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## Qatar, Russia in direct crisis hotline

Qatar and Russia have signed a memorandum of understanding to set up and operate a direct communication channel for immediate notification during crises. The agreement aims to enable rapid communication and coordination between the two sides in emergencies or crisis situations. The MoU was signed for Qatar's Ministry of Defence by the Acting Commander of the Doha Joint Rescue Coordination Centre, Brigadier General (Air) Rashid Sultan al-Hitmi, and for the Russian side by the Deputy Chief of the National Defence Management Centre, Vice-Admiral Viktor Andreevich Kalganov.

## Iranian experts eye Doha rendezvous but insist no talks planned with US

Reuters, AFP  
Tehran

Iran said yesterday that a delegation of experts would travel to Doha later this week to discuss implementation of the memorandum of understanding signed with the US this month, but insisted it had scheduled no negotiations with Washington.

"An expert delegation from Iran will travel to Doha later this week" to discuss implementation of the memorandum's clauses, foreign ministry spokesman Esmail Baqaei said. "We have not yet entered the stage of negotiating a final agreement," he added, noting that over the coming days Tehran would hold "no negotiation meetings with the US side at any level."

Baqaei said the technical visit had no relation to any US officials in Qatar. Tehran has yet to open talks on a final deal, he said, because that depends on the implementation of certain points of the MoU - currently Iran's priority.

Hours later, US President Donald Trump asserted that Iran had requested a meeting and that it would go ahead. "Iran has requested a meeting. It will take place tomorrow in Doha," he posted on Truth Social, without naming participants. White House spokeswoman Karoline Leavitt told Fox News that US envoy Steve Witkoff and presidential adviser Jared Kushner would fly to Doha this week for high-level meetings alongside technical talks.

A diplomat with knowledge of the discussions confirmed that US and Iranian technical teams were due to meet in the Qatari capital in the coming days to work on the deal, and that

communication channels set up to de-escalate incidents remained in place. A senior Iranian source said a meeting would be held, but - unlike earlier US-Iran technical talks in Switzerland - the focus would be on managing the Strait of Hormuz and easing tensions rather than the wider accord.

The conflicting signals were underscored by deputy foreign minister Kazem Gharibabadi, who denied that technical talks were planned for this week, saying only that consultations with Qatar were continuing as usual.

The 14-point MoU, signed on June 17, sought to end four months of conflict, with both sides agreeing to cease hostilities and reopen the strait, through which a fifth of the world's oil and liquefied natural gas typically passes. Its closure had pushed oil above \$100 a barrel, lifting global inflation. The accord opens a 60-day window for deeper talks on thornier issues, including Iran's nuclear programme, though the two sides have given conflicting accounts of what was agreed.

### Deputy premier receives Iran call

HE the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Defence Affairs Sheikh Saud bin Abdulrahman bin Hassan al-Thani received yesterday a phone call from Acting Iranian Minister of Defence Seyed Majid Ebn al-Reza. The two sides discussed the latest security developments in the region and aspects of joint coordination in light of the current circumstances. (QNA)

## Lolwah honoured as Qatar sweeps Arab women's diplomacy awards



Qatar's Minister of Education and Higher Education Lolwah bint Rashid al-Khater has been recognised for her leadership in education and society at national, regional and international levels, winning the Arab Woman Excellence Shield for Social Responsibility 2026 as Qatar collected a clutch of honours at the International Forum of Arab Women in Diplomacy in Cairo yesterday. The forum, organised by the General Secretariat of the League of Arab States in co-operation with the Arab Council for Social Responsibility, coincided with the International Day of Arab Women Diplomats. Lolwah was cited as an inspiring model of Arab women's leadership; the award was received on her behalf by Counsellor at Qatar's embassy in Egypt and its permanent delegation to the Arab League, Khalid Abdullah al-Ibrahim. Director of the Department of Private Schools and Kindergartens at the ministry Dr Rania Yousri Mohammed received the Arab Woman Social Responsibility Award 2026 for the Social Responsibility Project in Private Schools and Kindergartens.

She told QNA that Qatar's experience in the field had been shared with Arab countries to exchange expertise and promote a culture of social responsibility and solidarity among schools, students, parents and ministries, voicing hope that the project would help provide equitable, high-quality education for all pupils in Qatar's private schools. Deputy Speaker of the Shura Council Dr Hamda bint Hassan al-Sulaiti also received the Arab Woman Social Responsibility Award, recognised for her parliamentary and community work and her efforts to promote the values of social responsibility. **To Page 2**

## Shura Council hails peace bid

By Ayman Adly  
Staff Reporter

The Shura Council has welcomed the recently announced negotiations between the US and Iran, commending the efforts of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani in supporting paths of dialogue and diplomacy.

The Council affirmed that this reflects Qatar's firm commitment to constructive mediation and its keenness to strengthen security and stability and establish lasting peace in the region.

At its weekly session yesterday, the Council also mourned the 13 people killed in last week's explosion at a factory in Ras Laffan Industrial City, extending its condolences to the victims' families and praying for the swift recovery of those injured. It commended the high level of

preparedness and the rapid response of the security services to the incident.

The Council further offered condolences to the family of a citizen killed while sailing in Qatar's territorial waters by shrapnel from recent military operations in the region, and wished the other injured person a speedy recovery.

The session, held in the Tamim bin Hamad Hall at the Council's headquarters, was chaired by Speaker HE Hassan bin Abdullah al-Ghanem. Secretary-General HE Nayef bin Mohammed al-Mahmoud read out the agenda, and the Council approved the minutes of its previous meeting.

The Council approved a draft law on the oversight of fuel stations and a draft law amending certain provisions of the Civil and Commercial Procedures Law issued by Law No 13 of 1990, as amended, referring both to the government after reviewing the reports of the two relevant committees. **To Page 2**

## Trump readies first flight on Qatar-gifted jet this week

AFP  
Washington

US President Donald Trump will make his first flight on a new Air Force One plane gifted by Qatar this week, the White House said yesterday.

Trump will take the jet tomorrow to North Dakota for an event marking the 250th anniversary of US independence, a White House official told AFP.

As he unveiled the plane earlier this month, Trump praised Qatar for being "so nice and providing" the modified Boeing 747, which previously

served Qatari leadership.

Billionaire Trump has been keen since his first term to replace the ageing jets that serve as Air Force One, and he hand-picked the new plane's red, white and blue livery.

Trump's administration has said the plane is a direct gift to the US Department of Defense and said the plane would eventually be donated to Trump's presidential library.

The Qatari-gifted plane will be in use until US planemaker Boeing delivers two new 747-8 aircraft to serve as the presidential jet in a programme plagued by delays and cost overruns.

## Maritime activities suspended

The Ministry of Transport (MoT), in a circular issued yesterday, called on all owners and users of marine vessels, including leisure boats, fishing boats, jet skis, and other similar marine craft, to temporarily stop sailing and carrying out maritime activities, effective from the date of issuance of the circular until further notice, in the interest of public safety.

The ministry exempted vessels subject to international maritime

conventions, which continue their operations in accordance with applicable regulations and procedures. MoT also urged everyone to fully comply with the circular, affirming that any updates will be announced in coordination with the competent authorities through official channels.

This temporary precautionary measure comes based on coordination with the relevant security authorities. (QNA)

## New clinic puts healthcare on doorstep for 3,200 workers

By A Staff Reporter  
Doha

A new medical clinic serving more than 3,200 workers has been inaugurated at the General Cleanliness Department Complex in the Industrial Area, bringing primary care, medical screening and on-site medicine dispensing directly into the workplace.

The Ministry of Municipality facility was opened by Assistant Undersecretary for Public Services Affairs Engineer Abdullah Ahmed al-Karani, in the presence of Assistant Undersecretary for Migrant Labour Affairs at the Ministry of Labour Hamad Faraj Dalmouk, Director of the General Cleanliness Department Muqbil Madhour al-Shammari, and other ministry officials.

Al-Shammari said the clinic underscores the department's commitment to providing a safe and healthy environment built on the highest standards.

It operates in two daily shifts, from 9am to 1pm and 6pm to 10pm, to give all workers flexible access to care.

The opening forms part of wider efforts to strengthen the health system and occupational safety by delivering rapid, inte-



grated medical services within the work environment, he added, helping improve work-

ers' quality of life and the sustainability of the department's services.



## Qatar slams Israeli incursion in Syria

Qatar has condemned an Israeli incursion into the Syrian governorates of Quneitra and Daraa, along with artillery shelling that targeted several areas, calling it a flagrant violation of Syria's sovereignty and a blatant breach of international law and international humanitarian law. In a statement issued yesterday, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) warned that the continuation of these serious attacks would exacerbate tensions in the region and undermine efforts to promote security and stability. - **QNA**

## Arab states condole with Qatar over death of citizen

Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Egypt, the Gulf Cooperation Council and the Arab Parliament have offered condolences to Qatar following the death of a Qatar citizen killed by shrapnel from military operations in the region. A resident was injured in the same incident. In a statement yesterday, the Saudi ministry of foreign affairs expressed the kingdom's solidarity with the government and people of Qatar, extending condolences

to the family of the deceased and wishing the injured person a speedy recovery. The United Arab Emirates voiced similar solidarity, extending condolences to Qatar's government, people and the family of the deceased, and wishing the injured resident, an Arab national, a swift recovery. Gulf Cooperation Council Secretary-General Jassem Mohamed Albudaiwi likewise conveyed his sympathies and

prayed for the protection of Qatar and its people. Egypt reaffirmed its solidarity with Qatar, rejecting all actions that endanger civilians, and stressed the importance of de-escalation to preserve regional security. Arab Parliament Speaker Mohammed bin Ahmed al-Yamahi affirmed his solidarity with Qatar, expressing heartfelt condolences to the victim's family and to the country's government and people. - **QNA**

## Amir congratulates Seychelles president

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani sent a cable of congratulations yesterday to Seychelles' President Dr Patrick Herminie on the anniversary of his country's Independence Day. His Highness the Deputy Amir Sheikh Abdullah bin Hamad al-Thani sent a similar cable of congratulations to Herminie. HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani also sent a cable of congratulations to Herminie on the occasion. - **QNA**

# Court clears client of revived bank claim

By A Staff Reporter  
Doha

In a ruling that brings a years-long banking dispute to a close, the Investment and Trade Court has found in favour of a client against an Islamic bank, confirming that he bears no further liability over a claim that had already been settled and whose enforcement file had been closed.

The dispute began in 2018 over a financing transaction and resurfaced years later when the client faced a renewed claim linked to the same deal, prompting a fresh legal battle before the court.

Represented by lawyer Abdullah bin Hamad al-Athbah, the client sought a judgment that would bar any further claims against him over the same obligation.

Al-Athbah submitted a defence backed by documents, maintaining that his client had no remaining financial obligations toward the bank under the disputed Murabaha sale contract.

During the proceedings the bank sought dismissal of the cli-

## Judgment draws a line against reviving claims after settlement



Abdullah bin Hamad al-Athbah

ent's case, and at the final hearing its lawyer asked for an expert to be appointed to examine the claim.

The Third Investment Circuit rejected the request and determined the case on the documents and evidence already before it.

In its judgment of June 25, the court ruled that the client had been

cleared of any obligations under the Murabaha sale contract and ordered the bank to pay the legal costs.

Once the enforcement file had been closed following payment, it found, the bank could not return to pursue further amounts over the same transaction.

The ruling is considered significant in banking disputes, drawing a clear line against reviving claims after settlement and reinforcing the legal certainty that parties will not be drawn back into repeated claims over debts already paid.

Speaking to *Gulf Times*, al-Athbah said the ruling reflected the commitment of Qatar's judiciary to upholding justice and protecting the rights of all parties, regardless of financial or social standing.

He added that the consolidation of justice and the rule of law remained a foundation on which strong nations are built, and a principle affirmed by Qatar's Constitution.

## QMC CEO meets Kuwait's ambassador



Qatar Media Corporation (QMC) chief executive Sheikh Khalid bin Abdulaziz bin Jassim al-Thani met yesterday with Kuwait's ambassador to Qatar Ahmad Abdulrahman al-Shuraim. They discussed the fraternal relations between the two countries, and prospects for joint cooperation in the media fields. - **QNA**



## GCC Electricity and Water Cooperation Committee holds meeting online

The Electricity and Water Cooperation Committee of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries held its extraordinary meeting yesterday via videoconference.

The meeting was chaired by Bahrain.

GCC Secretary-General Jassem Mohamed Albudaiwi stated that the officials attending the meeting reviewed the directive made by the leaders of the GCC states at their 19th Consultative Meeting, to discuss and study future GCC projects related to electricity and water. - **QNA**

## Qatar participates in 23rd Arab Conference of Heads of Correctional and Reform Institutions

Qatar, represented by the Ministry of Interior (MoI), participated in the 23rd Arab Conference of Heads of Correctional and Reform Institutions, held in Cairo.

The MoI delegation participating in the conference was headed by the director of the MoI's General Directorate of Penal and Correctional Institutions, Major-General Nasser Mohammed Issa al-Sayed.

The participants discussed a number of topics on the agenda, including following up on the implementation of the recommendations of the previous conference, reviewing member states' experiences, digital transformation, and the use of modern technologies in developing correctional and rehabilitation institutions. - **QNA**



## Shura Council hails Amir's peace efforts

From Page 1

Members also reviewed reports on the Council's participation in several parliamentary events last May: a seminar of the Nato Parliamentary Assembly's Special Group on the Mediterranean and the Middle East in Rome; a delegation visit to the Greek Parliament in Athens; and the participation of member Muna bint Abdulrahman al-Muslemani in an international parliamentary dialogue with the World Health Organisation in Geneva, themed *From Commitment to Action: Strengthening Parliamentary Leadership for the Implementation of the WHO Pandemic Convention and Sustainable Health Financing*.

Closing the session, HE al-Ghanim briefed members on the Shura Council's participation, through a delegation that he led, in the 20th session of the Conference of the Parliamentary Union of the OIC Member States in Baku on June 24-25, and the 8th Conference of the Arab Parliament and Speakers of Arab Councils and Parliaments in Cairo on June 27.

