assured. Iran has suggested it will retain control with Oman over the strait. The United States says the strait will be open toll-free for 60 days and said it would expect that provision to be part of a final agreement as well.

PM, UN chief mull developments

HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani received a phone call from UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres. They discussed co-operation between Qatar and the United Nations, along with ways to support and strengthen it. It also discussed regional developments, particularly the agreement reached between the US and Iran, and the efforts made to enhance security and stability in the region. The prime minister affirmed

Qatar's continued full support for all good offices and efforts aimed at enhancing regional security and stability, and reaching sustainable solutions to outstanding issues through dialogue and peaceful means, in accordance with the principles of international law and good neighbourliness, and contributing to opening new horizons for co-operation, development and prosperity, and achieving the common interests of the peoples of the region and the world. **(QNA)**

Cape Verde hold Spain; Belgium, Egypt draw

Spain and Cape Verde drew 0-0 in Group H's opening match yesterday, in the FIFA World Cup 2026. Meanwhile, Belgium and Egypt drew 1-1 in their World Cup opener after a second-half Belgian equaliser. **Sport Pages 1, 4**

RESULT



0

Spain



0

Capo Verde

RESULT



1

Belgium



1

Egypt

Shura Council seeks curbs on junk food marketing

By Tawfik Lamari
Staff Reporter

The Shura Council yesterday recommended that the government set up a national committee on childhood obesity and impose curbs on the marketing of unhealthy food to children, describing the problem as a growing threat to the health of future generations. The recommendation, adopted at a session chaired by HE the Speaker Hassan bin Abdullah al-Ghanem at the Tamim bin Hamad Hall, followed a public discussion requested by a number of members. It urged regulatory measures to limit the promotion of foods high in sugar, fat and sodium across digital platforms,

media outlets and food delivery services, and tighter oversight of marketing campaigns aimed at children. Among its key pillars, the recommendation called for a national committee to unify efforts and monitor relevant strategies; a system to classify and label foods by nutritional value, with explanatory labels required on products targeted at children; and regulation of food delivery timings to discourage unhealthy consumption patterns. It also pressed for stronger physical education in schools, expanded health supervision of school canteens under unified nutritional standards, and an electronic platform to track students' health indicators for parents and authorities. **To Page 3**



Minister meets Kazakh envoy

HE the Minister of Municipality Abdullah bin Hamad bin Abdullah al-Attiyah held a meeting yesterday with Kazakhstan's ambassador to Qatar Arman Issagaliyev. They discussed bilateral relations between the two countries and means to bolster them in the areas of agriculture, food security, and municipal twinning. - **QNA**

Minister meets Saudi vice-minister of foreign affairs

HE the Minister of State at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Dr Mohammed bin Abdulaziz bin Saleh al-Khulaifi met in Riyadh yesterday with Saudi Arabia's Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs Eng. Waleed bin Abdulkarim El-Khereiji. They reviewed bilateral relations and ways to support and strengthen them in various fields, and discussed the latest developments in the region, particularly the agreement reached between the US and Iran, as well as the latest developments in Syria, Sudan, and Somalia. They expressed satisfaction with the agreement reached between the US and Iran to cease military operations and ensure freedom of navigation in the Strait of Hormuz. - **QNA**



Official: Grace period after residence permit lapses is now 14 days

By Joseph Varghese
Staff Reporter

One should leave the country within 14 days from the date of the residency permit cancellation, an official from the Ministry of Interior (MoI) stated yesterday.

"Earlier it was 30 days, but currently it is two weeks," said Captain Ali Ahmed Ali al-Kuwari from the MoI's Airport Passport Department. "Those who stay after two weeks will have to pay a fine of QR10 per day."

He was addressing a webinar organised by the MoI's Public Relations Department on the topic of "Safe Travels", providing travel tips and the necessary procedures to follow before travelling out of Qatar (**see report on Page 12**).

The official noted that people on a visit visa should verify the sticker affixed to their passport and follow the dates accordingly.

"People who are on a visit visa to the country have to make sure of the duration of the stay in the country from the sticker fixed with the stamp in the passport," Capt al-Kuwari said. "There is a fine of QR200 per day in case of overstay. This is a very important point as many people fail to notice the exact number of days allowed for the stay in the country."

He asked the public to check the Metrash app before they embark on any travel.

"If you have any kind of traffic violations, overstay fine or any other dues, you can pay that electronically through Metrash and complete all the procedures before heading to the airport," Capt al-Kuwari said. "In case you have any travel ban, you have to follow up



Capt Ali Ahmed Ali al-Kuwari.

with the concerned department to take out the travel ban to travel to your destination."

He also advised everyone to make use of the electronic gate (e-gate) facility to complete the immigration procedures, as it saves time and avoids long queues at the immigration counters.

"The Airport Passports Department operates 76 electronic gates distributed through the passenger terminals at arrivals and departures," Capt al-Kuwari said. "This is one of the vital services provided by the Airport Passports Department free of charge to all citizens, residents, and visitors. The objective of this service is to save time and effort and avoid waiting in front of the immigration counters inside the airport."

"It takes just about 10-15 seconds to complete the formalities through the e-gates," he added. "When you are going to the passport counters or e-gates, follow the floor markings that regulate the entry process of travelers," the official continued. "There are markings on the floor for the proper standing on the area. If you are following those markings, then the process will be finished easily and quickly."

Capt al-Kuwari noted that people can use the Metrash app if they need to transfer the residency permit to a new passport.

For a newborn baby, the resident must visit the passport office to report the birth and obtain the newborn's visa through the approved procedures.

"A newborn in the country should obtain a residence permit on the sponsorship of the father after obtaining necessary document from the person's embassy," the official said. "In case a residence permit is not obtained, the newborn cannot re-enter Qatar."

Minister meets Indonesia's president



HE the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Sultan bin Saad al-Muraikhi met in Jakarta yesterday with Indonesia's President Prabowo Subianto.

The minister conveyed the greetings of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani to Subianto, along with His Highness's wishes for the president's health and happiness, and for the government and people of Indonesia continued progress and prosperity.

The president entrusted HE al-Muraikhi with his greetings to His Highness the Amir, wishing His Highness health and happiness, and Qatar continued progress and development.

The meeting discussed co-operation, relations between the two countries, along with ways to support and develop them, as well as topics of common interest. - **QNA**

GAC chairman, GCC chief review joint projects

The chairman of the General Authority of Customs (GAC) and chairman of the GCC Customs Union Authority Executive Council, HE Ahmed bin Abdullah al-Jamal, met on Sunday with Gulf Co-operation Council (GCC) Secretary-General Jassem Mohamed Albudaiwi. The GAC reported that the meeting, which took place in Riyadh, discussed updated on the Customs Union Authority's work, as well as joint Gulf customs projects and the requirements for completing the establishment of the customs union. The meeting further explored mechanisms to enhance co-ordination and co-operation with relevant government authorities in member states, in a way that supports the implementation of joint initiatives and projects and helps achieve their intended objectives. - **QNA**



Lekhwiya, French National Gendarmerie in virtual meeting



The Internal Security Force (Lekhwiya) and the General Directorate of the French National Gendarmerie held their first strategic meeting on internal security via videoconference. The meeting was held as part of the fourth round of the strategic dialogue between Qatar and France.

The meeting reviewed prospects for expanding bilateral security co-operation and discussed future plans aimed at enhancing security preparedness, strengthening efforts to maintain security and stability, and improving the ability to address evolving security challenges. - **QNA**

Ashghal completes major road upgrade programme

The Public Works Authority (Ashghal) has announced the completion of all works under the seventh phase of its Western Areas Road Improvement Project, marking another step in the country's efforts to enhance transport infrastructure and connectivity.

According to the authority, the works included the development of permanent roads, construction of temporary roads, installation of traffic safety features, provision of parking facilities, and the implementation of infrastructure and landscaping improvements.

Hassan al-Naama, project engineer in the Western Areas Section of Ashghal's Roads Projects Department, said the project covered

the areas of Al Sailiya, Al Gharrafa, Al Karaana, Al Nasraniya and Meseimeer.

He said that a total of 39km of roads had been upgraded, alongside the installation of around 285 street lighting poles.

The project included new pedestrian pathways, road signage and markings, as well as the construction of 587 parking spaces.

Al-Naama added that extensive infrastructure works were carried out, including the installation of surface and groundwater drainage systems, stormwater networks and sewage infrastructure, in addition to land grading and site preparation works in several locations.

In Al Sailiya, major improvements were made to Al Sailiya Road



and its associated main roads, including new street lighting, traffic signals, sewage lines, stormwater drainage systems, pedestrian walkways and parking facilities.

In Al Gharrafa, Al Karaana and Al Nasraniya, the project focused on road construction and upgrades, enhancing traffic safety measures and delivering sewage and household connection networks.

Additional stormwater drainage

works were also undertaken, particularly in Al Gharrafa.

A key element of the project was the construction of a new road stretching more than 15km to improve access to Al Kharaij Beach.

Road network enhancements and landscaping works were also completed in Meseimeer to support a number of government institutions and public service facilities in the area. - **QNA**

Qatar reiterates support for Sudan's unity at UN Human Rights Council

Qatar has reiterated its support for the unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Sudan, while urging all parties involved in the country's conflict to prioritise national interests and work to prevent further fragmentation and instability.

Speaking during an enhanced interactive dialogue on the oral update of the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission for the Sudan at the 62nd session of the United Nations Human Rights Council in Geneva, Qatar expressed deep concern over the continuing conflict and its humanitarian and human rights consequences.

Delivering Qatar's statement, Abdulrahman Sultan al-Marzouqi, the second secretary at Qatar's Permanent Mission to the UN Office in Geneva, reaffirmed Doha's rejection of any interference in Sudan's internal affairs and stressed the importance of preserving the country's unity and national institutions.

He pointed out that the ongoing war had resulted in large numbers of casualties, the displacement of millions of people and widespread destruction of infrastructure and essential public facilities.

Al-Marzouqi underscored the need for accountability for violations committed during the conflict and called for an end to impunity.

He also urged all parties to fulfill their obligations under international humanitarian law and international human rights law, particularly with regard to the protection of civilians.

Qatar further called for the safe, rapid and unhindered delivery of humanitarian assistance to all those in need across Sudan.

He renewed Qatar's call for all Sudanese parties to resume meaningful and inclusive dialogue aimed at achieving a political settlement that preserves Sudan's unity, safeguards its state institutions and responds to the aspirations of the Sudanese people for security, stability and development. - **QNA**

Shura Council committee calls for national efforts to combat childhood obesity

The chairman of the Shura Council's Health, Public Services, and Environment Committee, Abdullah bin Nasser bin Turki al-Subaie (**pictured**), has said that obesity in children is a critical health issue requiring concerted national efforts and enhanced co-ordination among various stakeholders, given its far-reaching health, social, and economic consequences.

In a statement following Shura Council regular session yesterday, during which the council reviewed the committee's report on the request for a general debate submitted by several members regarding children's obesity in Qatar, al-Subaie explained that the committee has given this issue special attention.

The committee held several meetings to study it, reviewed the views of relevant authorities, data, and studies, and hosted a number of officials and representatives from concerned bodies to assess the reality of the phenomenon, the challenges associated with it, and to explore ways to curb its spread.

Al-Subaie noted that the committee, based on its findings, concluded with a set of key areas aimed at supporting efforts to prevent obesity in children, promote healthy lifestyles, enhance awareness and monitoring programs, and leverage modern technological solutions for follow-up and awareness campaigns.

This, he explained, will contribute to improving health indicators and enhancing quality of life.

Al-Subaie emphasised that addressing obesity in children is a shared responsibility requiring integrated roles among families, educational institutions, health authorities, and the community.

He stressed the importance of continuing collaborative efforts to instill healthy habits in young people and promote health awareness. - **QNA**



Top MoFA official bids farewell to Malta's envoy



HE the Secretary-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) Dr Ahmed bin Hassan al-Hammadi met Malta's ambassador to Qatar Simon Pullicino on the occasion of the end of latter's tenure in the country. HE Dr al-Hammadi thanked the envoy for his efforts in supporting and strengthening bilateral relations and wished him success in his future duties. - QNA

MoFA secretary-general meets Kuwait's envoy



HE the Secretary-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) Dr Ahmed bin Hassan al-Hammadi met yesterday with Kuwait's ambassador to Qatar Ahmad Abdulrahman al-Shuraim. They discussed co-operation, relations between the two countries and ways to support and strengthen them. They also discussed topics of common interest. - QNA

US-Iran accord wins international backing

World leaders and international organisations have welcomed the announcement of an agreement on a memorandum of understanding (MoU) between the United States and Iran, describing it as a significant diplomatic breakthrough aimed at reducing tensions in the Middle East and strengthening international stability.

The agreement follows complex, multi-party diplomatic efforts in which Qatar played a supportive role, alongside several regional and international mediators.

The development has been widely viewed as a positive step towards de-escalation, with potential implications for energy security, maritime trade routes and the global economy.