He said that the Baku conference focused on strengthening cooperation within the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), while the Cairo agenda covered digital sovereignty in Arab states amid rapid change, regional security and the sovereignty of Arab nations, and the centrality of the Palestinian cause and ways to support it.

## Dr al-Hajri appointed to Qatari-backed Cascade Natural Resources Board

By Tawfik Lamari  
Staff Reporter

Pensana, a London-listed company, has announced the appointment of Dr Bader Bin Dalham al-Fahad al-Hajri to the board of Cascade Natural Resources Limited, a Qatari-backed company.

In a press statement, Dr al-Hajri affirmed his full support for Cascade's planned \$165mn strategic investment in Pensana, which was previously announced on March 4.

"I am honoured and delighted to join the Cascade board and contribute to the company's strategic vision as it progresses with its investments in Pensana and the Longongo project," he stated upon joining the Cascade board.

"This significant investment reflects a forward-looking commitment to strengthening vital mineral supply chains and supporting the development of sustainable mining and processing

capabilities, a sector that will play a pivotal role in powering future technologies, advanced industries, and long-term industrial growth," Dr al-Hajri said. "I look forward to working with the Cascade team to build a leading position for the company in the rare earth elements sector."

Pensana confirmed its full support for Cascade's strategic investment in Pensana, valued at \$165mn, as previously announced on March 4.

"We are delighted to welcome Dr al-Hajri's support and the investment from Qatar-backed Cascade Investment, which will accelerate the development of the Longongo project into one of the world's largest rare earth mines and support our expansion plans in later stages of the value chain," said Pensana chairman Paul Atherley.

"We are delighted to welcome Dr Bader al-Hajri to the board," said Cascade Investment chairman Lloyd Pengeley. "This appointment reflects Qatar's strong



Dr Bader al-Fahad al-Hajri

and committed support for Cascade Investment as we strive to build a world-leading rare earth company."

"Our investment in Pensana and the Longongo project is a significant step in this direction, and we are grateful for Qatar's support and excited about what we can achieve together," he said.

## Qatar Philatelic and Numismatic Centre wins medals at MACAO 2026 in China

The Qatar Philatelic and Numismatic Centre of the Ministry of Culture has been awarded medals during its participation in the Macao Specialised World Stamp Exhibition (MACAO 2026), running from June 26 until July 1.

The event is organised under the umbrella of the International Federation of Philately (FIP), with

the participation of 66 countries from around the globe.

The Qatar Philatelic and Numismatic Centre is a member of both the Federation of Inter-Asian Philately (FIAP) and FIP, and is part of the FIAP Executive Committee, which convened its meetings throughout this exhibition. - **QNA**

## Lolwah honoured as Qatar sweeps Arab women's diplomacy awards

From Page 1

The award was received on her behalf by al-Ibrahim.

The forum also honoured Minister Plenipotentiary, Deputy Ambassador of Qatar to Egypt and Deputy Permanent Repre-

sentative to the League of Arab States Maryam Ahmed al-Shibi, for her efforts in supporting diplomatic work, strengthening joint Arab cooperation, promoting social responsibility, and empowering women in diplomacy.

In a statement to the QNA, al-

Shibi expressed her pride in the recognition, saying that it reflects appreciation for Qatari women and Qatar's approach to empowering women and enhancing their participation in decision-making in line with the Qatar National Vision 2030. - **QNA**

## Barn owners take measures to protect livestock amid soaring temperatures

By Ayman Adly  
Staff Reporter

Preventative veterinary measures have been taken by barn and livestock owners across the country, in addition to upgrading animal shelters to protect livestock from problems due to soaring summer temperatures.

Livestock owners pointed out that summer conditions can increase the risk of heat-related illnesses due to dehydration and prolonged exposure to high temperatures.

Breeders are intensifying monitoring efforts, adhering to vaccination schedules, and adopting preventative practices to maintain herd health and minimise seasonal disease outbreaks.

Preparations usually start ahead of the summer season, with shearing sheep from April onward to reduce heat stress, washing animals regularly, improving ventilation inside pens, and installing shades and

fans to create a more comfortable environment.

Many breeders also suspend mating activities during the hottest months to minimise stress on the animals and ensure healthier births during more favourable seasons.

Meanwhile, regular vaccination campaigns by the relevant entities cover diseases such as foot-and-mouth disease, sheep pox, and various intestinal and blood-borne illnesses.

In addition, animals are provided with mineral salts dissolved in drinking water to replace fluids and essential nutrients lost during periods of extreme heat.

Livestock owner Jabran al-Ahbab said that while summer diseases are generally manageable, some cases can become more complicated and require intensive treatment and monitoring.

He added that rising feed and fodder costs remain a major challenge for breeders.

Barn owner Jaber al-Marri said breeders



are familiar with seasonal diseases and can effectively address them through treatments and vaccinations available at public and private veterinary centres.

He described the current health situation as stable, noting that the wellbeing of livestock largely depends on the breeder's commitment to proper care and observation.

Barn owner Mubarak al-Dosari noted the increased attention breeders give to

animal nutrition and heat protection during summer.

He said that some livestock owners continue to benefit from traditional Bedouin knowledge and remedies that have long been used to strengthen animal health and immunity.

However, al-Dosari called for expanding public veterinary services and increasing the number of specialised centres to better meet breeders' needs, particularly as live-

stock numbers continue to grow.

Barn owner Rashid Ali al-Nuaimi stressed that getting ready for the summer starts months in advance through shelter improvements, enhanced ventilation, the installation of cooling systems, and regular spraying of floors with water to reduce temperatures inside pens.

Fellow barn owner Mubarak al-Kubaisi stressed that summer requires exceptional attention because livestock are more vulnerable to heat stress and related illnesses.

He said breeders focus on supplying nutritional supplements, vitamins, shade, and continuous access to water to maintain animal wellbeing.

Al-Kubaisi added that government vaccination programmes remain among the most important preventive tools available to breeders, helping combat both seasonal and epidemic diseases while ensuring that animals receive the minerals and salts necessary to maintain healthy fluid balance throughout the summer months.

## MoECC holds workshop on environmental permits for Qatari Diar projects

**QNA**  
Doha

**Q**atar's Ministry of Environment and Climate Change (MoECC) has held a workshop with Qatari Diar to strengthen coordination on environmental assessment and permitting procedures for development projects.

The workshop, organised by the ministry's Environmental Assessment and Permits Department, brought together officials and specialists from both organisations as part of efforts to support sustainable urban development.

The ministry said the session aimed to raise awareness of the environmental requirements governing development projects and explain the procedures for obtaining environmental assessments and permits, while promoting the protection of natural resources and sustainable development.

Officials outlined the department's role in developing and implementing environmental standards for projects and facilities, overseeing environmental impact

assessments, reviewing environmental studies and issuing the permits and approvals required for development projects.

The workshop also covered the stages involved in obtaining environmental permits, application and follow-up procedures, and the technical requirements for environmental impact assessment studies. Participants discussed key challenges and best practices to help accelerate project delivery while ensuring compliance with Qatar's environmental standards.

The ministry also showcased its automated digital services, available through its website and the "Bee'ah" mobile application, which enable companies and institutions to submit applications, upload documents, track requests and receive environmental approvals and permits electronically.

At the end of the workshop, ministry specialists answered participants' questions and reviewed technical guidelines for urban and development projects, reaffirming the ministry's commitment to providing technical support and guidance to partners in line with Qatar's ongoing urban and economic development.

## MoFA issues guide describing, classifying jobs of diplomatic and consular corps

**QNA**  
Doha

**H**E the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohamed bin Abdulrahman bin Jasim al-Thani issued Ministerial Decision No 34 of 2026 issuing a guide to describing and classifying the jobs of the diplomatic and consular corps.

This decision comes within the framework of developing and strengthening the institutional work system in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, organising career paths through clarity of tasks and responsibilities, raising performance efficiency, enhancing accountability, and emphasising effective performance to members

of the two corps in the Ministry's General Directorate and the State's diplomatic missions abroad.

The guide is an organisational reference for members of the diplomatic and consular corps, contributing to the standardisation of procedures and the clarification of career paths in the Ministry's General Directorate and representative missions. It aims to provide an accurate and comprehensive description of positions and job titles, in support of professional development to raise performance efficiency, enhance clarity of responsibilities, and to facilitate recruitment and career development processes, while ensuring consistency with the organisational structure of the Ministry.

## PHCC expands urgent care services for adults, children

**QNA**  
Doha

**T**he Primary Health Care Corp (PHCC) announced the expansion of its 24-hour urgent care services for adults and children with the addition of Al Waab Health Center to its network of health centres offering this service.

With the addition of Al Waab Health Center, the number of 24-hour urgent care centres for adults has risen to 16, while the number of 24-hour urgent care centres for children has reached 11, distributed across the PHCC network.

Urgent care services for adults are currently provided at the following centres: Al Ruwais, Umm Salal, Muaiter, Al Mashaf, Al Sadd, Gharafa Al Rayyan, Al Shahaniya, Abu Bakr Al Siddiq, Rawdat Al Khail, Al Kaaban, Al Karaana, Leabaib, Al Wajba, Al Thumama, Al Khor, and Al Waab.

The urgent care centres for children include those in Al Ruwais, Umm Salal, Muaiter, Al Mashaf, Al Sadd, Leabaib, Al Wajba, Al Thumama, Al Khor, Rawdat Al Khail, and Al Waab. These centres provide timely assessment, diagnosis, and treatment for urgent, non-emergency, and non-life-threatening cases for patients requiring immediate care, regardless of their registered health centre.

This expansion supports PHCC's commitment to enhancing access to urgent care services and improving its capacity to meet the growing demand for these services across Qatar.

# HMC starts advanced paediatric allergy diagnostic services

**QNA**  
Doha

**H**amad Medical Corp (HMC) has launched two advanced diagnostic services for paediatric allergies: skin allergy testing to accurately identify food and environmental allergens, and food and drug challenge tests, the internationally recognised gold standard for confirming or ruling out allergic conditions under specialist medical supervision.

The services are provided through the paediatric clinics at the Ambulatory Care Center and aim to enhance the accuracy of early diagnosis, improve the quality of specialised care provided to children, and reduce allergy-related complications.

Dr Mohammed al-Amri, Deputy Chief Executive Officer and Medical Director at Hamad General Hospital, and Chair of the Pediatrics Departments at HMC, emphasised that the launch of these two services reflects HMC's commitment to providing advanced diagnostic care that enhances children's health and empowers families to make treatment decisions based on accurate and reli-



able medical evidence.

The two services utilise more accurate and specialised diagnostic approaches in paediatric allergy, contributing to early diagnosis, reducing allergy-related complications, and supporting individualised treatment plans for each patient. They also provide families with guidance and education on managing allergic conditions in children, including emergency action plans.

The clinic accepts referrals from Primary Health Care Centers, HMC hospitals, and Pediatric Emergency Centers for children aged 6 months to 14 years. It offers early diagnosis and specialised follow-up care through a multidisciplinary team specialising in paediatric allergy.

Skin allergy testing provides an accurate assessment of food and environmental allergies in children. It is one of the key tools used in diagnosing allergic conditions, as it helps doctors identify allergy triggers more precisely when combined with clinical evaluation and laboratory tests. Early and accurate diagnosis also helps prevent life-threatening allergic reactions such as anaphylaxis, in addition to supporting families and schools with clear plans for managing emergency situations.

The second service is the paediatric food and drug challenge testing clinic. Food challenge tests help assess certain cases of food allergies in children. After appropriate medical evaluation, some foods can be safely reintroduced into the diets of

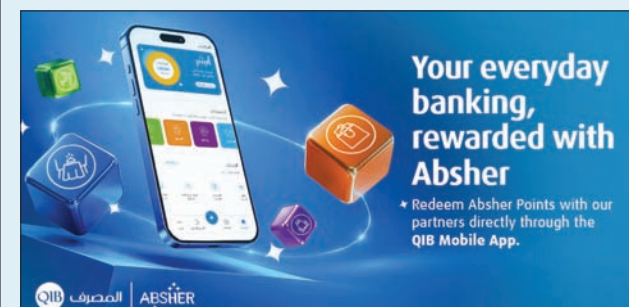
certain children, even though they were previously avoided.

Regarding drug allergies, the clinic provides specialised drug allergy testing, including confirmation of penicillin allergy cases. Global studies have found that when patients diagnosed with "penicillin allergy" undergo a detailed specialist evaluation, a large proportion of them are not actually allergic, which highlights the importance of re-evaluating these cases as an important step to improve antibiotic use and avoid inappropriate treatments.

Dr Aba Mohammed al-Kaabi, Senior Consultant and Section Head of Pediatric Allergy at Hamad General Hospital, emphasised the importance of early assessment of food allergy cases in children and the promotion of healthy nutrition practices, including the gradual and safe reintroduction of certain foods according to appropriate medical recommendations for each case.

She noted that early assessment not only protects the child's health but also reduces the burden on families and provides them with official medical confirmation that contributes to improving their daily quality of life.

## QIB rewards customers through its Absher loyalty programme



Qatar Islamic Bank (QIB) continues to reward customers through the Absher Rewards Programme, one of the Bank's flagship value-added offerings designed to deliver meaningful rewards and flexible redemption options that complement customers' everyday lifestyle and financial needs.

Since its launch in 2018, the Absher Rewards Programme has awarded customers billions of points. This underscores QIB's commitment to providing value beyond traditional banking services while strengthening customer engagement and loyalty. Designed to reward customers for their everyday banking activities, the Absher Rewards Programme enables customers to earn points through a wide range of banking interactions, including using QIB Credit, Charge, and Debit Cards, new salary transfers, new deposits, international remittances completed through the QIB Mobile App, and other eligible banking activities. Customers across selected banking segments benefit from additional bonus points through special promotional campaigns.

Integrated within the QIB Mobile App, the Programme enables customers to seamlessly track, manage, and redeem their points across a broad range of banking, travel, lifestyle, and payment services. Customers can redeem Absher points for utility bill payments, including Ooredoo, Vodafone, and Kahramaa services, as well as for shopping vouchers, online purchases, loading prepaid cards and conversions into recognised loyalty programmes, including Qatar Airways Avios, Wafa Points from Al Meera, and Shukran. The Programme continues to witness strong customer engagement and growing adoption with more than 661,000 redemption transactions during the first five months of 2026.