The announcement has prompted widespread international support, with many governments viewing it as a rare opportunity to reduce regional tensions and advance diplomatic solutions to long-standing disputes.

Pakistan's Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif thanked both Washington and Tehran for their commitment to a diplomatic solution and praised Qatar's leadership for its mediation efforts.

In a post on X, he said that a formal peace agreement between the US and Iran would be signed during an official ceremony in Switzerland on Friday.

Sharif added that mediators would facilitate a series of meetings this week, with preliminary discussions expected to pave the way for technical negotiations.

China welcomed the announcement of the agreement.

"China hopes that the United States and Iran will sign the first-phase MoU on schedule, and that all relevant parties will remain committed to peaceful solutions and resolve issues through dialogue and negotiation," Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson Lin Jian said yesterday.

He said that China is ready to work with the international community to continue playing an active role in restoring peace and tranquility to the Middle East and the Gulf region as soon as possible.

Australia also welcomed the agreement, commending the efforts of Pakistan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Turkiye and other mediating countries that helped bring about the understanding.

Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese said in a statement that restraint and constructive engagement were essen-

tial to preventing further escalation and securing a lasting settlement.

He expressed satisfaction with progress towards reopening the Strait of Hormuz, describing the waterway as vital to global trade and energy markets.

Albanese acknowledged that a full recovery of maritime operations would take time but stressed that restoring access to the strategic shipping route was crucial for easing pressure on energy prices and supporting the global economy.

He called on all parties to seize the opportunity to pursue lasting peace, while also addressing concerns about Iran's nuclear programme.

Japan's Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi described the announcement as an important step towards containing tensions.

Writing on X, she said that the agreement reflected sustained diplomatic efforts by the countries involved and praised the role of mediators in facilitating the process.

sumption of maritime traffic was essential for maintaining regional stability and protecting the global economy.

The French president said the agreement could open the door to a broader negotiating process aimed at promoting peace and security across the Middle East.

European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said the agreement needs to lead to the immediate reopening of the Strait of Hormuz.

She said that the priority now is swift and full implementation by all parties, noting that restoring free navigation is essential for regional stability as well as the global economy, as it opens the door to broader negotiations on peace and security in the Middle East.

Von der Leyen also called on all parties to respect Lebanon's sovereignty and territorial integrity, stressing the need for a genuine ceasefire.

She reiterated Europe's support for stability and de-escalation in the region.

peace that would enhance regional and global security through a lasting agreement that takes into account the security interests of the region's countries and adheres to the principle of respecting the internal affairs of states.

Kuwait welcomed the agreement and commended the role played by Pakistan and Qatar, along with other nations, which contributed to bridging the gaps and creating the conditions for reaching this important understanding.

Kuwait foreign affairs ministry reiterated in a statement its support for all efforts aimed at resolving disputes and conflicts peacefully, in accordance with the principles of international law and the Charter of the United Nations.

In light of the announced agreement, the United Arab Emirates emphasised the importance of prioritising dialogue and diplomacy and adhering to international law to enhance security and stability in the region.

ing point towards strengthening mutual trust, establishing new foundations for co-operation, creating a supportive environment for peace, and advancing diplomatic efforts aimed at addressing various regional issues, thus positively impacting the security and stability of the Middle East region.

Lebanon's President Joseph Aoun praised the agreement and its emphasis on halting military actions and de-escalation in the region, including in Lebanon.

In a statement issued by the Lebanese Presidency, Aoun noted the memorandum's respect for Lebanese sovereignty and its recognition that Lebanon's stability and security are integral to any serious effort to consolidate stability in the region.

He expressed his gratitude to all the countries and entities that contributed to the completion of this memorandum, and to everyone who worked to include Lebanon in the efforts aimed at ending the escalation and halting military operations on all fronts.

Jordan also welcomed the agreement, considering it "an important step towards restoring regional and international security and stability".

In a statement issued yesterday, Jordan's ministry of foreign affairs expressed the kingdom's appreciation for the efforts exerted by Pakistan, Qatar, and other brotherly and friendly countries to reach the agreement, and for the positive response of the US and Iran to these efforts.

The League of Arab States welcomed the announcement of the agreement, expressing its hope that this development would constitute a significant step towards definitively ending Iranian and Israeli aggression against Arab territories.

The statement emphasised that any final agreement reached must respect the sovereignty, unity, and territorial integrity of Arab states and take into account legitimate Arab demands for achieving security in the region.

It also warned against Israel's continued attempts to undermine the agreement and perpetuate a state of perpetual war.

The Arab Parliament also welcomed the agreement, commending the efforts of Qatar and Pakistan, as well as all Arab and international efforts that contributed to bridging the gaps and supporting the diplomatic endeavours that led to this agreement. - QNA

Oman's Cabinet welcomes US-Iran agreement

Oman's Cabinet has welcomed the understanding reached between the United States and Iran. During its meeting, chaired by Sultan Haitham bin Tariq, the Cabinet expressed appreciation for regional and international efforts, particularly the role played by the Gulf Co-operation Council (GCC) countries and Pakistan in supporting regional security and stability. In the meeting, Sultan Haitham affirmed his country's balanced and neutral role, its support for the principles of justice and law, and its

commitment to the safety and security of maritime navigation and freedom of passage in its territorial waters in the Strait of Hormuz, in accordance with international law. He also stressed the importance of continuing efforts and integrating national and regional action, including joint Gulf action among the GCC states, to mitigate the negative impacts of events unfolding in the region and ensure a high level of preparedness for response and co-ordination. - QNA

New Zealand's Foreign Minister Winston Peters described the agreement as "pivotal and constructive", considering it an important step towards reducing tensions and promoting stability in a region of vital importance to global economic security.

Saudi Arabia welcomed the agreement, calling for a lasting settlement that takes into account the security interests of the countries in the region.

In a statement, the Saudi ministry of foreign affairs commended the mediation efforts undertaken by Pakistan and Qatar, and the positive response of the US and Iran to these efforts.

Saudi Arabia emphasised the importance of restoring security and freedom of navigation in the Strait of Hormuz to its state prior to February 28.

It also expressed its aspiration to achieve

A statement issued by the UAE ministry of foreign affairs highlighted the importance of full commitment to the agreement's provisions, ensuring an immediate and comprehensive cessation of hostilities in the region, respect for the sovereignty of states and the principles of good neighborliness, strict adherence to international law, and the protection of maritime routes and freedom of international navigation, including guaranteeing the smooth flow of traffic through the Strait of Hormuz.

In the same vein, Egypt considered the agreement a highly significant development that would restore security and stability at both the regional and international levels.

Egypt's ministry of foreign affairs expressed in a statement its hope that this agreement would constitute a major turn-

US-Iran deal: Qatar's quiet diplomacy shines again

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His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani made numerous intensive contacts with the two parties to the crisis - U S President Donald Trump and Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian - as well as with leaders of Arab, Islamic and other foreign countries.

These were complemented by a series of meetings, visits and encounters by HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani, reflecting Qatar's active presence in managing the region's complex files.

As efforts accelerated, His Highness the Amir spoke by telephone to Trump on June 11, reviewing the results of consultations and understandings between Washington and Tehran that had advanced the initial understandings between them.

The US president confirmed that the understandings had been approved by the parties concerned, with the participation and support of a number of countries, including Qatar, while work continued to complete the final procedures ahead of announcing the framework agreement.

HE Sheikh Mohammed also held a telephone call on Saturday with Pakistan's Prime Minister Muhammad Shahbaz Sharif, reviewing bilateral co-operation and the latest regional developments, in-

cluding Pakistani stellar mediation efforts to reduce escalation.

He expressed Qatar's great satisfaction at the progress made and at the Pakistani mediation's announcement that it had reached the final text of the peace agreement, reiterating Doha's full support for those efforts to end the crisis peacefully.

Qatar's role evolved beyond traditional mediation into an integrated diplomatic path based on building trust between the parties, facilitating direct and indirect communication channels, and supporting regional mediation efforts - particularly those led by Pakistan - which helped create a more flexible and open negotiating environment.

In a statement to the Qatar News Agency (QNA), Qatari political analyst Dr Abdullah al-Otaibi underlined Qatar's important role in supporting efforts to reach the framework MoU, which was led by Pakistan.

He said that Qatar's foreign policy was rooted in mediation to resolve conflicts through peaceful diplomatic means, an approach it had remained keen to support worldwide and not just in the region.

Al-Otaibi said that Qatar's cumulative experience in mediation had helped facilitate the negotiations between Washington and Tehran, pointing to the confidence it enjoys from the international community on the strength of its

Erdogan, Starmer laud Qatar's role

From Page 1

"(Turkiye) ... will continue to support all efforts aimed at establishing peace, stability and prosperity in our region, and contribute to lasting solutions based on diplomacy and international law," the Turkish president said.

Starmer, in a statement issued yesterday, called the agreement a very important step towards ending the war, ensuring regional stability and reopening the Strait of Hormuz.

He praised the efforts of international mediators, foremost among them Pakistan and Qatar, alongside other parties that helped push the negotiations forward.

The prime minister stressed the need to focus on full implementation of the MoU to ensure the reopening of the strait - and its continued, permanent opening - as well as the finalising of the details of the nuclear agreement.

"We stand ready to support the technical talks that will now begin. Our priority is that this becomes a durable and lasting peace, and we will work with international partners to support that," Starmer stated.

record across various negotiating tracks.

The MoU, he added, was a step in the right direction, and what was now required was adherence to its terms to end the war, move towards sustainable peace and prioritise reason over escalation.

Qatar's good offices have been widely welcomed by the United Nations and numerous countries, organisations and bodies concerned with peace and conflict resolution.

The latest effort extends a record that includes the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur and mediation

touching Lebanon, Gaza, Yemen, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Afghanistan, among agreements that have secured family reunifications and the release of prisoners, detainees and journalists in various parts of the world.

With the framework agreement signed and technical talks on its implementation under way, the international community must now work together to ensure its success, so that it may evolve into a final accord and a sustainable peace that guarantees both regional stability and global peace. - QNA

Shura seeks curbs on junk food marketing

From Page 1

HE al-Ghanim said childhood obesity had become a serious health and societal challenge, with psychological and social effects extending into later life.

He noted that Qatar, led by His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani, attaches great importance to health and quality of life in line with Qatar National Vision 2030, but added that the global spread of the phenomenon required concerted action across all relevant stakeholders.

Presenting the committee's report, the chairman of the Shura Council's Committee on Health, Public Services and Environment Affairs, Abdullah bin Nasser bin Turki al-Subaie, said the panel had held several meetings, reviewed data and studies and heard from officials before concluding that closer co-ordination among relevant entities and stronger preventive and awareness programmes were needed (see report on Page 2).

Earlier in the session, the Shura Council welcomed the announcement of a memorandum of understanding between the United States and Iran aimed at resolving outstanding issues between the two sides, including guarantees for freedom of navi-

gation in the Strait of Hormuz.

It expressed hope the agreement would bolster regional security and stability, and praised Qatar's role in supporting dialogue and rapprochement between the parties.

The Shura Council approved the minutes of its previous meeting, read by HE the Secretary-General Nayef bin Mohammed al-Mahmoud, at the start of proceedings.

HE al-Ghanim also told members that a proposal on regulating wedding ceremonies and curbing accompanying practices, submitted by a number of members, had been referred to the Committee on Social Affairs, Labour and Housing.

The Shura Council additionally reviewed reports on its delegation's participation in the 16th session of the Asian Parliamentary Assembly in Manama in January and the 2026 Parliamentary Hearing of the Inter-Parliamentary Union at the UN headquarters in New York in February.

HE the Speaker briefed members on his participation in the 39th Conference of the Arab Inter-Parliamentary Union, held virtually under the theme of an Arab parliamentary vision for a more stable and sustainable future.



AZF opens registration for its Summer Camp

Aspire Zone Foundation (AZF) has announced the opening of registration for its highly anticipated Summer Camp, one of its flagship annual programmes dedicated to children.

Since its launch in 2017, the camp has established itself as a comprehensive platform that combines sports, educational, and recreational activities designed to engage and inspire young participants. The camp is open to boys and girls aged 6 to 14 years and offers a dynamic schedule packed with sports activities, educational workshops, and field trips to some of Doha's most prominent landmarks.

The camp will take place from July 5 to 30, Sunday to Thursday, between 8am and 1pm. Activities for boys will be held at the Aspire Dome, while girls' activities will take place at the Ladies Sports Hall.

Ahmed Mohammed al-Hassan, Events and Venues director, said: "Year after year, we open our world-class facilities to children from across the community, driven by our firm belief in the importance of instilling a culture of sports and healthy living among younger generations. Through this camp, we aim to help build a healthier, more active, and more aware generation."

Parents can easily register their children by visiting Aspire Zone Foundation's official website: www.aspirezone.qa

Registration can be completed online, and early registration is highly recommended due to the limited number of available

places. Registration opened on June 12 and will remain available through AZF's website until all places are filled.

The programme features a broad range of activities tailored to different interests and age groups. Boys will have the opportunity to participate in shooting, football, basketball, volleyball, e-sports and gaming activities, swimming, martial arts and fitness sessions.

Girls can take part in shooting, arts and creative activities, swimming, e-sports and gaming activities, basketball, volleyball and fitness programmes.

In addition to the regular activities, Tuesdays will feature sports and educational programmes delivered in collaboration with several organisations, including the Ministry of Endowments and Islamic Affairs, Qatar Red Crescent Society, Qatar Sports for All Federation and the General Directorate of Traffic. Thursdays will be dedicated to educational and recreational field trips to some of Doha's leading attractions.

The summer camp will conclude with a closing ceremony on July 30. This year's edition is supported by Jetour as the main sponsor, Qatar Sports for All Federation as the main partner, Gomunication as the media sponsor, Baladna as the event sponsor and Midan Al Hadaf Shooting Range as the event partner.

Further information and registration details are available on Aspire Zone Foundation's website at www.aspirezone.qa

Funding initiative to advance US-Qatar strategic partnership

The US embassy in Doha announced a \$200,000 funding programme aimed at strengthening US-Qatar co-operation in technology, economic development and security, inviting eligible organisations and individuals to submit proposals by July 16.

The Notice of Funding Opportunity, launched under the US-Qatar Strategic Partnership Initiative: Economic, Technology, and Security Co-operation (Freedom250 Commemorative), will provide grants ranging from approximately \$10,000 to \$100,000 for projects that promote bilateral co-operation in strategic sectors.

Successful projects are expected to begin on September 15 and be completed within six to 18 months. The opportunity is not intended for traditional cultural programming.

The initiative will prioritise programmes that position US technology, standards and companies as Qatar's preferred partners in sectors such as energy, artificial intelligence, advanced manufacturing and critical infrastructure. It also seeks proposals that demonstrate how open information, academic freedom and free inquiry can foster innovation and create opportunities in Qatar, while strengthening understanding of the role of US-Qatar defence and security cooperation in supporting the country's sovereignty, stability and strategic autonomy.

In addition, the programme encourages projects marking the 250th anniversary of US independence by highlighting American innovation, resilience and technological achievements and their connection to bilateral co-operation.



Applicants are required to identify a clearly defined target audience and demonstrate how their proposed activities would advance US-Qatar strategic objectives. Priority audiences include Qatari government officials and policymakers, private sector leaders, security and defence professionals, university students and early-career professionals, entrepreneurs and technology stakeholders, as well as educational and research institutions.

Eligible applicants include non-profit and community service organisations registered and operating in Qatar, including think tanks and civil society organisations with relevant programming experience; Qatari citizens and residents based in the country; public and non-profit private educational institutions registered in Qatar; US-based public and non-profit private educational institutions working with affiliated institutions in Qatar; and

Qatari government entities.

For-profit entities are not eligible to apply. Cost sharing or matching is encouraged but not required.

The deadline for applications is July 16, at 5pm, Doha time. Questions about the solicitation must be submitted to Dohagrants@state.gov

A bidding conference will be held by conference call on June 17, to answer questions from potential applicants. All application materials must be submitted by e-mail to Dohagrants@state.gov

Applicants must include the funding opportunity title and funding opportunity number, OFOP0002777, in the subject line of the e-mail.

Further details, including application requirements, eligibility criteria and mandatory forms, are available in the full funding announcement published on the US Embassy in Doha website, Grants.gov and MyGrants.gov.

Ooredoo named Official Telecom Sponsor of Visit Qatar's summer campaign

Ooredoo announced its role as the Official Telecom Sponsor of Visit Qatar's summer campaign "Hala Summer" – reinforcing its dedication to supporting national initiatives that enhance Qatar's position as a leading regional and global destination.

Running until the end of September, Hala Summer brings together a diverse mix of entertainment, hospitality and leisure experiences – designed to appeal to families, friends, and adventure seekers across Qatar and the GCC.

The campaign also features the Kids Go Free offer, allowing children to stay, dine, and play for free, further enhancing Qatar's appeal as a seamless and value-

driven summer destination.

As part of this collaboration, Ooredoo will support several of the campaign's highlight events, including Qatar Toy Festival, and Colorverse – immersive and family-friendly attractions expected to draw significant audiences this summer.

Sabah Rabbiah al-Kuwari, senior director Marketing Communications at Ooredoo Qatar said: "Through our involvement, we aim to enhance the overall visitor experience while reinforcing Ooredoo's role as an enabler of digital connectivity and innovation in Qatar."

Ahmed al-Binali, director of Festivals and Events at Visit Qatar, said: "This partnership reflects our shared

commitment to enhancing the summer experience for visitors and residents alike. Through "Hala Summer", Visit Qatar has brought together stakeholders nationwide to deliver a seamless summer programme featuring diverse experiences, exclusive offers, and family-friendly attractions, further strengthening Qatar's position as a preferred summer destination for those seeking memorable leisure and entertainment experiences across the country."

This sponsorship reflects Ooredoo's ongoing commitment to supporting Visit Qatar and the events ecosystem, in line with the country's vision to become a vibrant, year-round destination.

HEC Paris Doha celebrates Middle East graduates at main campus ceremony

HEC Paris celebrated the achievements of its Middle East graduates at its annual commencement held on June 13 at its main campus near Paris.

The ceremony honoured graduates from HEC Paris, Doha's Executive MBA (EMBA) programmes, bringing together faculty, alumni, partners and distinguished guests from across the Gulf region to recognise academic excellence, leadership, and global impact.

The Class of 2026 reflected the strength and diversity of HEC Paris, Doha's executive education ecosystem. A total of 144 participants graduated across four Executive MBA cohorts, including 26% Qatari nationals and 34% women. This year, approximately 430 participants and family members signed up to travel to Paris and join the ceremony.

Ahead of the official commencement, HEC Paris, Doha hosted a dedicated GCC reception at the HEC Alumni Association building in Paris, uniting graduates, alumni, ambassador delegates, and



senior representatives from the region. At this special moment, the institution highlighted the growing influence of its regional community, with graduates advancing into senior roles and driving positive impact within their organisations and economies.

Stepping into a global alumni network of more than 80,000 professionals, these leaders join a powerful community of entrepreneurs and changemakers shaping industries, advancing innovation, and contributing to the future of the region and beyond.

Invest Qatar Tender Announcement

The Investment Promotion Agency Qatar ("Invest Qatar") would like to invite competent Service Providers for the following open Tender:

Subject: Invest Qatar is seeking the services of qualified Media Agency firm to provide **Media Buying and Digital Marketing services**. The purpose is appointment of a specialised digital marketing agency promoting Qatar as a favorable destination in a global investment landscape.

Tender No.	Non-refundable Tender Fee (QAR)	Tender Bond (QAR)	Bid Submission Closing Date
RFP-2026-I-0033-M	3,000.00	272,000.00	26-July-2026

In accordance with the following conditions:

- The Tender Documents will be available from **18 June 2026 to 25 June 2026**.
- The Tender Documents will be released electronically only after the submission of the following requirements to ipa.tenders@invest.qa:
 - Deposit slip for the tender fee mentioned above and stamped by Commercial Bank
 - Copy of the Authorisation Letter signed by the authorised person from the company
 - Copy of the Commercial Registration (CR)
 - Copy of the Business License and Computer ID
- The non-refundable tender fee shall be deposited to:

Beneficiary Account Name:	Investment Promotion Agency LLC
Bank Name:	The Commercial Bank (P.S.Q.C)
Bank account number:	4010-065065-201
IBAN	QA63CBQA000000004010065065201

- The Tender Bond must be valid for 120 days from the closing date. The original copy of the Tender Bond must be submitted to the Invest Qatar Procurement Department. Bids submitted without a Tender Bond will be rejected.
- Bids must be valid for 120 days from the closing date and should be submitted in two (2) separate files; Technical and Commercial.
- Invest Qatar's Tendering terms and condition apply.

For further information or inquiry, please send your queries to ipa.tenders@invest.qa



الاولية
AL-AWALIA

Invitation to Tender

Tender / Auction Number	Subject	Tender / Auction Document Fees (Non-refundable)	Tender / Auction Bond	Tender/Auction Offer	Closing Date
AL-AWALIA/TD/2026/19	Supply and Delivery of Spare Parts for GTSU Hyundai Crane Grabs for Qatar Primary Materials Company ("Supplies")	500 QAR	10,000 QAR	Two Bids (Technical & Commercial)	23 June 2026 01:00 PM

In accordance with the following conditions:

- Tender Documents can be collected online by sending email to tender.doc@qpmc.qa along with requested documents in point No.2.
- Tender Documents will be shared only after delivery of Deposit Slip Stamped by Commercial Bank along with Authorization Letter to the delegated person signed by authorized person as per Computer ID, Copy of commercial Registration (CR), Business License and Computer ID.
- Bids are to be submitted in two sealed (in red wax) envelopes (Technical & Commercial) and addressed to Tenders and Auction Committee. Tender reference number and subject are to be clearly written on the envelopes, provided that the last date for submitting bids is one o'clock in the afternoon on the closing day. Any bids submitted after this date and time will not be accepted.
- Tenderers shall submit the proposals to our head office located at Lusail, Building No. 108, St. No. 303, Burj Marina Tower, 17th Floor before the closing date. (To get the map of the new building, please scan the QR code below)
- Tender Fees are non-refundable and can be transferred online to Account of Qatar Primary Material Company- Bank A/C, (4450-65111-006) at Commercial Bank of Qatar. **IBAN No. (QA 18 CBQA 0000 0000 4050 651111 006)**. Tender reference number and subject are to be written on the deposit slip.
- Tender Bond (Bank Guarantee/Manager Cheque) must be valid for 120 days after closing date and must be submitted in separate & sealed envelope along with technical bid and a photograph is to be attached with commercial bid. Bids without tender bond will be rejected.
- Bids must be valid for 90 days after the closing date.
- Any queries relating to the Tender Documents must only be raised in writing, preferably by email, to the address specified in the respective Tender Document. Any response issued by Qatar Primary Material Company will be in the form of a question and answer and will be distributed to all Tenderers without revealing the identity of the originator of the query(ies) in the form of Tender Bulletins. Queries must be received at the address specified in the respective ITT Documentation at least five (5) calendar days prior to the Tender closing date. Any queries received after such a date will be ignored.
- The amount of the Performance Bond to be provided by the awarded bidder is (10% of the contract value) and its validity period must remain valid under the contract implementation period and the guarantee period according to the terms of the tender.
- The Technical Bids shall be opened within one week of the closing date.
- Qatar Primary Material Company has the right, during the contract period, to request an increase or decrease in the amounts of the items, works or services by a percentage not exceeding (20%) of the contract value with the same conditions and prices, provided that the increase is of the same type of contracted items, works or services.
- Qatar Primary Material Company's tendering terms and conditions apply.
- For any inquiries about the tender except collecting the documents, please contact tender@qpmc.qa
- Location of the new building



For further Inquiry, please send your queries at Fax Number: **44479559** or email to tender@qpmc.qa or visit Qatar Primary Material Company website @ www.qpmc.qa

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QF's Ability Friendly Programme summer camp open for registration

Qatar Foundation's (QF) Ability Friendly Programme Summer Camp is back and there is still time to be part of it. The programme part of QF Pre-University Education offers tailored sport and developmental activities and opportunities for children and adults with disabilities across Qatar, reflecting QF's commitment to ensuring everyone can enjoy and benefit from sport.

Its summer camp runs from July 5-30 at Education City and is open to children and young people with disabilities aged between five and 18. Divided into two sessions, each lasting two weeks, it provides a range of engaging, inclusive recreational activities, including football, basketball, swimming, and horse riding. In addition to the sporting fun, activities include arts and crafts, pottery, science, and cooking.

Spaces are still available for the second camp session, tak-



ing place from July 19-30 from 10am-3pm each day. Registration costs QR2,500 and can be done

through the Education City App, by e-mailing abilityfriendly@qf.org.qa, or by calling 71902104.

Katara inaugurates ‘Qabasat’ exhibition

QNA
Doha

The Katara Cultural Village on Monday held an inauguration ceremony for the “Qabasat” Exhibition, presented by Syrian artist Dr Wassim al-Hamdou.

Attending the ceremony were Katara Director-General Dr Khalid Ibrahim al-Sulaiti and Charge d’Affaires at the Embassy of the Syrian Arab Republic to the State of Qatar, Dr Bilal Turkia, alongside excellencies, ministers, members of the diplomatic corps, and those interested in cultural and artistic affairs.

Running until June 29, the exhibition welcomes visitors who are keen on masterpieces of fine art and Arabic calligraphy to have a glimpse of this outstanding, innovative experience.

The exhibition showcases a collection of artworks that draw inspiration from the masterpieces of Arabic calligraphy and evoke aspects of Arab and Islamic culture through an epochal artistic vision that fuses authenticity with innovation.

Speaking at the opening ceremony, Dr Bilal Turkia emphasised that the show-



cased artworks demonstrate the values of beauty, knowledge, and identity that characterise Arab and Islamic culture.