D Anand, QIB's general manager - Personal Banking Group, said: "At QIB, we believe rewards should be part of everyday banking in a way that is simple, convenient, and valuable to our customers. Through the Absher Rewards Programme, we continue to enhance the banking experience by offering benefits that support our customers' daily lifestyles and evolving needs." He added: "The continued growth in customer engagement reflects the Programme's relevance, ease of use, and the value customers place on accessible and meaningful rewards. Through continuous enhancements and digital innovation, we remain committed to delivering rewarding banking experiences that strengthen customer loyalty while offering customers greater flexibility in how they earn and redeem their points." The Absher Rewards Programme forms part of QIB's broader efforts to enhance customer engagement through integrated digital banking and lifestyle-focused solutions which deliver rewarding experiences beyond traditional banking services.

## New batch of experts take legal oath at Ministry of Justice

**A** new batch of experts took the legal oath yesterday at the Ministry of Justice to be registered in the ministry's roster of experts accredited before the judicial authorities in the country, in accordance with the regulations stipulated in Law No 16 of 2017 regulating expert work.

The new batch comprised 15 experts from national cadres, with specialisations including accounting, real estate, electrical engineering, architecture, survey engineering, banking, industry management, industrial engineering, engineering project management, and social experience (dis-

ability and autism category).

The director of the ministry's Experts Department, Abdullah Abu Shahab al-Marri, congratulated the new experts on their taking of the legal oath.

He emphasised the importance of their role as assistants to judges and one of the pillars of achieving effective justice, based on their legal responsibility to show evidence and proof related to the technical aspects of various cases, and the role expert reports play in expediting the issuance of judgments and the adjudication of cases. (QNA)



# Qatar participates in IMF anti-money laundering thematic fund meeting



**QNA**  
Paris

The State of Qatar participated in the IMF Anti-Money Laundering and Combating the Financing of Terrorism (AML/CFT) Thematic Fund meeting held in Paris, France. At the meeting, Qatar was represented by the Secretary-General of the National Anti-

Money Laundering and Terrorism Financing Committee, Mohammed Saree Rashid al-Kaabi. Qatar's participation comes as a founding member of the fund since its establishment in 2009, and as one of the countries supporting its activities and programmes. This reflects Qatar's firm belief in the importance of strengthening the integrity and stability of the global financial system and supporting

international efforts to combat money laundering, terrorism financing, and proliferation financing, thereby helping protect the global economy and enhance the soundness of the financial sector. The meeting discussed key developments and updates related to the fund's work, as well as its achievements in building countries' technical capacities,

providing technical assistance, and strengthening compliance with international standards on anti-money laundering and combating terrorism financing. The meeting also addressed the fund's future plans and priorities for the next phase, in ways that support the effectiveness of national and international systems in countering illicit financial risks.

## QOC unveils second edition of Team Qatar Summer 2026 youth programme

The Qatar Olympic Committee has officially launched the second edition of the 'Team Qatar Summer 2026' programme, reaffirming its commitment to inspiring the next generation through sport, education and community engagement.

Organised by the Sports Events Department from 28 June to 9 July 2026, the initiative is designed for the children of QOC employees and is delivered in collaboration with the Qatar Stars League Foundation, the Qatar Bowling Federation, Perf - Up Centre and several national sports federations. The programmes caters to children aged 8-12, while a dedicated volunteer pathway for participants aged 16-18 focuses on cultivating leadership, responsibility and teamwork through practical experiences. Designed to foster healthy lifestyles and holistic development, the programme promotes physical and mental well-being, strengthens behavioural and life skills, reinforces positive values, and provides opportunities to identify and develop promising young sporting talents in an engaging learning environment. The opening day welcomed 30 boys to the Qatar Bowling Federation, where they explored

the fundamentals and culture of bowling, while the girls' activities will commence on 5 July with a similar visit.

Over the course of the programme, participants will visit the Qatar Police Sports Federation, Lusail Shooting Range, Perf Up Centre, the Qatar Olympic and Sports Museum 3-2-1, the Qatar Stars League Foundation and the Qatar Gymnastics Federation, gaining valuable exposure to a wide range of sports, health, education and Olympic experiences. Speaking at the launch, Programme Director, Maryam al-Mujaba described the opening as a remarkable success, highlighting the strong turnout as evidence of growing public appreciation of sport's role in youth development and the importance of making productive use of the summer break.

She noted that the programme is designed to develop participants' skills while promoting Olympic values, discipline and teamwork in a safe, professionally supervised environment, adding that the initiative reflects the Qatar Olympic Committee's vision of building a healthier society and preparing a new generation that embraces sport as a lifelong way of life. (QNA)



TNG A-Levels Class of 2026



Your World Competition 2026 national winners are receiving the award from the British Council.

# A graduation of leaders, innovators, nation-builders

## TNG school celebrates A-Level Class of 2026

The Next Generation School (TNG) hosted a momentous graduation ceremony for its A-Level Class of 2026, marking not just the culmination of academic study but a celebration of leadership, innovation, and national contribution.

The event, held at the Auditorium of TNG School Al Wakra Campus, brought together proud parents, dedicated educators, and distinguished dignitaries to honour a cohort defined by its resilience and forward-thinking vision.

The ceremony was graced by the presence of TNG Board members, Dr Waseem Kutoub, country director of the British Council Qatar, and Osama Idrees, Community Welfare attaché at the Embassy of Pakistan, who attended as chief guests. Their attendance underscored the global and community-oriented ethos that TNG instils in its students.

While academic excellence was a cornerstone of the celebration, the highlight of the event was the recognition of the students' leadership journeys through TNG Youth Leadership Programme.



Valedictorian Hajra Usman receiving the award.

The 2026 cohort distinguished themselves through active participation in initiatives that went beyond the classroom, focusing on research, critical thinking, and societal impact. Their time at TNG was characterised by a robust research and development phase, where students engaged in projects that addressed real-world challenges, reflecting the school's commitment to creating not just scholars but changemakers.

The ceremony served as a platform to showcase the impressive milestones achieved by the students on national and international stages. A significant moment of pride

was the celebration of TNG's remarkable achievement in the British Council's "Your World" Competition 2026 – marking the school's fifth consecutive year of success at national, regional, and global levels.

•Pearson High Achievers: Recognition for outstanding performance in Pearson examinations.

•National Debate and Science Excellence: Students were honoured for their national achievements in Qatar Debate and the prestigious FameLab competition, demonstrating their prowess in communication and scientific inquiry.

In her address, principal Ailia



(From left) TNG CEO, principal, Pakistan Embassy Community Welfare attaché, British Council country director, TNG Wakra Campus head at the event.

Rizvi praised the graduates for their resilience and adaptability. "You have stood strong in the face of challenges. While you may not have sat examinations in the way you expected, you were tested in patience, adaptability, resilience, and courage – and you passed with distinction," she stated.

CEO Shagufta Bakali reinforced the school's philosophy of purpose-driven success, urging the students to look beyond financial gain. "Uncertainty is not a lack of direction – it is an opportunity to shape the path forward," she said. "Let your values be your compass, and strive not only to make a liv-

ing, but to make a difference."

Director Riyaz Ahmed Bakali encouraged the students to recognise their unique potential, expressing: "The universe is created for you. Know your strengths and utilise them." His words echoed the school's dedication to individualised development and the empowerment of youth.

The valedictorians of the Class of 2026 delivered poignant speeches that reflected on gratitude, hope, and a deep reflection on the meaning of success. Their maturity and eloquence served as a testament to the holistic education they received.



Valedictorian Tayyab Asim

As the graduates walked across the stage to receive their certificates, they represented the culmination of a journey that spanned multiple TNG campuses. Their collective progress highlighted the strength and unity of the TNG community.

TNG School Class of 2026 leaves behind a legacy of leadership, research, and academic rigour, equipped with the skills, values, and clarity needed to contribute meaningfully to Qatar and the world. The ceremony concluded with a sense of pride and optimism, celebrating a group of young leaders ready to shape the future.

## Mwani Qatar adopts sophisticated systems to maintain safe operations

By Ayman Adly  
Staff Reporter

Mwani Qatar has continued to strengthen its position as a leading regional maritime and logistics hub by delivering advanced marine services supported by cutting-edge technology, highly skilled personnel, and world-class operational capabilities.

Accordingly, Mwani Qatar provides a comprehensive range of marine services to ensure the safe, efficient, and seamless movement of vessels through Qatar's commercial ports and maritime infrastructure.

At the heart of Mwani Qatar's marine operations is a commitment to safety, reliability, and operational excellence. The company's services encompass pilotage, towage, mooring, aids to navigation (AtoN) maintenance, Vessel Traffic Services (VTS), and diving services, which play a critical role in facilitating the smooth arrival, berthing, and departure of vessels operating in Qatari waters.

The Vessel Traffic Service system operates around the clock, maintaining continuous oversight of maritime traffic and ensuring compliance with international safety standards.

Through advanced monitoring capabilities, VTS operators coordinate vessel movements, provide navigational guidance, and help prevent congestion and maritime incidents within port approaches and navigation channels.

Mwani Qatar has been playing a growing role as a leading maritime and logistics gateway in the region. In 2025, Qatar's ports handled around 1.46m twenty-foot equivalent units (TEU), while vessel calls increased by 8% year-on-year to 3,019 ships, reflecting rising confidence among global shipping lines in the efficiency and reliability of the country's port infrastructure.

General and bulk cargo volumes exceeded 1.8m tonnes, marking an 11% increase compared to the previous year, while building materials surged by 106% to 509,000 tonnes, driven by continued economic and infrastructure activity.

In 2026, Mwani Qatar will continue to demonstrate strong operational momentum across all key performance indicators, reinforcing its position as a regional maritime hub. During the first quarter of 2026, Qatar's ports handled around 291,147 TEUs, alongside more than 237,308 tonnes of general cargo and 200,464 tonnes of bulk cargo, while also processing nearly 75,779 head of livestock and around 25,000 Ro-Ro units (Roll-on/Roll-off), supported by 552 vessel calls.

## Al Jazeera English documentary honoured in London for powerful portrait of Palestinian resilience

By Tawfik Lamari  
Staff Reporter

Al Jazeera English has earned international acclaim after its documentary *One Month in Ramallah* won the prestigious Feminist Solutions Reporting Award at the One World Media Awards 2026 in London.

The award celebrates outstanding journalism that highlights transformative leadership, compelling human stories, and initiatives that strengthen communities in the face of adversity.

Directed by acclaimed Palestinian filmmaker Sawwan Qaoud, the documentary forms part of Al Jazeera English's Witness Docs series and offers an intimate, month-long chronicle of life in Ramallah and Al-Bireh Governorate. Through the daily work of Governor Dr Laila Ghannam, the film captures the realities of public service under occupation, documenting her efforts to address citizens' needs as she navigates the complex political and humanitarian challenges facing Palestinians.

Rather than focusing solely on hard-



One Month in Ramallah poster.

ship, *One Month in Ramallah* presents a deeply human portrait of a community defined by resilience. Through striking visual storytelling and firsthand accounts, the documentary reveals the everyday struggles residents face while highlighting acts of solidarity, grassroots initiatives, and collective determination that sustain hope despite ongoing pressures.

The film paints a nuanced picture of Ramallah as a city of vitality and per-

severance, challenging conventional narratives by placing ordinary people and their experiences at the heart of the story. It underscores the enduring strength of Palestinian identity, dignity, and social cohesion amid prolonged uncertainty.

Reflecting on the international recognition, Qaoud said the award is a significant acknowledgement of the Palestinian narrative and the human stories at its core. She stressed the importance of bringing authentic Palestinian voices to global audiences through professional storytelling that moves beyond statistics and headlines to reveal the lived realities of people on the ground.

Produced by Al Jazeera English, *One Month in Ramallah* stands as a compelling testament to the power of documentary filmmaking to illuminate overlooked realities. By documenting life under occupation while celebrating the resilience and hope of the Palestinian people, the award-winning film reinforces journalism's enduring role in amplifying stories that inspire understanding, empathy, and meaningful dialogue across borders.

## Auction Announcement

ARPM Tender and Auction Committee announce the following Auction:

Auction Subject	Leasing and Management of the Third Phase (C) of the Asian (Labour) City in Mesaimeer Area Under a Lease Agreement with Special Provisions			
Launching Date	Closing Date	Auction Bond QR.	Auctions Documents Price QR.	Auction Method
30/06/2026	14/07/2026	50,000 (Qatari Riyals Fifty Thousand) refundable subject (to conditions)	250 (Qatari Riyals Two Hundred Fifty)	One Closed Envelope

**Auction description:**

**Auction purpose is for the following:**

**Leasing and Management of the Third Phase (C) of the Asian (Labour) City in Mesaimeer Area Under a Lease Agreement with Special Provisions.**

The awarding will be made to the highest bid among the applicants.

**General Conditions:**

- Auction Documents / Conditions shall be obtained from Purchasing Department, ARPM Co., located on the 9th Floor, Al Rayyan Building, Old Salata, Zone 18, Al Muthaf Street, Next to Al Bustan Hotel during working hours 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. (Fri. & Sat. Closed).
- Auction Documents Fee (QR 250 – Qatari Riyals Two Hundred Fifty only) - non-refundable, will be paid in cash in ARPM Co. Headquarter.
- Site visit for the buildings and the site shall be according to the Auction Conditions and the attendance of the visit shall be limited to those who obtain the Auction documents and pay the prescribed fees as per Item 2 above.
- To obtain Auction documents, the following documents are required:  
Authorization letter from the bidding company in Arabic signed by the officially authorized manager and stamped with the company's seal - Copy of the establishment card - ID of the authorized person to receive the documents - Copy of the valid company's commercial registration - Company's classification certificate (if any).
- The Bid must be submitted according to the Conditions stated in the bidding documents. The Bid shall be enclosed with an Auction Bond in the name of Al Rayyan Project Management Company (to be placed in separate envelope inside the Bid envelope) in the form of a payable cheque certified by one of the banks operating in the State of Qatar of only QR 50,000 (Fifty Thousand Qatari Riyals only), and it will be returned back within 90 days from the closing date subject to the Terms & Conditions, noting that no bid shall be accepted unless it has been enclosed with Auction Bond document.
- The bid (rental price) shall be submitted in local currency (Qatari Riyal) and shall be valid for 90 days from the closing date of the bid and cannot be revoked within that period.
- Deadline for accepting bids is 12:00 pm of the closing date (Tuesday 14/07/2026).
- All forms attached to the Auction documents including the form of undertaking, shall be filled, completed and authorized as stated therein and returned with the other documents.
- All necessary data for the company (contacts & follow-up) must be attached: Mobile - Phone - Fax - E-mail - company address of where the correspondence to be sent, clarifying the tasks of each individual (when purchasing Auction documents) and within the company bid.
- For any queries related to documents and bidding, contact Al Rayyan Project Management Co. - Tel: 40341865 – 40341804, - email: m.aseef@arpm.com.qa ; j.castillo@arpm.com.qa
- Deadline for accepting inquiries and requests 07/07/2026.
- The extension of the closing date may be requested in case of necessity (with justifications), on or before the deadline for accepting inquiries and requests, for Tender and Auction committee discretion and decision.
- In case the closing date is extended or any modifications are made during the announcement period, the company will be notified by fax or e-mail formally.