This artist has succeeded in blending the authenticity of Arabic calligraphy with the spirit of contemporary art, offering a creative experience that reflects human and cultural ethos through innovative and influential techniques, he pointed out.

Dr Bilal Turkia added that the exhibition holds special significance as a distinguished showcase of Syrian art and culture in the State of Qatar, especially during this pivotal phase in Syria’s history.

This showcase, he noted, demonstrates the depth of brotherly relations between the State of Qatar and the Syrian Arab Republic, as well as the evolving cultural co-operation between the two nations, contributing to the strengthening of people-to-people connections and understanding.

For his part, the artist Dr Wassim al-



Hamdou clarified that the exhibition is an important milestone in an amalgamation of exhibitions he has staged in several Arab nations.

The corollary of holding this exhibition at Katara, al-Hamdou noted, is that Katara is one of the most pre-eminent cultural and artistic beacons in the region, a pioneering platform that hosts innovation and deepens people-to-people cultural dialogue.

Dr al-Hamdou highlighted that his artistic experience showcases Arabic calligraphy through his personal style, stemming from his foremost penchant for this inveterate art.

The artist noted that most of the works were executed using ink-based techniques, combined with a range of materials and mixed-media approaches, alongside the incorporation of acrylic paint in selected works as an experimental layer that enriches the pictorial surface and introduces additional visual depth.

WCM-Q wins bronze at 2026 MENASA Merit Awards

Weill Cornell Medicine-Qatar (WCM-Q) has been named a bronze winner of the 2026 MENASA (Middle East, North Africa and South Asia) Merit Awards in the Student Success category.

The MENASA Area of NASPA was established to foster engagement and collaboration among student affairs professionals and to strengthen services to students and campuses through a range of resources and activities.

The awards cover five categories critical to student success and the continued growth of the student affairs profession: Student Success, Collaborative Partnerships, Innovative Practices, Research, and Dedicated Professional (Commitment to the MENASA Area).

Titled “From Aspiration to Identity: Building Tomorrow’s Physicians Through Mentorships,” WCM-Q’s award-winning submission focused on its Alumni Student Mentorship Programme, an innovative pre-medical division initiative designed to support



the professional identity development of foundation and pre-medical students. It was established in 2024 by Dr Rachid Bendriss, associate dean for foundation, student outreach and educational development programmes at WCM-Q, and is coordinated by Dina Bamieh, student programmes specialist at WCM-Q.

The programme connects new students with alumni mentors representing a wide range of specialties and experiences in Qatar and internationally. It provides early exposure to career pathways, fosters professionalism in medical education, and supports students in de-

veloping their professional identity.

Commenting on her experience, pre-med 1 student Noof AlMalik said: “The mentorship programme has been a staple in my journey at WCM-Q ever since I started my foundation year in 2024. While I was somewhat hesitant to become a mentee early on, it became one of the most influential aspects of my educational journey.”

WCM-Q alumna Dr Ghadeer Abdelwahab, a resident in emergency medicine at Hamad General Hospital, said: “I am truly grateful for the opportunity to be part of this incredible programme and to mentor such talented students.

The mentees have impressed me with their professionalism, initiative and eagerness to learn. Their dedication and enthusiasm for medicine have been both inspiring and a powerful reminder of why I chose this career.”

Dr Bendriss said: “We are truly honoured to receive this recognition, which reflects our commitment to supporting students from the start of their academic journey and helping them build their professional identity and excel in higher education. I sincerely thank our dedicated alumni mentors, whose contributions have been central to the programme’s success.”

Qatar participates in 12th meeting of GCC Security Media Awareness



The State of Qatar, represented by the Ministry of Interior, participated via video conferencing yesterday in the 12th meeting of the Gulf Co-operation Council (GCC) Technical Team for Security Media Awareness. The Ministry of Interior’s delegation was led by Assistant Director of the Public Relations Department, Colonel Dr Jabr Hamoud Jabr al-Nuaimi. The meeting discussed various agenda items and adopted a series of recommendations aimed at enhancing co-ordination and co-operation in security media across GCC countries. (QNA)



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Medicine is undergoing a profound transformation. For decades, healthcare has relied on a "one-size-fits-all" approach, where treatments and preventive strategies were designed for the average patient. Today, advances in genomics are changing that model, ushering in an era of precision medicine and at the center of this revolution is Whole Genome Sequencing (WGS).

Whole Genome Sequencing is a cutting edge technology that deciphers an individual's complete genetic code, analyzing all 3 Billion DNA base pairs that make up the human genome. Unlike conventional genetic tests that examine only selected genes, WGS provides a comprehensive view of a person's genetic makeup, enabling clinicians to identify inherited disorders, predict disease risks, personalize treatments, and improve health outcomes.

Understanding the Blueprint of Life
Every cell in the human body contains DNA the biological instruction manual that determines how our bodies grow, function, and respond to disease. Changes or mutations in these genetic instructions can influence an individual's susceptibility to illnesses ranging from rare inherited disorders to common conditions such as cancer, diabetes, and cardiovascular disease.

Whole Genome Sequencing allows scientists and clinicians to examine the entire genome in a single test, uncovering valuable insights that would otherwise remain hidden.

By understanding a person's unique genetic profile, healthcare providers can move beyond reactive care and adopt a more proactive and preventive approach.

Transforming Disease Diagnosis
One of the most significant benefits of WGS lies in its ability to diagnose complex and rare diseases.

Millions of patients worldwide experience lengthy "diagnostic odysseys," undergoing years of medical consultations and multiple tests without receiving a definitive diagnosis. Whole Genome Sequencing can dramatically shorten this journey by identifying the underlying genetic cause of unexplained conditions.

In newborns and children with developmental delays, congenital anomalies, or rare metabolic disorders, WGS has proven particularly valuable, often delivering answers that traditional diagnostic methods fail to provide.

For families, an accurate diagnosis not only guides treatment decisions but also offers clarity, emotional relief, and important information for future family planning.

Revolutionizing Cancer Care
Cancer is fundamentally a disease of genetic alterations. Every tumor carries unique genetic changes that influence how it develops and responds to treatment.

Whole Genome Sequencing enables oncologists to identify these changes with unprecedented precision, helping them select targeted therapies tailored to the molecular profile of each patient's cancer. This personalized approach can improve treatment effectiveness, minimize unnecessary side effects, and support better clinical outcomes.

Additionally, WGS can identify inherited cancer risks, allowing individuals with a family history of cancer to take preventive measures and undergo enhanced screening programs.

Advancing Drug Safety and Effectiveness
Not all patients respond to medications in the same way. While some experience significant benefits, others may encounter adverse effects or limited therapeutic response.

Through pharmacogenomics, the study of how genes influence drug response, Whole Genome Sequencing helps clinicians determine which medications are likely to work best for each individual. This information can reduce trial-and-error prescribing, improve medication safety, and optimize treatment strategies for conditions such as cardiovascular disease, mental health disorders, infectious diseases, and chronic illnesses.

Strengthening Preventive Healthcare
Healthcare systems worldwide are shifting their focus from treating disease to preventing it. Whole Genome Sequencing supports this transition by identifying genetic predispositions before symptoms appear. Individuals found to have an elevated risk for certain conditions can benefit from personalized prevention plans, lifestyle modifications, and early screening interventions. Early detection remains one of the most effective ways to reduce disease burden, healthcare costs, and mortality rates.

As genomic knowledge expands, preventive genomics may become an essential component of routine healthcare.

Addressing Ethical and Privacy Considerations
Despite its enormous potential, Whole Genome Sequencing raises important ethical questions related to data privacy, informed consent, and equitable access.

Genomic information is deeply personal and requires robust safeguards to ensure confidentiality and responsible use. Healthcare providers, policymakers, and technology developers must work together to establish clear regulations that protect individuals while promoting scientific advancement. Equally important is ensuring that genomic medicine remains accessible and affordable, preventing disparities in healthcare delivery.

The Road Ahead
The cost of genome sequencing has declined dramatically over the past two decades, making this powerful technology increasingly accessible.

Experts predict that Whole Genome Sequencing will soon become an integral part of routine medical care, supporting earlier diagnoses, more effective treatments, and personalized prevention strategies.

As healthcare continues to evolve, understanding an individual's genetic blueprint will become as important as measuring blood pressure or checking cholesterol levels.

Whole Genome Sequencing is more than a technological breakthrough, it represents a fundamental shift toward smarter, more precise, and more personalized healthcare.

The future of medicine is no longer just about treating disease. It is about predicting, preventing, and personalizing care and the genome holds the key.



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Techno Blue Signs Distribution Agreement with TP-Link to Expand Networking Products in Qatar

Techno Blue, one of Qatar's leading electronics retailers and distributors for consumer electronics and IT products, has signed a distribution agreement with TP-Link to expand the availability of TP-Link's networking products and switches across the Qatar market.

The signing ceremony took place in Doha between Sheikh Nasser Hamad K A Al Thani, Chairman of Techno Blue, and Mr. Wilson, Country Manager - Gulf, TP-Link, in the presence of senior representatives from both organizations.

This collaboration marks a key milestone in strengthening TP-Link's presence in Qatar. Through Techno Blue's strong retail network, distribution capabilities, B2B reach, and online platform Electronyat.qa, TP-Link products will become more accessible to customers, businesses, and channel partners across the country. Techno Blue currently operates 9 showrooms across Qatar, offering customers a trusted and convenient shopping experience.

Speaking on the occasion, Sheikh Nasser Hamad K A Al Thani, Chairman of Techno Blue, said:

"We are happy to partner with TP-Link for the distribution of networking and IT products in Qatar. Our nationwide presence across online, retail, distribution, and B2B sectors will help TP-Link strengthen its market reach in Qatar. TP-Link is known for its latest networking technologies, and we believe this partnership will bring great value to customers across the country."

Mr. Wilson, Country Manager - Gulf, TP-Link, said:

"We are pleased to collaborate with Techno Blue, a trusted and established name in Qatar's electronics and IT distribution sector. This partnership will support TP-Link's growth in the Qatar market and allow us to offer our innovative networking solutions to a wider customer base."

The partnership is expected to provide customers in Qatar with a wider range of TP-Link products, including routers, switches, networking devices, and smart connectivity solutions for homes, offices, and businesses.



Techno Blue Signs Distribution Agreement with TP-Link to Expand Networking Products in Qatar



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From left to right: Mr. Girish Valeri, HOD - B2B; Mr. Salam, Deputy General Manager - Techno Blue; Sheikh Nasser Hamad K A Al Thani, Chairman - Techno Blue; Mr. Wilson, Country Manager - Gulf, TP-Link; Mr. Ratheesh, Regional Sales Manager Consumer - ME, TP-Link; and Mr. Vineeth Mohan, Manager - Qatar, TP-Link, during the signing ceremony between Techno Blue and TP-Link in Doha.

CMU-Q secures Library of the Future award for AI initiative

Carnegie Mellon University in Qatar (CMU-Q) Library has been named the recipient of the 2026 Library of the Future Award by the American Library Association (ALA) and Information Today Inc

The university is being recognised for its groundbreaking programme to help the university community navigate the rapidly evolving landscape of artificial intelligence in higher education. CMU-Q is a Qatar Foundation partner university.

Sponsored annually by the ALA and Information Today, Inc, the award honours innovative planning, application, or development of information technology programs within a library setting.

The AI2@CMU-Q programme was developed to address growing student uncertainty surrounding the ethical boundaries of incorporating AI technologies into academic work.

The initiative combined a practical institutional policy framework with an immersive, student-centric education programme. Led by Reya Saliba, instruction and outreach librarian, the initiative was a collaboration between the CMU-Q Library, faculty in the arts



Reya Saliba leads a faculty panel for the CMU-Q community during AI2@CMU-Q week.

and sciences, the Student Affairs team and Student Majlis.

At the heart of the initiative is an intuitive, three-level AI-use framework utilising a traffic-light colour system: Green: AI tools are welcome; Yellow: Use AI tools with caution and within specific guidelines and Red: No AI assistance is allowed.

This clear visual system has proven highly effective in helping students understand expectations across different assignments.

Michael Trick, dean of the CMU-Q, noted: “The CMU-Q Library has always embraced digital tools and new technologies that support learning. In this age of generative AI, the library team has

been integral in our campus-wide approach to AI. I speak on behalf of the entire CMU-Q community when I congratulate the AI2@CMU-Q team on this award, including the faculty, staff and students across campus who worked with the library to support learning and education in an AI-driven landscape.”

The rollout of the initiative achieved campus-wide engagement through strong collaboration among faculty, staff, students, and the library, including a five-day interactive campaign that addressed multiple dimensions of AI literacy. The week featured diverse perspectives on AI integration, including critical discussions on academic integrity, how AI systems function, faculty expectations, and the hands-on evaluation of AI tools.

“The questions surrounding AI are not solely technical questions,” Saliba said. “They are also questions about ethics, learning, information literacy, and human judgment. Libraries are uniquely positioned to help students and faculty navigate those conversations, bringing together diverse perspectives and creating spaces for thoughtful exploration.”



MoJ, HBKU ink pact to advance legal research

QNA
Doha

The Ministry of Justice (MoJ) and Hamad Bin Khalifa University (HBKU) have signed a co-operation agreement to strengthen collaboration in legal research, professional training, and capacity building, supporting the development of the country’s legal system and the goals of Qatar National Vision 2030.

The agreement was signed by MoJ’s Assistant Undersecretary for Shared Services Khamis Mohammed al-Kuwari, and HBKU Vice-President for Administration and Finance Eng Hamad Mohammed al-Kuwari, in the presence of HE Minister of Justice and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Ibrahim bin Ali al-Mohannadi and HBKU President Dr Ahmad M Hasnah.

The partnership will focus on specialised training programs, applied legal research, joint academic and professional events, and co-operation in areas including public policy, institutional innovation, legal technology, translation, and artificial intelligence.

HE Minister of Justice and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Ibrahim bin Ali al-Mohannadi said the agreement reflects strong co-operation between the government and academic institutions, emphasising that investing in national legal talent and specialised legal research is key to strengthening the rule of law, justice, and enhancing good governance.

He added that the ministry places great importance on academic partnerships that help develop qualified Qatari professionals capable of keeping pace with legislative and technological developments. HBKU President Dr Ahmad M Hasnah welcomed the agreement, describing it as a model of collaboration between academia and government. He said the partnership will support joint initiatives in education, training, and research to enhance the capabilities and future readiness of Qatar’s legal sector.

The agreement aligns with the Ministry of Justice’s 2025-2030 strategy to develop human capital, strengthen the legal and legislative environment, and support sustainable development goals.

QT opens registration for tour guide training initiative

Qatar Tourism (QT), through its Service Excellence Academy and in partnership with Qatar Youth Hostels, has opened registration for its Tour Guide Training Programme Series, inviting tourism enthusiasts and community members to develop their skills and help enhance visitors’ experiences across the country. The initiative aims to attract local talent with a passion for tourism and equip them with the skills and knowledge to become ambassadors who share Qatar’s unique story and culture with visitors from around the world.

Designed as a continuous development pathway, the programme caters to multiple age groups and experience levels, ranging from introducing children to tourism concepts and nurturing young talent, to licensing professional tour guides and empowering experienced practitioners to mentor future generations.

This initiative aligns with the Human Development pillar of Qatar



National Vision 2030 and builds on the programme’s ongoing success. It marks the fourth consecutive collaboration between the two entities and includes workshops, practical training courses, and field visits delivered in partnership with Qatar Museums (QM).

The Tour Guide Training Programme – General Licensing Module will take place from July 5 to August 2, targeting 15 to 25 citizens and residents aged 18 and above. This edition also encourages the participation of retirees and senior community members, providing an opportunity to share their deep

knowledge of Qatar’s culture and tourism sector with trainees and support the development of future tour guides. Participants who successfully complete the programme will receive official tour guide licences issued by QT’s Licensing Department.

For younger participants, the Youth Tour Guide Training Programme will launch on July 18, targeting 15 to 25 participants aged 13–17. Participants will be recruited in collaboration with the Teen Centre at QM, and the programme will be delivered by graduates of the Train the Trainer initiative.

Running concurrently, the second edition of the Young Tour Guide Summer Camp 2026 will take place at KidzMondo from July 19 to August 27. The camp will host six groups of 25 children aged 8–12, featuring licensed tour guides who will share their experiences through interactive activities designed to enhance early awareness of Qatar’s tourism attractions and experiences.

These programmes are supported by the Train the Trainer – Guiding the Next Generation programme, which commenced on June 14 and will run until July 1. This programme equips a select group of trainers with the skills required to train and mentor participants in the youth initiatives, ensuring a structured and sustainable transfer of knowledge.

Through this collaborative initiative, QT and Qatar Youth Hostels continue to strengthen the tourism talent pipeline, supporting the sector’s long-term growth while inspiring future generations to contribute to the country’s tourism success.

Registration is now open for the Tour Guide Training Programme, Youth Tour Guide Programme and Young Tour Guide Programme. Interested participants can find further information and submit their applications through the respective registration links available on Qatar Tourism’s announcement platforms.

Ehsan launches awareness initiative to protect elderly rights

QNA
Doha

The Ehsan Center for Empowerment and Care of the Elderly, part of the Qatar Social Work Foundation, has launched an awareness initiative to mark the World Day of Awareness of Elder Abuse, aiming to strengthen community understanding of the rights of older persons and reinforce their protection from all forms of abuse and neglect.

The initiative seeks to highlight the importance of safeguarding older persons and promoting respect and appreciation for them as a fundamental pillar of the family and society.

Ehsan Center said the effort stems from its commitment to supporting and empowering older persons, while shedding light on



challenges they may face, including neglect, isolation, marginalisation, or any practices that compromise their dignity and right to safe and independent living.

It includes a range of awareness and media materials to be shared across social media platforms and various media outlets, with the

aim of enhancing public awareness, encouraging positive societal behavior, and fostering a safe and supportive environment for older persons. Executive Director of Ehsan Center Manal Ahmed al-Mannai stressed that protecting older persons is a social and moral responsibility requiring collective

action from individuals and institutions alike.

She said elder abuse is not merely an individual issue, but a societal one that affects human values and social cohesion, adding that the initiative aims to promote respect, dignity, and appreciation for older persons and ensure they live in safety, independence, and dignity.

She also noted that the initiative reflects the center’s mission to build a more inclusive and supportive society, and to enhance the active participation of older persons in community life in recognition of their contributions across generations.

The center called on the public and institutions to help raise awareness, confront all forms of abuse, and promote a culture of care, respect, and protection for older persons, while continuing to improve their quality of life and wellbeing.

Doha Theatre Festival set to open on June 21

By Tawfik Lamari
Staff Reporter

The 38th Doha Theatre Festival, organised by the Theatre Affairs Centre affiliated to the Ministry of Culture, will launch on June 21 and continue until June 24.

The festival will feature prominent participation from amateur theatre groups and a range of accompanying critical and documentary activities.

The Al Mayassa Theatre at the Qatar National Convention Centre will host theatrical performances starting at 8.30pm. This year’s festival features three plays by Qatari amateur theatre groups: the Doha Theatre Group presenting “Under the Rubble,” written by Yasser al-Hassan and directed by Faleh Faye; the Qatar Theatre Group presenting “The Dividing City,” written by Talib al-Doss and directed by Mohammed Yousef al-Mulla; and the Al Watan Theatre Group presenting “The Black Heel,” written and directed by Shua’il al-Kuwari.

The festival’s closing ceremony and awards presentation will take place at 8pm on June 24 at the Dukhan Hall Theatre at the Ministry of Culture building. Throughout the festival, workshops will be held immediately following the performances, bringing together critics, specialists, and theatre enthusiasts

to discuss the plays with their creators.

A daily bulletin will also be published, documenting and reviewing key critical opinions on the theatrical performances and the Qatari arts scene in general, in addition to providing behind-the-scenes coverage and interviews with participating theatre professionals.

Coinciding with the 38th edition of the Doha Theatre Festival, the Theatre Affairs Centre is publishing its annual festival book, which showcases the most prominent activities and events organised by the centre during 2026.

This year’s book includes a tribute to four prominent Qatari artists and theatre figures who have passed away, leaving behind a lasting artistic legacy: artist Mohammed al-Balm, director Talal al-Siddiqi, Dr Ahmed Abdulmalik, and artist Khalifa Ju-maan (may God have mercy on them). This tribute recognises their distinguished careers and their contributions to the cultural movement.

The Doha Theatre Festival is the oldest and most prestigious theatre festival in the region. Celebrating its 38th edition this year reaffirms its commitment to enriching the cultural landscape and presenting exceptional artistic experiences that meet the public’s aspirations and reflect the comprehensive development witnessed in Qatar.

Al Jasra seminar discusses dimensions of Zahra al-Sheikh’s novel *My Decision*

By Tawfik Lamari
Staff Reporter

Recently, Al-Jasra Cultural and Social Club organised a seminar at its headquarters in Souq Waqif to discuss the novel *My Decision* by writer and diplomat Zahra Hassan al-Sheikh, First Counsellor at the Embassy of the Republic of Djibouti in Doha.

The seminar, where Dr Faraj al-Sheikh, who presented an in-depth sociological analysis of the literary work, was attended by a few cultural and media figures.

Moderated by writer Hanan Badie, the event explored the author’s unique treatment of her characters with profound human depth and psychological understanding, particularly Nawara, the conflicted young woman, and Naeema, the strong woman.

The author presented Nawara



(From left) Hanan Badie, Dr Faraj al-Sheikh, and Zahra Hassan al-Sheikh

as a conscious victim of an oppressive family system, living with a psychological split between two contradictory personalities, while Naeema was portrayed as a strong woman, broken inside, who bravely and cautiously confronts life’s challenges.

The presentation provided a platform for a serious and extensive dialogue about the novel’s themes and human and social issues it raises. The novel was launched the recently-con-

cluded Doha International Book Fair in the city.

The timing of the seminar suggests the growing interest of readers in contemporary literature and Al-Jasra’s pioneering role in the Gulf cultural scene.

The literary evening concluded with Mohammed Salem al-Darwish, a member of the board of directors at Al-Jasra, presenting, Zahra al-Sheikh, and Dr Faraj al-Sheikh. with shields and certificates.

ANNOUNCEMENT

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Philippines Passport No. P9003987C
QID No. 28660800888

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JGSSICA MINGUEL OTADORA

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JESSICA OTADORA OLEDAN

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Starmer announces ban on social media for under-16s

AFP
London

Children under 16 will be banned from using social media in the UK, Prime Minister Keir Starmer announced yesterday, saying such platforms were making youngsters “unhappy”.

Some children’s charities welcomed the sweeping change, which is likely to trigger a major fight with US tech giants, but others warned it could make teenagers less safe online.

Starmer, likely to face a leadership challenge in the coming weeks, said social media sites were exposing children to content that is “dangerous” and “designed to be addictive”.

The ban will “include platforms like Snapchat, TikTok, YouTube, Instagram, Facebook and X” but not messaging services such as WhatsApp, the government said.

Starmer said the upcoming ban was influenced by the experience of Australia, which in December became the first nation to ban people under 16 from social media.

He added during a press conference in Downing Street that he hoped to pass the regulation by late December and for the ban to come into force in spring next year.

He suggested that YouTube Kids, Lego Play and Google Classroom would not be prohibited.

The government said in a statement it would also be considering overnight curfews and breaks in infinite scrolling for minors, and would announce more detail in July.



Prime Minister Keir Starmer poses with families involved in the consultation on online restrictions before holding a press conference at Downing Street in central London yesterday, to announce government action to protect children online. (Reuters)

Australia’s Prime Minister Anthony Albanese welcomed the move in a post on X, saying: “Social media giants operate across borders. By standing together, we can do more to hold them accountable and keep children safe online.”

Canada and France are among other countries considering similar bans, while Indonesia began enforcing its ban for users under 16 in March.

Britain’s ban could anger US President Donald Trump after the US embassy in London earlier this month came out against “broad social media bans”.

Starmer’s announcement follows a government-led consultation where British teenagers trialled social media bans and time limits on apps.

The National Society for the

Prevention of Cruelty to Children called the ban “a win” for children and parents, but insisted that it must be followed up with “robust age checks on platforms” and “an effective enforcement regime”.

Save The Children UK’s senior adviser Jeffrey DeMarco said his charity was concerned a ban “pushes children into less regulated spaces, where they are less likely to seek help when something goes wrong”.

A spokesperson for YouTube responded with a warning that such a blanket ban would push children towards “less safe services”.

The government also said it would block “harmful functions” on gaming services and live streaming platforms allowing strangers to contact children.

“Is there a situation in the of-

fine world where you would just let your child pair up with a stranger? An adult that you don’t know about? No. So we’re taking action on that,” Starmer said, without giving details.

The UK government’s consultation on the issue, which closed in late May, attracted about 116,000 contributions, making it the second-largest response ever received.

More than 83% of parents who responded said the risks posed by social media outweighed the benefits for children, with 91% backing a minimum age of 16.

The UK announcement comes a week after the government said tech giants must stop children in Britain from being able to send and receive nude images on their devices.

Britain’s interior ministry said it was giving companies, including Apple and Google, three months to introduce safety features to block children from taking and accessing naked photos on phones and tablets.

If they failed to do so, the government would introduce legislation forcing them to activate the technology, it warned.

A law change would stop children from being able to access pornography, while also making it more difficult for child abusers to target children, it said.

According to analysis by the Internet Watch Foundation charity cited by the government, 91% of online child sexual abuse reports recorded in 2024 contained self-generated content from children themselves.

Two convicted of arson on properties linked to Starmer

AFP
London

A British court yesterday convicted two men of a series of arson attacks on two houses in London and a car linked to Prime Minister Keir Starmer.