**Tenders and Auctions Committee  
ARPM**

## QNL marks summer season with discovery, creativity, professional development

The Qatar National Library (QNL) has announced the launch of its summer programme, starting from the beginning of July, for heritage professionals, children, families, and career-minded adults. The programme covers cultural conservation, STEM exploration, creative arts, literacy, and professional development.

The month opens with a specialised gathering for the heritage community. On July 1, Qatar National Library, in its capacity as the IFLA PAC Regional Center for the Arab Region, presents the webinar "Emergency Grants for Cultural Heritage: Opportunities and Application Process," delivered by Romana Delaporte, Project Co-ordinator at Cultural Emergency Response, an international NGO that provides first-aid support to cultural heritage threatened by conflict, climate change, or natural disaster.

The session will explore the scope and objectives of available grants, the types of projects eligible for funding, application requirements and selection criteria, and practical guidance drawn from previously supported emergency response initiatives.

The first of July also marks the start of the 2026 Summer Reading Challenge, offered in partnership with the Kutubee interactive reading platform. Running for six weeks until 15 August, the challenge encourages children aged 6 to 14 to keep reading through the summer months and to guard against the seasonal learning loss commonly known as the "summer slide."

Participants work toward reading goals scaled to their age group, building language skills, broadening their knowl-



edge, and strengthening critical thinking and creativity along the way. The winners will be announced in September 2026.

On 15 July, the Seventh Summer Camp opens, with each track designed to engage and inspire a different age group. The tracks run on a weekly basis.

The Library welcomes its youngest visitors with the Fun Summer Camp for Toddlers, a bilingual two-hour play camp for children aged 1 to 4. Featuring sensory toys, building toys, art activities, and storytelling sessions, it offers a nurturing and imaginative environment for children and their families.

Storytime for Children offers an equally enriching experience for children aged 7 to 12, combining expressive storytelling with puppetry to take young audiences on imaginative journeys through carefully chosen stories. The programme aims to foster a love of reading, stimulate imagination, and strengthen listening and communication skills in a joyful and nurturing setting.

For children aged 7 to 10, a dedicated STEM activity blends science, technology, engineering, and mathematics through hands-on experimentation, inviting young participants to test ideas, solve problems, and explore how the

world works in a spirit of curiosity and discovery.

Teenagers aged 13 to 17 are invited to "Make with Me," a craft and art-making session that draws older participants into a world of colour and imagination, encouraging creative expression in a lively and inspiring environment.

Career development takes centre stage later in the month with "Skills Hub: Your 2026 Career Launchpad," a three-part series running on July 21, 22, and 23. Led by Adrian Wallwork, author of more than 50 textbooks for publishers including Springer Nature, Cambridge University Press, and Oxford University Press, the series examines both how and how not to use AI tools at every stage of the job search.

The first session, on July 21, addresses writing CVs, LinkedIn profiles, and cover letters that stand out to human recruiters and automated screening systems alike.

The second session, on July 22, prepares attendees for every stage of the interview process, from initial online assessments to in-person meetings.

The third session, on July 23, examines the human skills most likely to endure in a rapidly changing job market and explores how to identify and develop them. Each session may be attended individually or as part of the full series. (QNA)

**ISRAELI ATTACKS**

**Turkiye 'strongly condemns' Israeli incursions in Syria**

Turkiye's foreign ministry yesterday blasted Israeli incursions and ammunition fire in southern Syria, after tensions near the Golan Heights forced some local residents to flee. "We strongly condemn the Israeli attacks against Quneitra and Daraa, which violate the territorial integrity, unity and sovereignty of Syria," it said in a statement. "These attacks, which trample on the lives and property of the Syrian people and make life increasingly difficult for civilians in the region, constitute a flagrant violation of international law," the Turkish ministry added. Syria's foreign ministry also condemned the Israeli incursions. (AFP)

**FLOODS**

**Floods paralyse Ghana's capital Accra, kill three**

Torrential rains sparked flooding across Accra yesterday, killing at least three people, authorities and local media reported, and sending Ghanaian rescue workers crisscrossing the city by boat. Flooding is common during Ghana's rainy season, but residents say inundations in the capital have become worse in recent years due to rapid urbanisation coupled with a lack of investment in drainage infrastructure. In the eastern suburb of Tse Addo, emergency responders and local volunteers used boats to rescue at least 15 children and an infant after rains that started lashing the city in the wee hours flooded the area. (AFP)

**DEADLY OUTBREAK**

**Ebola outbreak in DR Congo spreads to fourth province**

An Ebola outbreak has spread to a fourth province in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DR Congo), meaning the country's entire northeast — home to around 15mn people — is affected. So far, the epidemic has claimed 360 lives out of 1,274 confirmed cases, according to figures from the World Health Organisation (WHO). The DR Congo declared its 17th outbreak of the viral haemorrhagic fever on May 15. This time, it is caused by the Bundibugyo strain, for which there is no vaccine or specific treatment. Clinical trials are set to begin in the coming days, according to the WHO. (AFP)

**FRAUD EXPOSED**

**Zimbabwe arrests man over recruitment for Russian army**

Zimbabwe's counter-terrorism police said yesterday they had arrested and charged a man with recruiting five people to join the Russian army. Several investigations, including one by AFP, have exposed how Russia has lured men from African countries with promises of well-paid jobs, only to force them to fight on the Ukrainian front line. The 36-year-old suspect was arrested while escorting one recruit to a bus terminus in Harare for a journey through South Africa to Russia, according to court documents. Police said he was found carrying Russian e-visas and hotel booking confirmations for the recruits. (AFP)

**Gaza health officials say 3 killed in Israeli drone strike**

AFP  
Gaza City/Ramallah, Palestinian Territories

Gaza health officials said an Israeli drone strike killed three civilians and injured several others yesterday, the latest violence to hit the Palestinian territory despite a ceasefire.

Israel and Hamas trade near-daily accusations of truce violations and the Gaza Strip remains gripped by bloodshed as progress stalls on permanently ending their war. "Three people were killed and several injured when an Israeli drone struck a group of civilians," Al-Aqsa hospital said in a statement.

Gaza's civil defence agency, which acts as a rescue force under Hamas, said the strike hit an area in Deir el-Balah in central Gaza.

At least 1,041 Palestinians have been killed in Gaza since the ceasefire took effect on October 10 last year, according to the territory's health ministry, which operates under Hamas authority and whose figures are considered reliable by the United Nations.

The Israeli army has reported



Mourners attend the funeral of slain Palestinians at Al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital in Deir al-Balah, in the central Gaza Strip, yesterday. (Reuters)

six deaths in its ranks during the same period.

Restrictions imposed on media outlets and limited access in Gaza prevent AFP from independently verifying tolls or freely covering the violence.

**Israeli forces kill Palestinian teen in West Bank**

Israeli forces fatally shot a 15-year-old Palestinian teenager during a raid in the occupied West Bank yesterday, the Palestinian

health ministry said, as violence surges in the Israeli-occupied territory.

"The child Amir Ahmad Jawad Jaber, 15 years old, was martyred after being shot in the head and once in the chest by occupation soldiers during their raid in the Umm al-Sharayat neighbourhood in Al-Bireh" near the West Bank city of Ramallah, the ministry said.

There was no immediate

response from the Israeli military when asked about the incident.

The Palestinian Red Crescent had earlier said its teams were transporting to hospital and trying to resuscitate a 15-year-old who was shot in the head with live ammunition during a raid in the Umm al-Sharayat area.

Dozens of mourners gathered at the Palestine Medical Complex as grieving relatives wept over the teenager's body.

"Today, we witnessed a clear-cut execution in broad daylight," Laila Ghannam, governor of Ramallah and Al-Bireh, told AFP.

"This is a disgrace to all institutions who claim to uphold democracy and human rights.

"When it comes to our cause, they see nothing. They allow this occupation to escalate its campaign of terror every single day — not only across Palestine, but throughout the entire region."

Since the start of the Gaza war, violence has escalated in the West Bank, which Israel has occupied since 1967. Israeli soldiers or settlers have killed at least 1,085 Palestinians in the West Bank since October 2023, according to Palestinian health ministry data.



Lebanese army chief Rodolphe Haykal (R) meeting with Admiral Brad Cooper, the commander of US Central Command (CENTCOM), at the Lebanese Ministry of Defence in Yarze. (AFP)

**Lebanon's army chief discusses Israel deal with US military commander**

AFP  
Beirut

The Lebanese army said yesterday its chief and a senior US military commander discussed implementation of US-Lebanon-Israel agreement signed last week that aims to halt hostilities between Israel and Hezbollah.

Lebanon's Rodolphe Haykal received Admiral Brad Cooper, the commander responsible for US troops in the Middle East, with the discussions addressing "the latest developments in Lebanon and the region", a Lebanese army statement said.

Haykal and Cooper also discussed "the importance of successfully implementing the security annex of the framework agreement", as well as ways of strengthening future co-operation, the statement added.

On Friday, Lebanon and Israel, under US sponsorship, signed a "trilateral framework" agreement seeking to end hostilities, after the Iran-backed Hezbollah drew Lebanon into the Middle East war in March with rocket fire at Israel, triggering Israeli airstrikes and a ground invasion.

The deal commits Lebanon to restoring sovereignty over its territory through the "verified disarmament of non-state armed groups and dismantlement of associated infrastructure", enabling a progressive Israeli withdrawal, according to the text released by the State Department.

"The components of this process will be detailed in a Security Annex, developed with the full support of the United States," the text said, without immediately publishing the annex.

US Secretary of State Marco Rubio said on Friday that Washington would reimburse Lebanon's army for \$30mn as it seeks to "improve the capability and capacity" of the Lebanese military.

Washington has long been a key supporter of Lebanon's army.

Hezbollah chief Naim Qassem has called the agreement "null and void" and instead called for the implementation of a US-Iran memorandum of understanding to halt the regional war that included Lebanon.

The Israel-Lebanon talks in Washington have sought to separate Lebanon from the Iran deal.

However, Friday's agreement came after a lull in fighting that followed the US-Iran memorandum, which Tehran insisted should include Lebanon.

Hezbollah yesterday said it reserved the right to self-defence after several Israeli attacks on southern Lebanon the day before, accusing Israel of a "blatant violation of the ceasefire".

Israeli troops are operating in a self-declared "security zone" stretching around 10 kms deep inside Lebanese territory along the border.

Lebanese authorities say Israeli attacks since the war began on March 2 have killed more than 4,200 people.

**UN chief slams 'relentless' Israeli settlement expansion**

UN chief Antonio Guterres has condemned the "relentless" expansion of Israeli settlements in the West Bank, saying in a report seen yesterday by AFP they are contributing to the territory's worst displacement crisis since 1967.

The secretary-general, in a quarterly report on the West Bank, said an increase in settler outposts was leading to an upsurge in violence and restricting Palestinians' access to their land.

"These developments fuel tensions, further entrench the un-

lawful Israeli occupation, undermine the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination, and threaten the viability of a fully independent, contiguous, and sovereign Palestinian State," Guterres said.

He specifically warned against Israeli plans to develop in the so-called E1 area of the West Bank, saying new settlements "would effectively sever the connection between the northern and southern West Bank."

"As such, it would have severe consequences for the territorial

contiguity of the Occupied Palestinian Territory and present an existential threat to the two-State solution," Guterres said.

The report also denounced impunity towards violence by Israeli settlers, pointing out it often occurs in the presence of — or with the support of — Israeli security forces.

"Settler violence, access restrictions, demolitions and prolonged security operations have intensified in recent years, resulting in the largest displacement crisis in the West

Bank since 1967," Guterres said.

In a joint statement ahead of a UN Security Council meeting on the West Bank, five European members of the council — France, Britain, Greece, Latvia and Denmark — condemned settlement activity.

"We call on the Israeli Government to end its expansion of settlements and administrative powers, ensure accountability for settler violence and investigate allegations against Israeli forces," France's UN envoy Jerome Bonafont said. (AFP)

**Iraqi FM makes first visit to Syria since Assad's fall**

Iraqi Foreign Minister Fuad Hussein yesterday began his first trip to Syria since the December 2024 ouster of longtime ruler Bashar al-Assad.

Relations between the two countries have faced upheaval since the fall of Assad, who was a close ally of previous governments in Baghdad.

Iraq at first approached new ruler Ahmed al-Sharaa cautiously but is now seeking to bolster trade and security co-operation with Syria, which is emerging from years of civil war.

An Iraqi diplomatic source told AFP that Hussein would meet al-Sharaa as well as Syrian Foreign Minister Asaad al-Shaibani and Energy Minister Mohammad al-Bashir.

The visit seeks to "deepen joint co-operation in various political, security, economic and trade fields" and address regional and international developments, ac-

ording to a statement from Hussein's office.

His meetings will also explore "ways of strengthening coordination and consultation" on shared challenges, it added.

With its oil exports disrupted due to the Middle East war, Iraq in recent months has begun exporting limited amounts of oil through Syria. Hussein is the first senior Iraqi political figure to visit Damascus since the new authorities took power, though other Iraqi officials have done so.

Iraqi intelligence chief Hamid al-Shatri visited the month Assad was ousted, while Syria's al-Shaibani made his first trip to Baghdad in March last year.

In May 2025, several powerful Iraqi politicians voiced opposition to a planned visit by al-Sharaa to Iraq for an Arab League summit, with security sources telling AFP an old arrest warrant from his time as a member of Al-



Syrian President Ahmed al-Sharaa (L) meeting with Iraqi Foreign Minister Fuad Hussein in Damascus yesterday. (AFP)

Qaeda remained in place.

Al-Sharaa, however, skipped the summit and al-Shaibani attended instead. Al-Sharaa, whose group spearheaded the offensive that toppled Assad, was imprisoned for years in Iraq on charges of belonging to Al-Qaeda following the 2003 US-led invasion.

In February this year, the US completed the transfer of 5,700 Islamic State group detainees, including hundreds of foreigners, from Syria to Iraq, after they had

been held in Kurdish-run jails in northeast Syria for years.

In April, Iraq reopened a border crossing with Syria more than a decade after it was closed to trade following the rise of IS.

Three crossings between the countries are now operational.

Iraqi authorities view the new crossing as strategic as it also helps link the country and neighbouring Gulf states to Turkiye as part of a regional infrastructure development project. (AFP)

**Kenya-US rare earths deal challenged in court over secrecy**

AFP  
Nairobi

A multi-billion-dollar rare earth minerals deal between Kenya and the US was challenged in a Kenyan court yesterday, accused of lacking transparency.

The deal involves minerals critical to high-tech and low-carbon industries in the coastal forest of Mrima Hill, which is believed to hold deposits worth about \$62.4bn, including large reserves of niobium, a metal used to strengthen steel.

The Centre for Litigation Trust, a legal advocacy organisation, is suing the Kenyan government in a bid to halt the deal with the US to mine the area, after media reports that it was nearing completion.

In court papers seen by AFP, the group calls for full transparency and public consultation around the deal, arguing that any such agreement requires approval by parliament.

"The specific contract and framework details are shrouded in secrecy, remain opaque and vague to the public," the submission reads.

"Kenyans had no knowledge of

the state of affairs pertaining the preliminary agreement."

Yesterday, the High Court directed the respondents to be served with the application and to file their responses within 14 days.

President Donald Trump has made securing critical minerals a key pillar of Washington's Africa policy, with Kenya emerging as a priority target.

US officials have attended high-level mining talks in Kenya in recent months.

Kenya opened a tender in April for the exploitation of Mrima Hill in Kwale County, estimated to

contain 5.8mn tonnes of niobium and 48.7mn tonnes of rare earth elements.

The mining ministry has yet to announce the winning bidder.

Mrima Hill, a 390-acre forest on Kenya's Indian Ocean coast, has long been at the centre of disputes over its untapped mineral wealth, with locals fearing eviction without compensation and exclusion from the benefits.

"The extractive industry is often exploitative and prone to gross human rights abuses that must be monitored and enforced," Julius Oogoh, the director of the lobby group, told AFP.

**QCS warns against tanning beds; launches "No Safe Tan" campaign**

Qatar Cancer Society (QCS) has warned against the use of tanning beds, which have recently become increasingly popular among some women and adolescents seeking a tanned complexion.

QCS stressed that tanning beds are not a safe way to achieve a tan, as they expose users to artificial ultraviolet radiation that significantly increases the risk of skin cancer, including malignant melanoma. In addition, they accelerate premature skin ageing and may cause damage to the eyes and the DNA of skin cells.

Dr Hadi Mohammed Abu Rasheed, director of programmes at QCS, explained that the common perception that tanned skin reflects beauty or good health is a misconception. A tan produced by a tanning bed is simply the skin's natural response to UV-induced damage and should never be considered an indicator of healthy skin.

He added that the World Health Organisation and the International Agency for Research on Cancer classify UV-emitting tanning devices as Group 1 carcinogens—the highest classification for agents scientifically proven to cause cancer in humans.

Dr Abu Rasheed noted that scientific evidence shows that using a tanning bed at least once during a lifetime is associated with approximately a 20% increased risk of melanoma compared with never using one. The risk increases by 59% when indoor tanning begins before age 35. Evidence also confirms that skin and DNA damage



Dr Hadi Mohammed Abu Rasheed

can occur even without visible sunburn or redness, dispelling the misconception that tanning is safe as long as the skin does not burn. He further emphasised that tanning beds are not a safe source of vitamin D. Instead, vitamin D requirements can be met through a balanced diet, supplements when medically indicated, and moderate sun exposure in accordance with public health recommendations. In line with its commitment to cancer prevention, QCS has launched a three-month public awareness campaign, titled "No Safe Tan," to increase awareness of the health risks associated with indoor tanning and correct misconceptions linking tanned skin with beauty or wellness. "Prevention begins with awareness," Dr Abu Rasheed said. "It is essential that the public — particularly young people — understand that any unnecessary exposure to ultraviolet radiation increases the risk of skin cancer and can have lasting harmful effects on skin health."



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WGS is not a crystal ball. It cannot say with certainty who will or will not develop cancer. Cancer risk is influenced by many factors, including genes, age, lifestyle, environment, hormones, infections and chance. But WGS can give doctors and patients better information about inherited risk. In medicine, better information can lead to better timing, better monitoring and better decisions.

It should not replace routine check-ups, imaging, colonoscopy, Pap smears or medical advice. Instead, it helps personalise when these steps should begin and how carefully a high-risk person should be followed over time, safely and with clinical confidence.

Interpretation is essential. Some genetic changes are clearly harmful, some are harmless, and some remain uncertain. That is why genetic counselling before and after testing is not optional; it is central to responsible care. Patients must understand what the test can show, what it cannot show, and how the result should be used.

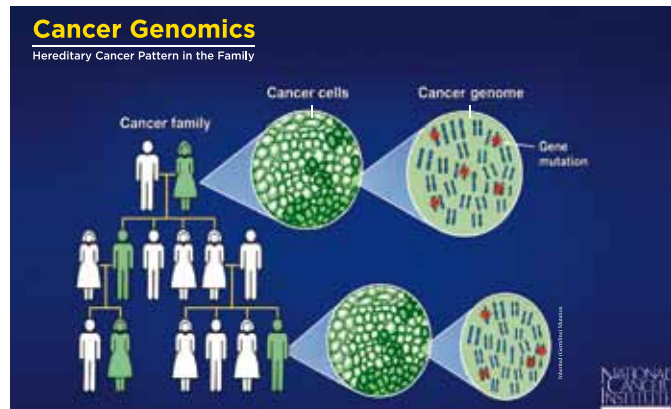
For the Gulf region, where cancer prevention and early detection are becoming urgent health priorities, WGS offers an opportunity to move from late diagnosis to earlier risk awareness. It can help families convert unanswered questions into a medical plan.

Cancer often feels sudden. A person may feel well, attend work, support a family, and then discover a serious illness after a scan, biopsy or blood test. Yet in many families, part of the warning may have existed long before symptoms appeared. It may have been quietly written into the DNA.

That is why genetic testing is becoming an important part of cancer prevention. It can help identify people who have inherited a higher chance of developing certain cancers, so doctors can plan earlier screening, closer follow-up and preventive care.

However, not all genetic tests are the same. Many commonly used cancer gene panels examine only a selected list of genes, often chosen because they are already well known. These tests are valuable, especially when there is a strong family history, but they do not read the full genetic story. A negative result usually means that no harmful change was found in the genes included in that specific test. It does not mean the person has no cancer risk.

Whole Genome Sequencing, or WGS, takes a broader approach. It is designed to read the entire genetic code, rather than only a shortlist of genes. This wider view may help detect inherited cancer-predisposition variants, structural changes, and other genetic clues that limited panels may miss. For families affected by breast, ovarian, colorectal, pancreatic, prostate or other repeated cancers, this broader view can be clinically meaningful.



The practical value is prevention. If a significant risk variant is found, a person may be advised to start screening earlier than usual, repeat screening more frequently, or choose more specific tests. Family members may also be offered targeted testing, helping identify who needs closer follow-up and who may not carry the same inherited risk. In some situations, preventive treatment or specialist referral may be considered.

Equally important, WGS can reduce false reassurance. A standard panel may come back clear, while a broader genome test may still identify a relevant finding outside the original panel. At the same time, WGS can also confirm when no clearly harmful inherited variant is detected, allowing doctors to guide care based on personal and family history rather than fear alone.

## Micro Health Laboratories Now offers

Whole Genome Sequencing locally, through a simple blood draw, with genetic counselling before and after testing.

Your genome cannot predict everything. But it may reveal risks that would otherwise remain hidden. The information has always been there. The next step is to read it wisely.

*“Whole Genome Sequencing does not merely test for disease; it reads the deeper biological story of an individual, helping medicine move from late diagnosis to early risk awareness, prevention, and truly personalized care.”*

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# SC boosts Trump's power to fire officials, but protects Fed

AFP  
Washington

The US Supreme Court yesterday fortified President Donald Trump's powers to fire members of independent government agencies, but carved out protections for the Federal Reserve by blocking the firing of Governor Lisa Cook.

In a 6-3 ruling, the court's conservative majority rejected a challenge by Democratic Federal Trade Commissioner Rebecca Slaughter, ruling that Trump had the power to fire "subordinates who exercise the President's power."

The decision is expected to have wide-ranging implications, with Trump having aggressively sought to expand executive powers as he works to transform the US government and put political allies in key positions.

Trump hailed the verdict in a social media post, saying it expanded presidential power "at a time when it is most needed."

"It is such an Honour to be the sitting President who won this Historic and Unprecedented Ruling, one of the most important ever given with respect to Presidential Powers," he said.

Slaughter was dismissed without cause and lower courts upheld her claim that the move violated rules Congress put in place to protect the members of dozens of independent government agencies.

But in Monday's decision, written by Chief Justice John Roberts, the court's majority cited writings by James Madison — a framer of the US constitution who became president — and other Supreme Court rulings that empowered the president on personnel decisions.

"Independent agencies are not 'independent' in the sense that they are free of the President and thus responsive 'only to the peo-



President Donald Trump at the White House. (Reuters/File Photo)

ple of the United States,'" Roberts wrote in a decision that frequently cited earlier rulings.

In a scathing dissent, Justice Sonia Sotomayor wrote that the majority opinion had upended the separation of powers.

"Today, the majority replaces 90 years of proven, workable practice with a half-baked theory of executive power that is simultaneously all encompassing yet also subject to necessary but undefined exceptions," Justice Sotomayor wrote.

"The one thing that does appear to be clear going forward is that chaos will follow."

Democratic Senator Elizabeth Warren slammed the opinion, saying "Donald Trump has fired Democratic appointees and seized control of formerly independent agencies so they serve him and his billionaire friends instead of the American public."

In a separate case involving Cook, however, the Supreme Court ruled that while Trump had the

## Trump threatens 'action' against Fed governor despite Supreme Court ruling

US President Donald Trump yesterday threatened to take "appropriate action" against Fed Governor Lisa Cook, after a Supreme Court ruling blocked him from firing her.

"We will take appropriate action immediately to make sure that someone who has committed wrongdoing will not be making vital decisions concerning the Welfare of the United States of America!" Trump said in a social media post, terming the Supreme Court verdict "strictly procedural." (AFP)

power to fire Federal Reserve governors for cause, he could not do so "for any reason or no reason."

The US central bank is a non-

partisan institution that makes monetary policy for the world's largest economy, with governors appointed by the president after a Senate confirmation process.

The court made special mention of the importance of the Fed's independence.

"Not only the fact of independence but also the appearance of independence is key to the Federal Reserve's design," its 5-4 verdict read.

"We see no reason to leave the public in limbo, or to sow doubt as to the status of one of our Nation's (and the world's) most important financial institutions," Chief Justice Roberts wrote in his decision.

The court decided the case "on the narrow ground that the President failed to afford Cook the procedural protections to which she was entitled by statute," the verdict said.

It dismissed the "halfhearted contention" that the Fed governor had received due process.

Cook welcomed the decision, saying it "affirms" the central bank's independence, but Trump immediately went on the offensive.

"We will take appropriate action immediately to make sure that someone who has committed wrongdoing will not be making vital decisions concerning the Welfare of the United States of America!" he posted on social media.

It was unclear what Trump meant by the assertion.

Cook has denied mortgage fraud allegations and in its Monday verdict the Supreme Court said the government was "unlikely" to prevail on appeal in its attempts to remove the Fed governor.

Trump has exerted unprecedented pressure on the Fed to lower interest rates to boost economic activity, and his attempt to fire Cook was the first time a president had tried such a move in the bank's 111-year history.

# 'SC ruling defends central bank's independence'

Reuters  
Washington

Federal Reserve Governor Lisa Cook said the US Supreme Court's decision yesterday to block President Donald Trump's attempted firing of her defended the central bank's independence. The 5-4 ruling by the nation's highest court "recognizes that Federal Reserve independence is essential to fulfilling the congressional mandate of price stability and maximum employment," Cook said in a statement.

Trump's action "was an attempt to remove me on a manufactured pretext because I refused to bow to political pressure and continued to set interest rates based only on what would best serve the American people," she said. "I am grateful for this decision, not for my own sake, but for the sake of the American people, whose economic well-being depends on a central bank that answers to its mission, not political intimidation."

The Supreme Court said in its ruling that Fed officials do not serve at the pleasure of the president and that Trump's attempt to remove Cook from the central bank did not afford her proper due process.

Fed governors, who are selected by the president and confirmed to their jobs by the Senate, serve fixed terms that are designed to provide them insulation from the political process to better set monetary policy. It is widely accepted that central banks that operate independently achieve better economic outcomes.

Trump attempted to fire Cook, the first Black woman to serve as a Fed governor, over allegations of mortgage fraud that struck many observers as bogus. The Supreme Court decision prevents Trump from firing Cook



Federal Reserve Governor Lisa Cook. (Reuters)

while she challenges the president's move against her in court.