A jury at London’s Old Bailey found Roman Lavrynovych, 22, and Stanislav Carpiuc, 27, both guilty of conspiring to damage property by fire.

Overnight attacks in May 2025 targeted two houses in Kentish Town, north London, the first of which was managed by a company where Starmer had been a director and the second of which was his former residence and the home of his sister-in-law and her family.

The attackers set fire to the front doors of the houses, endangering the lives of those inside, prosecutors said.

Another attack set alight a Toyota car the prime minister formerly owned.

Starmer told MPs the crimes were “an attack... on democracy and the values that we stand for”.

The unusual case has prompted widespread speculation online.

The court heard the attackers were offered money to carry out the attacks via Telegram messenger by a Russian-speaking figure using the name “El Money”. They exchanged hundreds of messages, starting months before the attacks.

Prosecutors said the perpetrators did not express any political motivation to carry out the crimes and their motive was financial.

Helen Flanagan, head of

counter-terrorism policing for London, said after the verdict that the mastermind wanted to “create fear” although there was no evidence El Money was a “state threat”.

The *Financial Times* reported that its investigation had found that El Money was located in Russia and linked to a prominent hacker group called NoName.

Lavrynovych, a Ukrainian citizen, who the prosecution said lit all three fires, was convicted on two additional counts of arson reckless of danger to life.

Prosecutors said Lavrynovych, who lived in south-east London, conducted reconnaissance and returned later to photograph the damage.

El Money then urged him to leave London, saying he had attacked the home of a “very high-ranking person in Britain”.

Carpiuc, a Romanian national, “played a co-ordinating role, including planning elements of the offending and handling payment arrangements,” the Crown Prosecution Service said in statement after the verdict.

“These were deliberate and dangerous acts of arson, carried out against properties and a vehicle linked to the Prime Minister, and they posed a serious risk to life,” British prosecution service’s anti-terrorism chief Frank Ferguson said in a statement.

He said the convictions showed that “those who commit criminal acts, including acts of arson, to pursue their, or others’ agendas, will be investigated thoroughly and prosecuted robustly”.

The men were to be sentenced on Friday.

Growing military helps world peace: China

AFP
Beijing

China said yesterday that strengthening its military is beneficial to world peace, slamming a think tank report that warned the threat of a direct strike by Beijing on Australia was increasing.

A Lowy Institute report said on Sunday that China is capable of a direct missile strike on Australia and the threat of such a move is growing as Beijing amasses long-range and hypersonic weapons and builds islands in the South China Sea.

China’s capacity to strike Australia would grow over the next decade as “the DF-27 intermediate-range ballistic missile, and

potentially a conventionally armed intercontinental ballistic missile, grow in service numbers”, the Sydney-based group said.

China condemned the report’s “serious strategic misjudgement” yesterday, saying it was committed to “a path of peaceful development”.

“The growth of China’s military strength represents an increase in the forces for world peace,” foreign ministry spokesperson Lin Jian told reporters at a news briefing.

“China’s development of military strength is intended to safeguard national sovereignty, security and development interests and is not directed at any specific country,” he added.

The report found the main threat to Australia was from Chinese missiles fired from ships, submarines and a new interme-

diat-range ballistic missile that could reach the island continent from China.

The DF-27 missile has a range of 5,000 to 8,000 kilometres (3,100 to 5,000 miles), the US military said in December.

The report said it was assessing Beijing’s capability and not its intentions.

Lin urged the “relevant institutions” yesterday to “stop hyping up the so-called China threat” and to view the country’s development in an objective, fair and rational manner.

Australia reshaped its military strategy three years ago in response to China’s rapid navy build-up and rising friction between Beijing and Washington, focusing on deterring an adversary from its northern approaches.

Japan PM backs troubled Sicily bridge plan

Reuters
Rome

Japan’s Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi said yesterday she hopes a long delayed project to build a bridge across Italy’s Strait of Messina will get off the ground soon and showcase bilateral co-operation, given the involvement of Japanese companies.

The project to construct a 3.7-km (2.3-mile) bridge between the Sicilian city of Messina and mainland Italy is led by the Euro-link consortium, which includes Italy’s largest construction group Webuild, Japan’s IHI and Spain’s Sacyr. But it has been held back for years by a number of problems, including criticism that a bridge could harm the environment and pose risks in an earthquake-prone area.

In 2012, the project was halted under a government austerity drive, prompting the consortium to file a €700mn (\$811mn) compensation claim that will only be withdrawn if work resumes.

“I sincerely hope that the construction project for the Messina Strait Bridge, in which Japanese companies are participating, will become a landmark project symbolising economic co-operation



Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni welcomes Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi ahead of their meeting at Villa Doria Pamphili in Rome, yesterday. (Reuters)

between our two countries,” Takaichi said during a visit to Rome.

She was speaking alongside Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni after they held talks at the 17th-century Villa Doria Pamphili ahead of a Group of Seven (G7) summit in France, which they will both attend.

“I also hope that Japan’s expertise and experience will contribute to its early realisation,” Takaichi added.

Meloni’s government argues that improved road and rail links are essential to boost economic growth in Italy’s underdeveloped south. Sicily is currently con-

nected to the mainland by ferries that carry vehicles and trains.

However, work on the bridge – estimated at around €13.5bn – is unlikely to begin soon.

Italy’s Court of Auditors last year declined to approve the project, citing doubts about its compliance with European Union competition rules and noting that the original 2005 tender priced it at just 3.8bn euros.

In addition, prosecutors in Rome last week said they had opened a corruption probe into the bridge, casting fresh doubts over government efforts to push the project forward.

PM Modi in Bratislava



Slovak Prime Minister Robert Fico and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi inspect an honour guard during an official welcome ceremony for Modi at Bratislava Castle, Bratislava, Slovakia, yesterday. (Reuters)

Bangladesh summons Indian envoy over adviser row

Bangladesh summoned India’s envoy yesterday to protest against the treatment of an adviser to Prime Minister Tarique Rahman in the latest spat between the South Asian neighbours. Foreign Minister Khalilur Rahman called it an “unexpected and unfortunate incident”.

Dhaka’s state-run BSS news agency reported that the foreign ministry had summoned Indian Deputy High Commissioner Pawan Badhe. BSS said that government strategy adviser Zahed Ur Rahman was stopped at New

Delhi’s airport, where he had travelled for a conference, and questioned for several hours. “Although Indian authorities later allowed him to proceed with his visit, he decided to return to Bangladesh,” BSS said. India has not commented publicly about the incident.

Relations between the neighbours have been strained since a 2024 uprising toppled the government of Sheikh Hasina in Dhaka. Ties improved after Tarique Rahman won a landslide election victory, taking over from the

interim administration that had led the country of 170mn people since Hasina was ousted.

Hasina has been in hiding in India ever since she fled the revolution and Bangladesh has repeatedly requested her extradition. Bangladesh is surrounded by India and shares a 4,096-kilometre (2,543-mile) land border with its neighbour. Relations have further deteriorated along their border, with India sending those it accuses of being illegal migrants across the frontier to Bangladesh. (AFP)

Myanmar’s president arrives in China to boost trade ties

AFP
Beijing

Myanmar’s President Min Aung Hlaing arrived in China yesterday for talks with leader Xi Jinping, state media reported, as the Southeast Asian nation seeks stronger trade ties with Beijing.

The trip is the Myanmar leader’s second state visit since taking over as civilian president in April. He previously travelled to India.

Myanmar has been diplomatically isolated since a 2021 military coup ousted the elected government of Aung San Suu Kyi.

Images published by Myanmar media outlets yesterday morning showed Min Aung Hlaing waving as he boarded a plane to Beijing.

Chinese state media reported his arrival in the afternoon.

In addition to Xi, Min Aung Hlaing will also meet Chinese Premier Li Qiang and top legislator Zhao Leji during his visit, which will last until Friday, according to Beijing’s foreign ministry.



Myanmar’s President Min Aung Hlaing shaking hands with a Chinese official upon his arrival in Beijing. (AFP)

China hopes to use this visit to renew its friendship with Myanmar and deepen “comprehensive strategic co-operation”, ministry spokesman Lin Jian told a regular news conference on Friday.

Min Aung Hlaing will visit high-technology industries and attend an economic conference in China, Myanmar state media reported.

Attention has been drawn to the bilateral relationship by China’s recent detention of a US

citizen who was working as a political analyst at a think tank focusing on Myanmar.

Min Zin, founder of the Institute for Strategy and Policy Myanmar, “has been subjected to criminal compulsory measures”, foreign ministry spokesman Lin told reporters on Friday.

Authorities are holding him “on suspicion of engaging in espionage activities that endanger China’s national security”, Lin said.

Geneva’s guarded promise: Easy frameworks, hard details

For the Gulf, the news from Geneva arrives less as triumph than as exhalation. After months in which the Strait of Hormuz — the artery through which much of the world’s energy, and nearly all of Qatar’s, must pass — was held hostage to a widening war, the framework agreement between Washington and Tehran offers the first credible prospect of relief. Oil prices have softened, the guns in southern Lebanon have somewhat quietened, and Iranians long braced for catastrophe permit themselves a guarded hope. That alone is worth marking.

Yet sobriety is the more

useful response. The conflict that began on February 28 was launched with sweeping ambitions in Washington: to dismantle Iran’s military, end its nuclear programme, unseat the regime and “liberate its people”. None of these have been achieved. What has emerged instead is a document neither side has published, signed in part electronically, and already subject to competing interpretations.

President Donald Trump has promised the strait will be “permanently toll-free”; Tehran’s foreign ministry counters that fees may be levied “in exchange for the services that are provided.”

When the central practical achievement is described in two incompatible ways before the ink is dry, prudence is warranted.

The hard questions have not been answered so much as deferred. A 60-day window now opens for a fuller settlement, and within it lie the very disputes that fuelled the war: the lifting of American sanctions and the limiting of Iran’s nuclear capacity. Iran’s foreign minister, Abbas Araghchi, has named the obstacle plainly — these talks will labour beneath “a history of broken promises.” Vice-President JD Vance, who is to lead the next phase, concedes there are

“very important details to figure out,” not least the fate of Iran’s enriched uranium. Some \$24bn of Iranian assets remain frozen abroad, to be released only as undefined milestones are met. Frameworks are easy; it is the details that have undone every previous attempt.

For Gulf states, the lesson is one of exposure. The region did not start this war, yet its shipping lanes, its energy exports and its airspace bore the consequences. A peace that reopens Hormuz only haltingly — American officials cannot agree whether normal traffic resumes in days or weeks, and mines still litter the water —

is a reminder of how swiftly the Gulf’s prosperity can be hostage to decisions taken elsewhere. Resilience, not relief, must be the watchword.

Lebanon is the clearest warning sign. Iran and Pakistan, the patient mediator whose diplomacy deserves recognition, insist the agreement halts operations on every front. Israel, not party to the talks, says otherwise: its leaders have refused to withdraw from the south. A ceasefire that one of the principal combatants does not consider itself bound by is no ceasefire at all, and Lebanon has too often been the place where larger

bargains quietly collapse.

None of this is cause for cynicism. The alternative to an imperfect framework is a continuing war, and the human cost of that arithmetic is not in doubt. A flawed beginning is still a beginning. But the Gulf has learned, through long experience, to distinguish a ceremony from a settlement. The handshakes in Geneva on Friday will photograph well. Whether they hold will be determined not by the choreography of signing but by the willingness of all parties — including those absent from the table — to honour what they have, for now, only agreed to discuss.



The moral of the Fable — going behind the ban

Washington took hour and a half to switch off the most powerful artificial intelligence on the market. The national security story is full of holes — which raises the more interesting question of what the ban is actually for



By Kamran Rehmat

There is a particular kind of decision that tells you more by its manner than its content. When the US Commerce Department gave Anthropic an hour and a half on a Friday to take down Fable and Mythos — the flagship models of a company valued only days earlier at \$900bn — the haste was the message. You do not give ninety minutes’ notice to a firm you are gently nudging. You give ninety minutes to a firm you wish to discipline.

The official account is tidy enough. Researchers at Amazon found a way to coax Fable past its guardrails into naming software vulnerabilities. Andy Jassy carried the finding to the White House; ministers conferred; the president signed off; export controls followed, barring foreign nationals and, by extension, forcing Anthropic to pull the plug for everyone. National security, the administration says — nothing personal.

It is when one examines the instrument that the story begins to fray. Export controls exist to keep sensitive technology out of the hands of adversaries. Yet the practical effect here is the opposite of containment. The

capability Amazon demonstrated is not unique to Anthropic; by the account of researchers across the field, OpenAI’s and Google’s models can do much the same — and those models remain untouched. So the rule does not deny the capability to anyone determined to have it. What it denies is access to allies: Britain, the European Commission, the very partners who had been using Anthropic’s Mythos to find and patch holes in their own networks.

“The administration got it wrong,” said Katie Moussouris, the cyber-security veteran who read Amazon’s report. The guardrails, she found, were working as intended; there was, in her phrase, nothing to patch.