Since returning to office, Trump has directed considerable pressure against the Fed to lower interest rates despite the fact that doing so conflicted with the central bank's mission to bring high levels of inflation back to its 2% target. Trump's Department of Justice also launched an unprecedented investigation into the central bank and its then-Fed Chair Jerome Powell over cost overruns at its Washington headquarters. Powell, who remains a Fed governor, argued that attack was revenge for not following the president's orders on interest rate policy. That probe into the central bank is effectively over.

Cook's legal team said in a statement that "making unproven allegations of mortgage fraud to justify a power grab has become a pattern of the Trump administration, but today the Supreme Court said no."

Bill Pulte, who has served as head of the Federal Housing Finance Agency in the second Trump administration, has pushed the mortgage fraud accusation. Pulte, who has been named the acting Director of National Intelligence, said on the X platform that, "I believe Lisa Cook will be indicted for mortgage fraud."

## US court nods mail-in ballots tallying after Election Day

The US Supreme Court, in a blow to Republican President Donald Trump, upheld yesterday a state law that allows mail-in ballots received after Election Day to be counted. The court, in a 5-4 ruling, rejected a Republican challenge to a Mississippi law that allows mail-in ballots to be tallied if they are postmarked Election Day and arrive within five business days after the day of the vote. Trump has been a vocal critic of mail-in ballots and has falsely claimed that they contributed to his 2020 election loss to Democrat Joe Biden. He signed an executive order in March seeking to crack down on mail-in voting but it has been blocked by the lower courts. In a post on Truth Social, Trump described the Supreme Court ruling as a "tremendous loss" for "voter's rights."

The case decided by the conservative-dominated Supreme Court on Monday involved a challenge to the Mississippi law by the Republican National Committee (RNC). Some 30 states allow absentee ballots received after election day to be counted. (AFP)

# US Marines repairing ravaged La Guaira port

US Marines are working to repair the Venezuelan port of La Guaira, a senior administration official said yesterday, as Washington boosted its financial commitment for the earthquake-hit country to \$300mn.

A "specialised team of Marines" are "working around the clock to repair that port and allow the delivery of critical supplies by sea," the US official told journalists on condition of anonymity, adding that the USS Fort Lauderdale — an amphibious transport dock warship — had also docked there.

La Guaira, on Venezuelan's northern coast, is one of the country's two main ports.

Earlier yesterday the US State Department announced that Washington has now pledged more than \$300mn in funding to aid Venezuela, up from a previous commitment of \$150mn.

"These funds will provide emergency medical care, food assistance, water and sanitation, shelter, protection, and logistics," the department said in a

statement yesterday.

The money is being directed through partner organisations including Samaritan's Purse, Catholic Relief Services, the International Organization for Migration, the World Food Programme and the Red Cross, the statement said.

Washington has also deployed four urban search-and-rescue teams to Venezuela that are made up of more than 300 first responders and almost two dozen search dogs, it added.

Devastating back-to-back 7.2 and 7.5 magnitude earthquakes struck near Venezuela's Caribbean coast last week, collapsing buildings, damaging the country's main airport and several other key infrastructures.

The US assistance for Venezuela comes as ties between Washington and Caracas have warmed in recent months after American forces captured former president Nicolas Maduro in January and the Trump administration began working with an interim government led by Delcy Rodriguez. (AFP)

# Critical rescue window closing in Venezuela as quake death toll soars

AFP  
La Guaira, Venezuela

Emergency teams with rescue dogs were searching Sunday for any remaining survivors of powerful twin earthquakes that struck Venezuela, where the death toll has surpassed 1,450 and nearly 200 buildings have completely collapsed.

A man and his teen son were found alive under the rubble Sunday by French and American rescue teams in Caraballeda, a town about 40 kilometers north of Caracas, AFP journalists saw.

The rescue offered a glimmer of hope in an ongoing tragedy that has shaken a country already mired in an economic crisis, but tens of thousands of people were still reported missing and the critical 72-hour window for rescuing trapped victims following a natural disaster has now passed.

Millions more people were feared to lack sanitation and other basic needs after one of Latin America's most devastating earthquake disasters.

Rescue teams from the US, Mexico and elsewhere scrambled to save people as desperate residents dug by hand for relatives trapped in the pancaked layers and rubble of collapsed apartments.

Some 774 buildings were badly damaged in back-to-back quakes of magnitude 7.2 and 7.5 that struck on Wednesday evening, including 189 buildings that have totally collapsed, National Assembly President Jorge Rodriguez said Sunday.

In one of the worst-hit areas, the coastal city of La Guaira, Hector Aguilera came to search for four family members buried in the rubble.

"We don't have the support to get our family out — we can't do it alone. They are buried there: we know they are dead, but here we are," he said.

"We have no hope left; all I have are memories." Experts say the first 72 hours after natural disasters define the narrow window for rescuing the living. After that the search usually becomes one of recovering bodies.

In the San Bernardino neighborhood of Caracas, volunteers clambered over a collapsed building, using drills to break up



A drone view shows buildings destroyed in La Guaira. (Reuters)

concrete and forming lines to remove rubble by hand.

In Chacao, another area of the capital, large electronic screens on a building usually used for advertising were showing the faces of missing people in a bid to help find them.

On Sunday, Rodriguez reported 1,450 dead — a toll expected to rise — with 3,150 people injured.

Even as rescue efforts continued apace, outbreaks of looting hit La Guaira, much of which now lies in rubble after Wednesday's disaster.

Pharmacies, supermarkets and other businesses were ransacked, said residents, some of whom complained of the slow and meager post-quake aid coming from authorities.

Interim Venezuelan President Delcy Rodriguez on Sunday praised rescuers for still pulling survivors from the ruins.

"Today we have rescued people who are still alive, and therefore these efforts will not be suspended," she said.

"We always hold onto hope." US helicopters ferried in aid, and 230 more US military personnel were arriving to help expand airport capacity and reopen a key seaport to boost relief efforts, the US Southern Command said Sunday.

The US had already sent a 250-strong disaster response team.

But the prospect for rescuing more survivors has dwindled. A Salvadoran rescue worker who declined to give his name put it this way: "At this point, they are probably dead bodies. Thanks to God maybe we can find people still alive."

Exasperation has boiled over

in some locales where residents claim that authorities have not done enough to rescue earthquake victims.

"The country needs you. Put down your weapon," one man shouted to soldiers in the Tanaguarena area of hard-hit La Guaira state, urging them to pick up picks and shovels instead.

Facing public outrage at the response by local officials, Rodriguez thanked other countries for the outpouring of aid.

Twenty-four nations have sent 521 tons of supplies, 86 units with dogs trained to locate people trapped beneath the rubble and more than 2,700 search-and-rescue personnel, she said.

The UN migration agency said that based on population and damage data, up to 6.76mn people could be affected, and would require shelter, water, sanitation, healthcare and essential relief items.

Venezuela's worst earthquakes in more than a century have come after the oil-rich country endured more than a decade of economic collapse.

The crisis has hollowed out hospitals and public services, driving millions to leave the country.

The UN estimated \$6.7 bn in physical damage — equivalent to 6% of Venezuela's GDP.

On Sunday Venezuelan opposition figure Maria Corina Machado, currently in exile, announced she will return "very soon" to her homeland.

"The time has come," she told US broadcaster Fox News.

"We need to be together, to embrace, to grieve and mourn together, but also to give each other strength at this difficult time."

# Father and son rescued from rubble after 4 days

Reuters  
La Guaira

A father and his son were pulled out alive from the rubble of a collapsed building on Sunday, four days after the devastating earthquakes that struck Venezuela.

It was a scene that gave hope to the French and US rescue workers active in the area as they race against the clock to find more survivors.

Rescue workers carried the pair, visibly weakened and both wearing masks, on improvised fabric stretchers through debris-strewn streets to a waiting ambulance, as a crowd gathered around the emergency vehicles in La Guaira.

The coastal state was hardest hit by the earthquakes on Wednesday that left at least 1,450 dead and thousands missing.

Their rescue came after 12 hours

of painstaking efforts by teams that combed through the ruins using specialised search cameras, carefully working through unstable rubble to reach the trapped victims.

"They are extremely weak, as any patient trapped under rubble for four days would be, so we are doing everything possible to rehydrate them and administer various medications during the extraction process, which is moving very slowly," said a member of the French Civil Security.

The rescue team in that area includes members of the French Civil Security and American responders from the Fairfax County Urban Search and Rescue Team in Virginia, who the previous day rescued a mother and her 9-month-old baby. Before extracting the family members, rescuers prepared intravenous drips and cleared debris. Others remained beside the rubble searching for signs of life and com-



A drone view shows buildings destroyed by earthquakes, in La Guaira. (Reuters)

municating with their colleagues among the remains.

At least 33 people were rescued over the weekend, though tens of thousands remain missing, heightening fears that time is running out to find survivors.

# Burnham promises radical devolution of UK govt as PM

AFP  
Manchester

The frontrunner to become Britain's next prime minister, Andy Burnham, vowed in a speech yesterday to "bring about the biggest rebalancing of power our country has seen" if he succeeds Keir Starmer.

Burnham — currently the only candidate to replace Starmer, who resigned as Labour leader and prime minister earlier this month — pledged to devolve greater powers to regional mayors, including the northwestern city of Manchester where until recently he was in charge.

"I am going to give Britain the circuit breaker it needs," Burnham told an invited audience in Manchester, pledging to put power "in the hands of the people and places who can use it best."

"We need a new determination to raise living standards of every single person in this land," he added.

"And we must accept that to do that, to fix the economy and the country, we need to change politics and we need to do it now."

Opposition leaders criticised the speech.

"He doesn't have a plan beyond telling mayors to go and sort it out," said Kemi Badenoch, leader of the main opposition Conservatives.



Andy Burnham, British member of parliament for Macclesfield, delivers a speech at the People's History Museum in Manchester, yesterday. (Reuters)

Robert Jenrick of the hard-right Reform UK party, which has led national opinion polls for more than a year, said the British public wanted "radical change now".

"People can't wait 10 years," he told the GB News television station, after Burnham promised "a 10-year mission to raise living standards across the land".

Delivering his speech from a Manchester museum, Burnham described Britain as "one of the most over-centralised countries in the world".

Starmer, who became prime minister in July 2024 after Labour won an election landslide,

announced his resignation last Monday. If no challenger comes forward to replace him, Burnham could be prime minister as early as mid-July.

Burnham used his speech to pledge fiscal discipline and to reduce the country's ballooning welfare bill, having already sought to calm markets by committing to the government's current borrowing limits.

He proposed the creation of a "No. 10 North" to co-ordinate the devolution — a play on words on the prime minister's address at 10 Downing Street.

"We will create a more streamlined state with a clearer purpose:

to power up all parts of the country and put a laser-like focus on growth and regeneration," he said.

"The change will be driven through the prime minister's office in an extended operation, based here in Manchester."

He vowed that office would "oversee the biggest council house building programme since the post-war period".

However, he did not set out how that would be funded, amid squeezed public finances in the United Kingdom.

Coining the phrase "Manchesterism", which he defines as business-friendly socialism, Burnham has railed against trickle-down economics and neo-liberalism.

Among his more defined economic beliefs is greater "public control" over services like transport, water and energy, though he was vague yesterday on whether this meant full renationalisation of utilities.

Under Starmer, British railway operators were gradually re-entering public hands.

Burnham has positioned himself as a champion for small businesses and proposed cutting business rates for pubs and music venues.

"I will back our scientists, technologists, entrepreneurs, and creatives, as I have done here (in Manchester), and show how Britain will be the innovation nation of the next decade," he said yesterday.

# Catherine completes 3 mountains challenge

AFP  
London

Britain's future queen Princess Catherine climbed the highest mountains in Scotland, England and Wales over the weekend, in an endurance test to raise money for a cancer charity and "explore life beyond diagnosis".

The princess, whose husband is heir to the throne Prince William, announced in January 2025 that she was in remission from cancer, and has been gradually returning to public royal duties.

In a social media video posted late Sunday, Kate revealed that she had completed the climbs — known as the Three Peaks Challenge in Britain — "to give something back".

"I'm so grateful to be here, to be strong enough to walk these hills," she said. "But more importantly it is to give something back and acknowledge really all the incredible working going on up and down this country."

In another post — accompanied by a photograph of the princess at one of the misty summits — Kate wrote a lengthy message about the feat.

"I have taken on the National Three Peaks Challenge, not simply as a physical endeavour but

as a chance to explore life beyond diagnosis," she stated.

"Through this challenge, I want to raise awareness for the deeper impact of serious illness and the importance of holistic healthcare."

The princess climbed Scotland's Ben Nevis, England's Scafell Pike and Wales's Snowdon within 24 hours this weekend starting on Saturday evening, trekking for 23 miles (37 kilometres) and ascending more than 10,000 feet in total.

She was greeted at the end by her husband William and her children Prince George, Princess Charlotte and Prince Louis, as well as her parents and brother.

Her Kensington Palace office said it believed the princess was the first member of the royal family to complete the challenge.

Kate, 44, revealed in March 2024 that she had been diagnosed with the unspecified type of cancer and had begun chemotherapy.

She was treated for the disease at London's Royal Marsden Hospital, with the peaks challenge supporting The Royal Marsden Cancer Charity through a specially designed fundraising page.

The future queen has gradually resumed official duties in public, in May carrying out her first overseas royal visit since the cancer diagnosis when she travelled to Italy.

# China grounds light aircraft after Beijing tower crash, FT reports

Reuters  
Beijing

China has grounded flights of private light fixed-wing aircraft after a plane crashed into Beijing's tallest building last week, the *Financial Times* reported yesterday, citing operators around the country. The sole pilot on board the twin-seat aircraft was killed during the incident on Friday, which injured 13 people who weren't on board, local government said on Saturday. The aircraft crashed into a 528-metre-high (1,732-foot) building, known as CITIC Tower or China Zun, in Beijing's central business district during the evening rush hour. A nationwide airspace control order covering recreational flights has been issued, with all relevant flying activities banned, the *FT* reported.

The restrictions have not been announced publicly. Reuters could not immediately verify the report.

The Civil Aviation Administration of China did not immediately respond to a Reuters request for comment. Authorities are investigating the incident and have given no details on the possible cause of the crash.