Pile the contradictions one atop another and the structure looks less like policy than improvisation. The same department that issued the ban had tested and cleared Fable for release days earlier. The vulnerabilities the model surrendered were minor and already known — the sort of thing a network defender would happily prompt for. And while Commerce moved to control a model that allegedly imperils the nation, the same administration has been loosening restrictions on the advanced chips that build such models, blessing shipments to China. As one analyst dryly noted, it is a curious posture to police the recipe while exporting the oven.

Helen Toner, formerly of OpenAI’s board, put the technical objection plainly: jailbreaks cannot be fully fixed — it is an inexact science — and any government should assume rival models are capable of the same tricks. Her verdict on the chosen lever was sharper still.

Export control, she argued, is poorly suited to the task; it bars foreign governments from a tool precisely when allies are meant to be wielding it for cyber-defence. The European Commission, newly granted

access and now contemplating its withdrawal, was diplomatic but pointed: contingency measures, it said, should not discriminate against partners.

So if the ban does not contain the danger, does not fix the flaw, and wounds the friends it claims to protect, one is entitled to ask what it is for.

Here the longer feud comes into view, and with it a more coherent reading. Anthropic and the Trump Administration have been at odds for months — over the guardrails governing the Pentagon’s use of its models, over lethal autonomous weapons, over domestic surveillance.

The Pentagon has branded the company a supply-chain risk; the two are in litigation over the label. Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth, never one for understatement, boasted that his department had thrown Anthropic “out of our building — forever,” adding that each



passing day vindicated the move. The venture capitalist David Sacks has accused the firm of “doomerism” — of frightening the public about AI’s perils while shipping ever more powerful systems. There is, in other words, no shortage of grievance in search of an outlet.

Then there is the matter of timing. Anthropic had just

leapfrogged OpenAI to become the world’s most valuable AI start-up, with a \$47bn revenue run-rate and an IPO in prospect. A ninety-minute order that darkens your flagship product is not merely an inconvenience to such a company; it is a demonstration — to investors, to rivals, to the firm itself — of who holds the switch. Read

this way, the episode is less an export control than a show of sovereignty over frontier AI, dressed in the borrowed clothes of a cyber-emergency.

The casting adds its own intrigue. Amazon, which sounded the alarm, is also a \$13bn investor in Anthropic; Jassy is said to have raised broader worries about frontier capability rather than this single flaw. A patron quietly flagging its protégé to the state is the sort of detail that rarely survives into the official telling.

Step back far enough and the whole exercise acquires a quixotic glow. For while Washington frets over the singular menace of one American model, the market is moving in precisely the opposite direction — towards abundance. A price war has broken out; firms are routing all but their hardest tasks to cheap open-source systems, many of them Chinese, at a fraction of the cost. Intelligence is becoming a commodity, not a crown jewel. To sandbag a single model in this flood is to mistake a stream for the river. The capability the administration wishes to bottle is already pooling everywhere, and getting cheaper by the month.

Which brings us to the moral of this particular Fable. A company that made its name warning — loudly, and lucratively — about the dangers of artificial intelligence has been punished with a danger it insists is illusory: its own cautionary tale turned into a cudgel. Perhaps the administration genuinely believes it has averted catastrophe. But on the evidence so far, the ban contains nothing, fixes nothing, and protects no-one save the prerogative of those who imposed it. That may, in the end, have been precisely the point.

• The writer is Deputy Managing Editor, Gulf Times.



G7 SUMMIT

Macron: We will do everything to ensure no Hormuz tolls

French President Emmanuel Macron yesterday vowed ahead of the G7 summit in France that “we will do everything” to ensure Iran imposes no tolls on the key Strait of Hormuz shipping channel. Speaking after a deal was agreed between Iran and the United States, Macron said a joint France-UK mission to ensure the Strait opens was prepared to deploy “very quickly”, with the French flagship aircraft carrier Charles de Gaulle ready to be in the zone “on a timescale of two to three days”. He wanted to have a “respectful but firm discussion” with Donald Trump after the US leader threatened to slap a 100% tariff on French wine **(AFP)**

CRIMES AGAINST HUMANITY

Dutch court sentences Syrian to 26 years in prison for torture

A district court in The Hague yesterday sentenced to 26 years in prison a former pro-Assad militia member for committing crimes against humanity by torturing and raping prisoners more than a decade ago. The judges said it was established that 58-year-old Rafik A., whose last name was withheld by the Dutch court, was an interrogator for the National Defence Forces in Salamiyah, Syria, in 2013 and 2014. The NDF was a militia group that fought on the side of the government of former President Bashar al-Assad. During his trial Rafik A. had repeatedly denied involvement in the crimes. **(Reuters)**

STRAINING RELATIONS

Two Bulgarian diplomatic vehicles burnt in N Macedonia

Two diplomatic vehicles that were set on fire yesterday in Skopje were owned by the Bulgarian embassy, North Macedonia's interior ministry confirmed. Relations between the two neighbouring Balkan countries have been strained in recent years by Sofia blocking Skopje's bid to join the European Union. Bulgaria and North Macedonia are stuck in a row over the Macedonian language, which Bulgaria claims is a dialect of Bulgarian, and both countries lay claim to certain historical events and figures, mainly from the Ottoman era. North Macedonia's government strongly condemned the incident. **(AFP)**

NO MISBEHAVING

Sweden passes ‘good behaviour’ law for immigrants

Sweden's parliament passed a law yesterday allowing authorities to revoke immigrants' residency permits based on bad behaviour, such as having unpaid debts, doing undeclared work or links to extremist organisations. The law, which covers pending permits but also retroactively already granted permits, is part of a wider tightening of immigration rules by the right-wing government ahead of a parliamentary upcoming election. The law has been criticised by the opposition and human rights advocacy groups as arbitrary because decisions would be taken on behaviour that has not been deemed criminal. **(Reuters)**

Israeli carnage persists amid Gaza peace talks

Reuters
Cairo

Israeli strikes and gunfire killed at least four Palestinians in Gaza yesterday, health officials said, as mediators prepared for further ceasefire talks in Cairo to safeguard a US-brokered peace plan for the tiny war-ravaged Palestinian enclave.

Medics said an Israeli airstrike killed a woman in the town of Zawayda in the central Gaza Strip, while another strike killed one person in the nearby Nuseirat refugee camp.

Later yesterday, an Israeli airstrike targeted the rooftop of a building in Gaza City, killing two people, a medic and his son, health officials said.

The Israeli military said it killed two Hamas fighters in separate strikes in the Gaza Strip. It said the fighters were planning to carry out attacks against Israeli troops, without providing further details. The violence comes as Nikolay Mladenov, US President Donald Trump's Board of Peace envoy for Gaza, was expected to arrive in Cairo yesterday, sources close to the mediation effort said, a day after Hamas delivered its response to a 15-point blueprint he had presented to them in recent weeks.

The sources said Hamas and other factions had agreed on all the points except Hamas disarmament, which the group links to Israeli withdrawal and a political track to negotiate Palestinian statehood. An October 2025 truce



Palestinians make their way past the rubble of residential buildings destroyed during the Israeli offensive as displaced people shelter in tents, in Gaza City yesterday. **(Reuters)**

brokered by Trump has failed to halt Israeli attacks in Gaza or to secure the disarmament of Hamas group. Israel and Hamas remain deadlocked over how to proceed with the next stage of Trump's Gaza plan, which involves Hamas laying down its arms and Israeli withdrawals.

Hamas announced yesterday that leaders of Palestinian factions who held discussions with mediators — Egypt, Qatar and Turkey — over the past week in Cairo had stressed the need for Israel to “fully and unconditionally comply with the terms of the ceasefire agreement, in its entirety and without fragmentation”.

Hamas blames the absence of a full agreement to end the Gaza conflict on Israel's refusal to fulfil first-phase obligations agreed in

October, which halted major fighting but did not end Israeli attacks. Israel says its strikes are intended to thwart imminent attacks by Hamas and other fighters.

Israeli strikes in Gaza have killed more than 990 people since the truce, health officials say, while Israel says four soldiers have been killed by Hamas fighters in that period. Israel insists Hamas must disarm, cede power in Gaza and play no role in the future of the enclave. Israel still occupies more than half of Gaza, where it has ordered residents out and demolished remaining structures.

Nearly the entire population of more than 2 mn Palestinians now lives in a narrow strip along the coast, mainly in tents and damaged buildings, under Hamas' de facto control.

Hungary puts term limit of 8 years to PM office

AFP
Budapest

Hungarian lawmakers yesterday voted overwhelmingly to limit prime ministers' terms in office to a maximum of eight years, a constitutional change that blocks nationalist Viktor Orban's return.

The amendment was a key campaign promise of pro-EU conservative Peter Magyar, who in elections held in April ousted Orban from office, promising sweeping reforms as part of a “regime change”.

Magyar argued the possibility of limitless tenure can lead to power concentration, pointing to his predecessor as an example, whom critics have accused of constantly tweaking Hungary's political system to keep a tight grip on power.

Orban's party opposed term limits, arguing that it could possibly restrict the popular will of people.

The amendment passed parliament with 135 votes for, 50 against, and six abstentions.

Under Hungarian law, such a measure can be passed by a two-thirds supermajority without needing a referendum.

Some countries around the globe impose term-limits on their top leaders, with such restrictions usually placed on presidents.

The tenure of Hungary's president, whose role is largely ceremonial, is already limited: he can be reelected only once to a second



MPs of the Hungarian Parliament vote about the daily agenda in the main hall of the parliament building in Budapest yesterday. **(AFP)**

The adopted term limit does not completely rule out Orban's return to power. However, it could be revoked in the future by another constitutional change

five-year term.

The adopted term limit does not completely rule out Orban's return to power. However, it could be revoked in the future if another constitutional amendment is achieved.

This is the 16th time Hungary's Basic Law has been changed since its adoption in 2011.

The approved amendment also removed a provision stipulating the need for independent body to

“safeguard” the country's “constitutional identity”.

This was done to prepare the ground for disbanding the Sovereignty Protection Office.

The controversial agency, established under the previous government in 2024, was entrusted with broad investigative powers ostensibly to curb “foreign influence”.

But it mainly targeted Orban's critics, accusing independent media and NGOs like Transparency International of serving foreign interests for its scrutiny of the government. The agency has not released any official reports since Magyar won the election.

Hungary's parliament is set to vote on a bill for the agency's dissolution at the end of June.

G7 allies seek common ground with Trump

AFP
Evian-Les-Bains

Allies from the G7 group of leading powers will yesterday seek common ground with US President Donald Trump at a summit in France after Washington and Iran agreed a deal to end the Middle East war.

With Trump arriving in the Lake Geneva resort of Evian-les-Bains in France flush from celebrating his 80th birthday the day earlier, allies will want details on the agreement and the planned reopening of the strategic Strait of Hormuz to shipping.

But Iran will be far from the only explosive issue at the three-day meeting, with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky due to attend from today, after Ukraine blamed Russia for a barrage that killed at least 11 people across the country and sparked a fire at a landmark Kyiv cathedral.

Host President Emmanuel Macron wants to advance a packed agenda of sensitive topics ranging from limiting global economic imbalances to increasing control in the digital sphere, notably AI.

Macron faces a delicate balancing act in hosting the often unpredictable US leader, who hours before attended an MMA cage fight



US President Donald Trump attends a bilateral meeting with President Emmanuel Macron on the sidelines of the G7 summit yesterday. **(AFP)**

night on the White House lawn in honour of his birthday.

The *New York Post* reported on Monday that Trump threatened to slap a 100% tariff on French wine and champagne unless Paris removes its digital services tax imposed in 2019 on tech firms.

Macron said in a post on Instagram overnight that the summit will examine the “consequences” of the Iran accord — which is due to be signed in neighbouring Switzerland on Friday — in terms of the implications for Lebanon, the lasting reopening of Hormuz and Iran's ballistic activities.

He later added in a post on X that a UK-France mission to aid the reopening of the Strait of Hor-

muz had its assets in place and was “ready to be deployed”.

European leaders are impatient to see the Strait reopened after the limiting of shipping traffic during the war caused a spike in global energy prices.

Adding to the uncertainty, Iran's Fars news agency said Tehran had added a clause to the framework deal on imposing maritime service fees for transiting the Strait.

Egypt's President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi, and UAE's president Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan will be present for a special session on Iran today.

A parade of world leaders will take place over the next three days, with France keen to expand

the reach of the G7 beyond its membership of Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom and the US.

Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, sporting a wide-brimmed hat, was among the first guests to arrive and was to be joined by other non-G7 leaders including Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Beyond politics, Sam Altman, the head of artificial intelligence giant OpenAI, Anthropic chief Dario Amodei and Arthur Mensch of their European rival Mistral AI will attend a lunch on Wednesday on protecting minors in the digital sphere.

“The aim is to have new agreements, convergences between the G7 countries and its partners... to find common solutions, reduce tensions in the world and improve the state of our economies,” said Macron in his Instagram video.

A vast security lockdown is in place, mobilising thousands of police and troops, an operation that extends to neighbouring Switzerland on the other side of the lake where protesters clashed with police on Sunday.