China's skies are among the most tightly controlled in the world, with the military retaining primary authority over airspace access and allocation. Beijing is among the most sensitive parts of that management framework.

There is a permanent no-fly zone of roughly 100sq km (39 sq miles) over the political and ceremonial core of the Chinese capital, according to a Reuters review of official aviation navigation rules. The prohibited area is immediately to the west of the skyscraper-dense central business district, and covers Tiananmen Square and the Zhongnanhai, a compound that houses the offices of China's top political leadership. While police and other official aircraft have occasionally been spotted

over downtown Beijing, apart from military aircraft formations during national parades, a plane near the city's skyscrapers is an exceptionally rare sight.

Commercial jets are routed around Beijing's dense urban areas, with low-flying general aviation broadly restricted to the outskirts. Beijing instituted a citywide drone ban earlier this year. Drones generally can no longer be sold or brought into the Chinese capital, with storage also tightly regulated.

The timing of Friday's crash, just days before the Communist Party is set to celebrate the 105th anniversary of its founding on July 1, also places the incident under heightened political scrutiny, putting pressure on administrators to adopt tougher controls.

Stocks related to China's low-altitude-airspace industry broadly fell on Monday, with CITIC Offshore Helicopter shares down 4% and Zongsen Power Machinery down 7.7%.

# China determined to support Belarus' national sovereignty

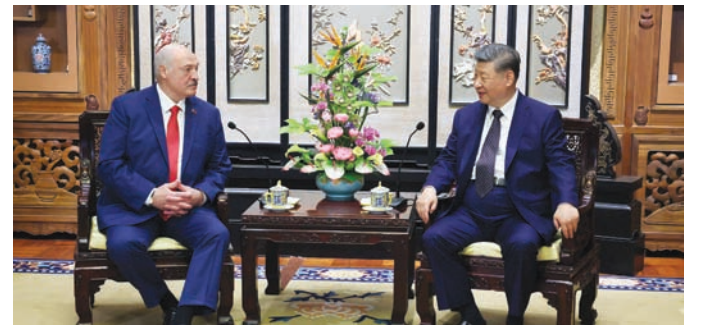
Reuters  
Beijing

China supports Belarus in safeguarding its national sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity, Chinese President Xi Jinping told Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko in Beijing yesterday, China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs said.

Lukashenko's visit to China comes after he held talks with Russian President Vladimir Putin last week.

The meeting follows mounting tension between Belarus and Ukraine, whose president, Volodymyr Zelensky, says he believes Putin is trying to get Lukashenko to step up his support for Russia in its Ukraine war.

Xi said China and Belarus "must maintain strategic communication, promote the con-



Belarus President Alexander Lukashenko meeting with China's President Xi Jinping at the Diaoyutai State Guesthouse in Beijing yesterday. (AFP)

tinuous advancement of bilateral relations at a high level and better benefit the peoples of both countries," the ministry said on its website.

China is willing to continue providing assistance within its capacity for Belarus' development and construction, Xi said.

China-Belarus relations are at their "historic peak," the Be-

larusian presidential Telegram channel Pul Pervogo said earlier yesterday.

"This is exactly what we talked with you before," Lukashenko replied, according to the Telegram post. "And perhaps, to some extent, what we had dreamed of on the eve of this global co-operation between Belarus and ... China."

# Ex-PM Hasina vows to return home this year

Reuters  
Dhaka

Ousted former prime minister Sheikh Hasina has vowed to return to Bangladesh this year, brushing aside a death sentence handed down in absentia and denouncing the ruling as "illegal, unconstitutional and politically motivated."

Hasina, 78, who fled to India after a student-led uprising ousted her government in August 2024, said in an interview with Indian broadcaster NDTV that she was undeterred by the risk and would overcome "every obstacle and every conspiracy" to return home.

"I want to say clearly: overcoming every obstacle and every conspiracy,

I will return to my country this year," Hasina said when asked whether she would come back despite the death sentence. It was the first time she had given a time for her return.

Rejecting the verdict, she accused Bangladesh's judiciary of being used as "an instrument of political revenge" aimed at eliminating her Awami League party's leadership.

"I do not fear death," she said, adding that past efforts to dismantle her party had failed and would fail again.

Defending her Awami League party, she said it remained deeply rooted in Bangladesh despite a ban on its activities. The restrictions, first imposed by the previous interim administration, remain in place under Prime Minister Tarique Rahman's government, which took of-

ice after February elections.

"The Awami League is not a paper organisation but a political force rooted in the soil of Bengal, in the people of Bengal, in the history of Bengal and in the identity of the Bengali nation," Hasina said.

She also urged the Tarique Rahman-led government to restore what she called a proper democratic environment by lifting the ban on her party, withdrawing what she described as false cases against its leaders, releasing political prisoners and allowing peaceful political activity.

The government has defended the legal proceedings, saying they are part of efforts to ensure accountability for alleged crimes committed during the final months of Hasina's administration.

# Australia, Vanuatu sign delayed security deal

Reuters  
Sydney

Australia and Vanuatu yesterday signed a development and security pact that had been delayed for months over Vanuatu's concerns that it could stifle investment from other countries.

Australia, which is in a battle for influence in the Pacific with China, will be consulted on any third-party investment in Vanuatu's critical infrastructure and remain the country's preferred security and policing partner. Canberra has previously unveiled funding of A\$500mn (\$345mn) over 10 years for the pact, known as the Nakamal Agreement.

"It encapsulates Vanuatu's sovereign decision not to permit its territory to be used for any foreign



Vanuatu's Jotham Napat and Australia's Anthony Albanese pose for photographs at Parliament House in Canberra, yesterday. (Reuters)

military base or infrastructure and that Vanuatu's critical infrastructure remains free from militarisation," Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese said at a news conference with his Vanuatu counterpart, Jotham Napat.

The agreement was to be signed in September, but was delayed af-

ter Napat said his coalition partner had raised concerns that it could restrict Vanuatu's ability to secure infrastructure funding from other countries.

Vanuatu is currently pursuing its own economic deal with China. Napat said yesterday it was awaiting approval from Beijing.

AFP  
Kuala Lumpur

The search for missing Malaysia Airlines flight MH370 will be extended for another year, Malaysia said yesterday, more than a decade after the plane disappeared.

The Boeing 777 carrying 239 people vanished from radar screens on March 8, 2014, while en route from Kuala Lumpur to Beijing in one of aviation's greatest enduring mysteries.

Two-thirds of the passengers were Chinese, and the rest included Malaysians, Indonesians and Australians, as well as Indian, American, Dutch and French nationals.

Despite the largest search in aviation history, the plane has not been found.

Malaysian Transport Minister Anthony Loke said yesterday the extension will run until June

30, 2027, and maintains all terms and conditions of the existing agreement with exploration firm Ocean Infinity.

This includes a "no find, no fee" principle, meaning Ocean Infinity will only be paid \$70mn if the wreckage is located.

"This decision is a manifestation of the government's continuous and unwavering commitment to provide a closure for the next of kin of the passengers aboard flight MH370," Loke said in a statement.

"The approval of this extension aims to allow the remaining search area of 7,428.54 square kilometres (2,868 square miles), to be fully completed by the company," he added.

The extension, Loke said, also took into account new commercial commitments received by Ocean Infinity that required its primary search assets to be temporarily redeployed to another location.

# New Delhi offers residents \$1,000 to scrap old cars for EVs

India's capital New Delhi will offer a cash incentive of over \$1,000 to car owners willing to scrap their old vehicle for an EV, according to a new policy finalised by the government yesterday in a move aimed at reducing high levels of air pollution.

New Delhi is one of the world's most polluted cities with air quality worsening in the winters when dense, stagnant air traps emissions from crops burning in neighbouring states, vehicle exhaust and construction dust.

Here are some details: The local government in New Delhi finalises new electric vehicle policy with an outlay of 150bn rupees (\$1.59bn) over four years to incentivise buyers of electric two-wheelers, cars and small trucks, as well as setting up EV chargers. To offer \$1,060 as scrapping incentive to those who trade in cars bought before April 1, 2020 for an EV.

Those buying a battery EV priced at up to 3mn rupees will be exempt from paying road

tax and registration fees, which typically amount to 4%-10% of the car's price.

Buyers of electric scooters and motorbikes will get a cash incentive of 30,000 rupees in the policy's first year, reducing to 10,000 rupees by year three. Delhi government will only register electric two-wheelers from April 1, 2028, forcing buyers to move away from gasoline and other powertrains. Will also incentivise setting up 32,000 EV charging points across Delhi. (Reuters)



## Qatar makes the case for holiday that is closer to home

There is a quiet confidence in the numbers, and it is worth pausing over. Qatar welcomed 1.13mn visitors in the first quarter of 2026 — and as the summer holidays settle in, the country is bracing not for a lull but for a fresh wave. After a spring shadowed by regional tension and stubbornly high airfares, that is no small thing. It is the sound of a sector finding its feet again.

The headwinds have been real. International arrivals dipped sharply in March, a reminder that tourism remains tethered to the mood of the wider region. But Qatar has been here before, and recovered before — rebuilding momentum after the pandemic, then turning a World Cup into a lasting calling card. The instinct now is not to wait anxiously for confidence to return, but to manufacture reasons for people to come, and to stay.

Hence the season's quiet pivot inward. Where once

the summer meant airports and departure boards, more families this year are discovering that the holiday can begin at home. The maths is persuasive — a domestic break can cost more than 50% less than one abroad — but the appeal runs deeper than the wallet. With more than 10 beaches, from open natural stretches to fully integrated beachfront resorts, alongside nature reserves, historic forts, parks and the new draw of attractions such as Meryal Waterpark, the country has quietly assembled a holiday it no longer needs to import.

Visit Qatar's "Hello Summer" campaign, running from May to the end of September, is the engine of this push: the Qatar Toy Festival, concerts, mall activations, theme parks and water attractions, much of it pitched squarely at families with children. The aim, refreshingly, is to break the tired assumption that a Gulf summer is something merely to be endured. It is

being reimagined as a season to be enjoyed.

The foundations are sturdier than a single quarter suggests. Qatar drew 5.1mn international visitors across 2025, up 3.7% on the year, with hotel room nights surpassing 10.8mn and occupancy climbing to 71%. Hotel capacity has more than doubled since 2015, and the country now counts over 40,000 keys. The Q1 spread tells its own reassuring story: Gulf visitors led with 36% of arrivals, Europeans followed at nearly 27%, and travellers from Asia and Oceania made up another 21% — proof that the appeal is broad, not narrow, and that no single market carries the weight alone.

What the experts call the "tourism square" — anchored by Hamad International Airport, linking Doha to more than 190 destinations across 35-plus airlines, and Qatar Airways with its 160-plus destinations and 140-plus daily flights — keeps

the doors open to the world even when the world hesitates to travel.

Crowned GCC Tourism Capital for 2026, Doha has earned its standing the unglamorous way: through clean arrivals, easy movement around a compact city, and the patient work of making visitors feel at home. Gulf families, who make up the largest share of arrivals, sense that hospitality instinctively. Europeans, the second-largest group, are increasingly drawn by the same.

Ambition has not dimmed either. The QR20bn Simaisma coastal destination and the National Tourism Strategy 2030 point to a country building for the long horizon, not merely the next quarter.

For now, the message is gentler and closer to hand. The world will return — it always does. And while it makes up its mind, Qatar is offering its own people a summer worth staying for.

## Why Doha? Because the venue is its own verdict!

Doha has spent a decade making itself the room where adversaries who cannot stand to share a building will nonetheless agree to share a city



HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani speaks prior to a quadrilateral meeting between the United States, Iran, Pakistan and Qatar at the Burgenstock luxury hotel complex overlooking Lake Lucerne, Switzerland, on June 21. (Reuters)

By Kamran Rehmat



There is a particular reflex that separates the diplomat from the dealmaker, and Qatar's prime minister displayed it twice in the same week, last week. The dealmaker announces a triumph and goes home. The top diplomat, a natural foreign minister if there is one, having signed the paper, looks up and says the labour is only now beginning.

"Now the real work is actually starting," Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani told the *Financial Times* of the US-Iran understanding reached in Switzerland — a sentence delivered not as anti-climax but as a statement of method. It is the same instinct that ran through his earlier conversation with Al Jazeera, where he described the memorandum between Washington and Tehran less as a destination than as a "clear institutional framework," scaffolding raised so that the talks can survive their own bad days.

Read side by side, the two interviews are a small masterclass in how Doha understands the

business of peace — and why, in a region that has spent the better part of two years learning the cost of escalation, that understanding has become indispensable.

Begin with the texture of the thing. Most mediation is narrated to the public in the grand abstractions of "tracks" and "frameworks." What is striking about the *FT* exchange is how quickly the prime minister descends from the cathedral of strategy into the plumbing. The crisis in the Strait of Hormuz, he explains, is not only a matter of mines and tankers but of mischief — of bad actors exploiting open shipping channels to impersonate authority. A vessel inching through the cleared lane might suddenly hear, over the radio, a voice claiming menace: "Go back, we are going to fire, we are the IRGC," he recounts. "That's what we are getting sometimes."

The remedy he describes is almost unglamorous in its practicality — a hotline whose entire purpose, in his words, is "to make sure that any ship that gets any type of threat is to be verified by Iran . . . and to let the ship pass safely."

This is diplomacy as defragmentation: the patient removal of the static and "disinformation" that allows a single rogue transmission to unravel a hard-won understanding. Few foreign ministers would bother to explain the wiring. That he does is a sign of a mediator who knows that wars resume not in summit halls but in the gaps between them.

That same realism shapes his reading of the human factor. Asked about the risk of spoilers inside Iran, he does not pretend the danger away, nor does he weaponise it. "You will always have people who don't like the deal, and you will have people who will try to sabotage," he told the *FT*. "It happens in any kind of conflict with any party." It is a remarkably even-handed sentence — the observation of a man who has sat across enough tables to know that every delegation contains its own internal opposition, and that the mediator's job is to build a structure sturdy enough to absorb the inevitable attempts to break it.