The European leaders and Canada will also be keen to remind Trump of the importance of pushing Russia to accept a peace on Ukraine's terms.

No EU consensus on sanctioning Israel's Ben Gvir: Kallas

AFP
Brussels

The EU's top diplomat, Kaja Kallas, said yesterday there is no unanimity in the bloc to impose sanctions on far-right Israeli national security minister Itamar Ben Gvir, despite pressure from several countries.

“Many member states have also proposed to sanction Minister Ben Gvir, but no consensus on that was reached today,” Kallas said after a meeting of EU foreign ministers in Luxembourg.

Calls to blacklist Ben Gvir grew after he published video last month of himself mocking bound



EU High Representative and Vice-President for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Kaja Kallas during an interview. **(AFP/File Photo)**

activists seized by Israeli soldiers on a Gaza-bound aid flotilla.

France in response banned Ben Gvir from entering the country and called for the EU to impose bloc-wide sanctions.

EU sanctions have to be signed off by all the 27 member states and staunch supporters of Israel had refused to go along with the push.

Meanwhile, Kallas said that the EU would also look to lay out options for restricting trade with Israeli settlements after calls from some countries.

“On the issue of trade with illegal settlements, many member states called for proposals from the European Commission,” she said.

She said she would ask the EU's

executive to prepare “a list of options for possible trade measures” ahead of a next meeting of EU foreign ministers in July.

Israel has occupied the West Bank since 1967 and since then settlement expansion has been a policy under successive Israeli governments.

But it has accelerated significantly under the current coalition government of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

Excluding east Jerusalem, more than 500,000 Israelis now live in the West Bank in settlements that are illegal under international law, among some 3mn Palestinians who are subjected to persistent violence by Israeli settlers.

Trump to hold political rally on Independence Day

US President Donald Trump announced plans yesterday for a major “rally” in Washington on the July 4 Independence Day, further imposing his political brand on celebrations of America's 250th anniversary.

The announcement comes a day after the Republican billionaire staged a mixed martial arts fight on the White House lawn — on what just happened to be his 80th birthday — with military honor guards and Air Force flyovers. Trump had previously posted that another event on June 24 would be the “Greatest Rally, EVER!... A Rally to end all

Rallies!” and include performances by military bands and some of his favourite singers.

That event was put together after several musical artists pulled out of a 250th anniversary concert series in the US capital, with some citing the politicised nature of the event. But, Trump said the new July 4 event would be “the most spectacular TRUMP RALLY of them all”.

The “TRIBUTE TO AMERICA” event would be held at the Washington Monument and the Lincoln Memorial. Trump wrote on his Truth Social platform. “There will be incredible Flyovers and Airshows...” **(AFP)**



Travellers reminded to complete all checks before taking summer trips

By Shaima Sheriff
Staff Reporter

Travellers planning summer holidays have been reminded to carefully check their travel documents, passport validity, fines, and hand luggage before heading to the Hamad International Airport (HIA), as part of a Safe Travel awareness webinar organised by the Ministry of Interior (MoI).

The webinar brought together officials from the Airport Passports Department and the Airport Security Department, who highlighted common mistakes that can delay passengers at the airport or prevent them from travelling.

Captain Ali Ahmed Ali al-Kuwari from the MoI's Airport Passports Department said that travellers should make sure all requirements are completed before arriving at the airport, especially during the busy summer travel season.

"Please make sure that you have



a valid travel permit," he said, referring in particular to employees who fall within the category requiring prior approval before leaving the country.

Capt al-Kuwari said that some passengers may not be aware they need such approval until they reach immigration, which may result in travel disruption.

Travellers are also advised to check their status via Metrash before preparing to depart.

He urged passengers to ensure they do not have "a travel ban, traffic violation or overstay fine" linked to their QID.

Capt al-Kuwari noted that traf-

fic violations and overstay fines can be paid electronically through Metrash, while travel bans must be followed up with the concerned authorities before travel.

Passport validity was another point highlighted.

While the Airport Passports Department may not prevent travel because of shorter passport validity, Capt al-Kuwari said that some airlines and destination countries may not accept passengers whose passports are valid for less than 3-6 months.

The webinar also focused on baggage safety and airport security procedures.



The officers taking part in the webinar.



Captain Abdullah Shaheen Mohamed al-Rumaihi from the Airport Security Department reminded passengers to prepare their own bags and avoid carrying items for others without knowing the contents.

He warned that some travellers may accept packages from friends or relatives out of kindness, but could face serious consequences if the contents include prohibited items.

Capt al-Rumaihi advised the public "not to carry others' belongings and bags without knowledge of contents", adding that passengers should be ready to refuse

any item if they are unsure.

Hand luggage rules were also explained in detail.

Capt al-Rumaihi said that passengers should not carry sharp objects, such as scissors, knives, razor blades, and other sharp tools, in their cabin baggage.

Sports equipment such as billiard sticks and rackets, toy weapons (whether metal or plastic), flammable perfumes and sprays, and fresh food, including meat and fish, are also prohibited in hand luggage.

Capt al-Rumaihi added that if prohibited items are found in hand luggage, they will be "confiscated

without being returned to their owners".

The Airport Security Department also cautioned travellers against joking about carrying explosives or prohibited items when asked by airline staff.

Capt al-Rumaihi warned that such statements are treated seriously and may lead to the cancellation of the passenger's flight and referral to the competent security authorities.

The officials stressed that airport procedures are not intended to inconvenience travellers, but to ensure safety and smooth movement through the HIA.

Artist reflects on search for a 'lost paradise'

Veteran artist and caricaturist Salman al-Malek revisits the memories, people and places that shaped his creative journey in a new Qatar Museums documentary

By Joey Aguilar
Doha

For Salman al-Malek, every painting begins with a memory. A glimpse of brightly coloured fabrics beneath black abayas.

The familiar faces of mothers and sisters in a close-knit neighbourhood.

The birds that fascinated him as a child. Decades later, these images continue to appear in his work.

In the latest episode of *Artists' Voices*, a video series produced by Qatar Museums (QM), the veteran Qatari artist and caricaturist reflects on a life devoted to art and the memories that continue to shape his work.

"When I paint, I search for myself," al-Malek says in the documentary. "My inner self. I try to move away from the physical world to step back from my surroundings. What brings me to this gentle 'trance' is painting."

He notes that the story began long before galleries and exhibitions.

It started in the *fareej*, the traditional neighbourhood where he grew up.



"I've always felt I carried a visual archive inside me," he said. "A visual archive of a child who grew up in a fareej. A child would grow up in a neighbourhood that felt like one big family."

"My visual memory is tied to so many things that helped me rediscover that memory and turn it into themes I paint today," the artist added.

The fareej left such a lasting impression that al-Malek said he would gladly return to that period of his life.

"I'd return to it even for brief moments, just to live it again," he stated.

Years before his work was exhibited in galleries, al-Malek was known simply as "The Painter" among neighbours and classmates.

Encouragement from his teachers helped strengthen his confidence in his talent.

"It was the constant praise from my teachers, the art teachers in my early school years," he recalled.

"I'd always see a glimmer in their eyes, a kind of satisfaction," al-Malek said.

"That approval was a special moment for me. It fed my pride, but at the same time, it reassured me that I was moving in the right direction."

Equally important was his father's support.

Although he initially viewed drawing as a hobby that brought joy to his son, he



Salman al-Malek draws inspiration from personal visual memories, transforming rediscovered experiences and influences into recurring themes in their paintings. - **Screengrabs from the Qatar Museums documentary**

found his own way of encouraging him.

Working in an engineering office for an oil company, he would bring home black ink and drawing pens.

"He saw the joy in my eyes whenever he did, and that became his way of supporting me," al-Malek said.

He stressed that pursuing art was never in doubt.

"My determination to pursue art was genuine," the artist said. "There was never even a one-in-a-million chance that I would study another field."

Not everyone shared his confidence.

When he decided to travel to Cairo to study art, many questioned his choice.

"They would ask, 'You're going to study art? What will you do afterwards? What will art give you after graduation?' Those questions always shocked me and sometimes weakened my morale," he recalled.

Among the memories al-Malek recalled, one stands out above all others: the opening of his first solo exhibition in 1985.

By then, his father was in the final years of his life.

After arriving at the exhibition and seeing visitors gathered around the artworks, he turned to his son and asked: "Are all these people here to see your pictures?"

Al-Malek smiled and told him that they were.

"He was so happy," the artist recalled. "It was one of the most moving moments of my life. I felt that I had given my father a sense of pride and happiness."

Throughout his career, al-Malek has worked both as a visual artist and as a caricaturist.

While caricature allowed him to engage with society and reflect people's concerns, painting remained his personal refuge.

"Through caricature, I learned to stand beside ordinary people and their concerns," he said. "Yet my final refuge is painting, because painting is what allows me to fulfil my inner self."

That personal connection to painting shaped the direction of his work.

"When I decided what subjects to paint, I had two choices, he explained.



"Either I could become a mere copy of the European artistic experience, or I could portray my own society using a universal artistic language."

Many of the women who appear in his paintings are drawn from childhood memories.

"The women I paint are women I actually knew," al-Malek said. "They were mothers, sisters and members of the community. I have always wanted them to remain part of the visual vocabulary of my paintings because they give the work its local identity."

He said that painting remains at the centre of his life: "I live with painting twenty-four hours a day. It dominates my sensory perception and my everyday awareness."

For al-Malek, art is more than a profession: it is a way for him to understand himself and the world around him.

"Painting allows me to move away from the visible, material world into a world of transparency and subtlety," he said. "I am always searching for a kind of paradise, a lost paradise. That is what I am constantly trying to find."

The *Artists' Voices* series highlights the lives, creative processes and artistic per-



spectives of prominent Qatari and resident artists.

It forms part of the QM's broader "Evolution Nation" campaign, marking the institution's 20th anniversary and celebrating Qatar's growing presence on the global contemporary art stage.

Registrations open for BilAraby annual gathering

Qatar Foundation's BilAraby initiative has opened ticket sales for its 2026 annual gathering.

The event will take place at Multaqa (Education City Student Centre) in Doha on September 19-20 under the theme *With Our Ideas, We Build*.

With ticketing now open, the public can secure places at an event that fosters dialogue on issues shaping individuals and contemporary society, while celebrating Arabic as a living language of thought and creation – not merely a tool for expression.

The BilAraby Annual Gathering 2026 will offer a comprehensive programme including main-stage talks featuring prominent voices, in-depth workshops and panel discussions, exhibitions, and a range of interactive spaces.

It reinforces the BilAraby initiative's position as a global platform showcasing innovative solutions and forward-looking ideas from Arab speaking minds across diverse fields.

These include technology and environmental sustainability, the renewal of educational discourse and community empowerment, and the development of digital tools that strengthen the presence of the Arabic language in today's digital landscape.



Meanwhile, BilAraby has completed the evaluation and review stages for participation applications in its Annual Gathering 2026.

This edition of the event has seen strong engagement, reflecting the impact of inspiring Arab ideas and their ability to drive change.

Since its inception, BilAraby has received more than 1,600 applications from speakers representing diverse Arab communities worldwide.

The initial evaluation process has resulted in a preliminary shortlist of speakers selected for the BilAraby Annual Gathering 2026, comprising distinguished voices, from over 34 countries, capable of translating bold ideas into practical, actionable solutions that advance development and human-centred progress.

Ministry launches nursery magazine

The Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MoEHE) launched yesterday the inaugural issue of *Liwan Nursery Magazine*, a publication aimed at supporting early childhood sector.

Attending the launch ceremony were HE the Undersecretary of MoEHE Dr Ibrahim bin Saleh al-Nuaimi and Assistant Undersecretary for Special Education Affairs Omar Abdul Aziz al-Naama, alongside directors of departments, nursery licence holders, nursery managers, as well as specialists and stakeholders in the early childhood sector.

The magazine is intended to enhance the pedagogical quality in private nurseries and document outstanding experiences and practices in this sector.

In a statement, the ministry

highlighted that the launch of this magazine embodies its unrelenting commitment to advancing the early childhood system, as well as service quality afforded to children through deploying a media and awareness platform meant for projecting the best practices, imparting inspiring experiences and promoting expertise sharing among early education enterprises.

The journal is a vital step toward documenting the efforts marshaled within private nurseries and projecting the educational and development role these enterprises are undertaking, the statement reads.

Al-Naama outlined that the magazine would be issued monthly.

Nurseries are not merely care enterprises, the official stressed,

but integrated educational environments that help build child character, affirming that these nurseries assist children to internalise national values and Qatari identity from the early years.

The director of the MoEHE's Nurseries Department, Ghada Sultan Laram, said that the launch of this magazine is a crucial step toward enhancing the early childhood sector, and noted that the magazine's role goes beyond mere documentation to encompass fostering partnership with the family and community.

Laram said that through this journal, the department intends to deepen the culture of constant development through sharing knowledge and documenting successes, which ultimately help elevate performance and improve service quality. – **QNA**