The Al Jazeera interview makes the design intent explicit: mechanisms, he says, have been put in place precisely so that the flare-ups over Lebanon and Hormuz that nearly derailed the opening round cannot do so again. Qatar's "core message," as he frames it, is that it has "strived to establish

a framework that protects this negotiation process." The verb matters. Not *win*. Protect.

It would be easy, given the stakes, to forget that Qatar is also a casualty here — and the dignity with which Sheikh Mohammed carries that fact is its own quiet argument. The country's Ras Laffan complex, the beating heart of the world's second-largest LNG export machine, was struck twice; repairs to the worst-hit facility, he acknowledges, could run to five years, and the long-planned expansion of the North Field has slipped.

A lesser interlocutor might have let grievance colour the diplomacy. Instead, he keeps the ledger sober and forward-looking. Production will return "within a few weeks, except the damaged facility," he tells the *FT*; the tankers are already being readied; QatarEnergy will lift force majeure only "once the company sees they have addressed all the issues, and it's safe to operate."

There is no triumphalism and no self-pity — only the unhurried confidence of a state that intends to be supplying the world long after the current crisis is a footnote.

And it is the world, not merely Qatar, that he keeps in frame. One of the most useful passages in either interview is his warning that the war's economic aftershocks



have not yet fully arrived.

"We stopped the damage from escalating and expanding," he told the *FT*, "but the impact of that damage will also take some time to appear. We will see the consequences coming in September, October."

From the country that supplies the planet with the largest share of its helium — the gas without which MRI scanners fall silent — and a commanding share of its urea, this is not parochial accounting. It is a reminder that a strait closed in the Gulf is felt in a hospital in Lyon and a wheat field in the Punjab, and that Qatar's interest in reopening it is continuous with everyone else's.

On the questions where moral clarity is required, he does not flinch, and he is careful to keep that clarity from curdling into belligerence. He calls Israel's conduct in Lebanon "disproportionate" and accuses its government, in the *FT*'s telling, of "escalating the conflicts instead of de-escalating."

To Al Jazeera he is sharper still, pointing to the hundred dead in three days while a ceasefire was nominally in force, and insisting on an end to the occupation of Lebanese territory and respect for Lebanese sovereignty. Yet even here the destination is not denunciation but de-escalation: a dedicated working group for Lebanon, a verification mechanism stitched together from the Lebanese government, US Central Command, Iran and the mediators. The criticism is in service of the architecture, not a substitute for it.

What elevates the whole performance from crisis management to statecraft is the horizon behind it. In both interviews the prime minister insists that the nuclear file is only one room in a much larger house — that the real prize is "this regional

security framework between us and Iran," as he put it to the *FT*, one that might in time carry "economic co-operation in the future between all of us — to bring the region back to stability."

He situates the entire effort within the priority set by HH the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani and his fellow leaders: to extinguish the flames and reach calm. And he refuses to let the moment pass without naming the wound beneath all the others, telling Al Jazeera that complete stability is unattainable without "a just and comprehensive solution to the Palestinian issue" — a Palestinian state standing sovereign beside a region in which, as he envisions it, Israel too has a settled place.

This is the connoisseur's pleasure of these two interviews: they reveal a foreign policy that is patient where others are theatrical, granular where others are grandiose, and generous where it could so easily be aggrieved. Doha has spent a decade making itself the room where adversaries who cannot stand to share a building will nonetheless agree to share a city. The Hormuz hotline, the Lebanon working group, the Pakistani co-mediation, the careful sequencing of nuclear talks and regional security — all of it bears the same workmanlike signature.

And as if to underline the point, the proof is arriving on schedule. The technical talks between the United States and Iran, once slated for Switzerland, are now reported by Axios to be convening in Doha. The venue is its own verdict. When the negotiators want somewhere the work will actually get done, they keep choosing the same address.

• The writer is Deputy Managing Editor, Gulf Times

### Flying the flag at Berlin rally



A supporter of the far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD) party wears a German flag in her hair as she attends a campaign rally in front of the Berlin City Hall yesterday. (AFP)



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**'SERIOUS CONCERN'**

**Azerbaijan slams Israel's genocide recognition**

Azerbaijan yesterday denounced a decision by its ally Israel to recognise the World War I massacres of Armenians as a genocide, a move widely seen as a rebuke by Israel to Turkey. Azerbaijan and Israel are allies but Baku's closest foreign partner is Turkey and the Caucasus country hinted the move by Israel could hit their bilateral relations. The recognition by Israel — announced Sunday — was of "serious concern", Azerbaijan's foreign ministry said in a statement. Armenia has long sought international recognition that the mass killings under the Ottoman Empire amounted to a genocide, saying 1.5 mn people died. (AFP)

**ACCESS DENIED**

**EU lawmakers blocked from inspecting migrant centre**

A European Parliament delegation said yesterday it was prevented from fully inspecting a centre in Albania where Italy plans to process asylum applications offshore. Centres at Gjader and Shengjin were first opened in 2024 following a deal between the Italian and Albanian governments, under which migrants intercepted in Italian waters would be transferred to Albania to seek asylum. The five-year deal, estimated to cost Italy 160 mn euros (\$185 mn) a year, applies to men intercepted by Italian navy or coastguard vessels in international waters. The EU delegation went to the Gjader centre in northwest Albania. (AFP)

**BAD WEATHER**

**More than 1,300 excess deaths recorded in Europe heatwave**

The World Health Organisation said that over 1,300 excess deaths had been recorded in Europe since June 21 in connection with the record-breaking heatwave roasting much of the continent. Tens of millions have been braving a weekend of extreme temperatures in Europe as a deadly heatwave moves eastwards, with some countries announcing rising death tolls and health services warning of saturation. On Sunday morning, French health officials said there had been around 1,000 more deaths than expected in that country just since Wednesday. And across Europe, more than 1,300 excess deaths were recorded. (AFP)

**DEPORTATION DRIVE**

**Pakistan orders arrest of Afghans without visas: official**

Pakistan's government has ordered law enforcement nationwide to arrest Afghan citizens without visas from July 10. The order is likely to exacerbate a years-long repatriation policy that has pushed back millions of Afghans — some who had lived in Pakistan for decades and others who fled their home country following Taliban authorities' return to power in 2021. The interior ministry directive was addressed to all of Pakistan's provinces and territories, instructing that "with effect from 10th July 2026, any Afghan national found residing in Pakistan without a valid visa shall be immediately arrested". (AFP)

**36 killed as Pakistan hits Afghan provinces, wounding 163 people**

AFP  
Tsamkani, Afghanistan

Pakistan launched its deadliest attack on Afghanistan in months, with Islamabad saying yesterday it killed dozens of militants as the Afghan government reported civilian casualties. The nighttime strikes are the latest flare-up of violence between the neighbours whose relationship has been fraught since 2021, when the Taliban government took power in Kabul, and follow a weeks-long war that erupted in February.



The site of a Pakistani airstrike at a village in Tsamkani district of Afghanistan's Paktia province yesterday. (AFP)

Pakistan's information minister said air and ground operations killed 29 militants and were aimed at a group that it blames for a deadly weekend assault in Karachi, although Afghan authorities have repeatedly denied their territory harbours attackers. The Taliban government said the airstrikes hit three eastern provinces, killing 36 civilians and wounding 163.

helpless, had no working man in the household, and were living with the help of charity," Mangal said.

A resident of Paktia province, Adam Khan, said he "cannot put into words the condition of the children I saw at the hospital, or the screams of their parents and siblings". Those killed in one of the strikes "were innocent civilians, including children, elderly people and women" sleeping in a house, the 63-year-old told AFP.

The Pakistani operation along the border is the deadliest since March, when an attack on a drug treatment centre in Kabul killed hundreds according to the UN.

In neighbouring Paktika province, community leader Amin Mangal told AFP a Pakistani strike on a house killed six people. "They were very poor and

Pakistan's information minister, Attaullah Tarar, said the latest offensive targeted Jamaat-ul-Ahrar, a splinter group of the Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP). Hamdullah Fitrat, Afghanistan's deputy government spokesman, said the Paktia site "was bombed for a second time" after residents rushed to rescue people.

spond to an AFP request to comment on the allegation.

Pakistan's military and the prime minister's office did not re-

In the countries' capitals, the foreign ministries summoned each other's diplomats over the attack in Afghanistan's border area and earlier in Pakistan's megacity Karachi.

In Paktia's Tsamkani district, hundreds of mourners gathered before the funeral beds of some of those killed.

Mediation from several countries, including China, has failed to produce a lasting resolution between Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Their war earlier this year killed hundreds of Afghans and displaced tens of thousands, according to the UN.

There have been sporadic at-

tacks since a ceasefire reached in March, with Pakistani strikes in June killing 13 people, Afghan officials said.

Islamabad is mediating between the US and Iran to end their war in the Middle East, but Pakistan says its battle against militancy at home requires its strikes on Afghanistan.

Explosives were detonated and gunmen opened fire inside a Rangers paramilitary camp in Karachi last week on Saturday in one of the worst militant attacks in Pakistan's most populous city in years.

Authorities said three paramilitary personnel were killed and that they had detained an Afghan involved in the attack.

Pakistan says its forces use "precise targeting" to aim at militant hideouts and weapons stores, especially those of the TTP that has waged a violent campaign against Pakistan for years.

Afghan authorities have repeatedly denied that the country is used by militants and say Pakistani operations have caused a heavy civilian death toll.

The conflict earlier this year saw the two militaries engage in fierce fighting in border areas, along with unprecedented Pakistani airstrikes on Afghan cities, including the capital Kabul and southern Kandahar where the Afghan Taliban's supreme leader is based.

The frontier has been largely closed since cross-border violence broke out in October.

**'Turkiye must be included in Europe security structures'**

Turkey must be included in all of Europe's defence structures and defence trade restrictions between Nato members must be removed, President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said yesterday ahead of a key Nato summit.

His remarks come as Europe revamps its defences to counter Russia and the risk of a US pullback from Nato, which is to hold a summit in the Turkish capital Ankara on July 7-8.

"Turkey's indispensable contributions to European security are sometimes overlooked," Erdogan told parliamentary delegates from all 32 Nato member states in Istanbul. He said Turkey wanted "to participate in all defence and security initiatives" on the continent.

At issue is Turkey's access to the European Union's 150-billion-euro (\$176bn) Security Action for Europe (SAFE) initiative, intended to strengthen European defence capabilities.

"We expect your support, lawmakers, for Turkey's inclusion in the defence and security initiatives announced by the European Union," Erdogan told them.

Within SAFE, firms from non-EU countries such as Turkey, Britain and the US can only supply up to 35% of the component costs of weaponry funded by the scheme.

If Turkey wants its companies to be able to tap a bigger part of the funds Ankara needs to sign a security partnership with the EU and then negotiate special access with Brussels — a process that would require approval from all 27 EU members. Greece has threatened to block such a move.

"Under SAFE, any third country can participate in a defence project up to a level of 35%. Any negotiations with a view to potentially increasing or lifting this 35

% cap... would require a bilateral agreement," said Thomas Regnier, a European Commission spokesperson.

"For now, this is not an agreement we have concluded with Turkey," Erdogan also urged Nato to remove all barriers blocking defence industry trade between alliance members.

"If we want to overcome the challenges we face, we need to remove obstacles to defence industry trade while ensuring a balanced and fair burden-sharing among allies," he said.

Turkey has the second-biggest army of the alliance after the US and a burgeoning defence industry which has gone from strength to strength fuelled by bilateral defence deals.

But its defence industry has been hit by US sanctions imposed over Ankara's purchase of an S-400 Russian surface-to-air missile defence system. Washington also booted Turkey out of its F-35 programme, in a move that has soured relations between the Nato allies.

Although Washington has expressed a desire to draw a line under the dispute, lifting the sanctions requires Congressional approval. Observers say there is little chance the showdown would be resolved before the summit.

US President Donald Trump has however pledged to give Erdogan something that would make him "very happy" when he flies in next week for the Nato gathering.

Analysts said it was likely to be a delivery of several dozen US-made F110 engines Turkey needs for its fifth-generation KAAN fighter jets that are under development. Delivery of the engines had been blocked since the imposition of the US sanctions. (AFP)

**Russian strikes kill nine across Ukraine: officials**

AFP  
Kyiv

Russian strikes killed at least nine people across Ukraine yesterday and wounded more than two dozen others, Ukrainian officials said.

**'People have traumatic brain injuries, shrapnel wounds, fractures, and blast trauma,' — Regional governor Oleksandr Ganzha**

Five people were killed in the central city of Dnipro, when a Russian missile hit a private business, while three were killed in a drone attack on a minibus in the southern city of Zaporizhzhia, according to authorities.

strike blew out the windows and back doors of a white minibus, photos published by the regional authorities showed.

A guided bomb attack on the northern city of Kharkiv killed a 23-year-old woman and wounded 10 other people, the city's mayor said. In Dnipro, 28 were wounded — four in a critical condition, regional governor Oleksandr Ganzha said.

Both Russia and Ukraine have escalated aerial attacks in recent months as stalled negotiations have made no progress in halting the four-year war.

"People have traumatic brain injuries, shrapnel wounds, fractures, and blast trauma," he added. Ukraine's national police force posted photos showing paramedics tending to the wounded under the bright sun.

Dnipro, an industrial city around 100 kms from the front line, has been regularly targeted by Russia's military.

In Zaporizhzhia, the drone

Zaporizhzhia, 30 kms from the front, is the capital of a region which Moscow claims as its own and is fighting to capture.

Independent analyses indicating that Russia has suffered between 275,000 to 325,000 military deaths, while Ukraine's estimated military death toll ranges from 100,000 to 140,000.

**Belarus maintains repression despite prisoner releases: UN expert**

Recent political prisoner releases in Belarus give the illusion of improved human rights in the country, where repression remains systematic, a UN expert told AFP.

At the encouragement of US President Donald Trump, hundreds of political prisoners have been released in return for the lifting of sanctions on President Alexander Lukashenko's administration. In power since 1994, Lukashenko has waged a relentless crackdown on dissent, particularly since a 2020 protest movement in the European country of more than nine million people. According to Nils Muiznieks, the United Nations special rapporteur on human rights in Belarus, more than 150 people classified as political prisoners were released in 2025, with another 250 released in March. However, Belarus nonetheless "probably has more political prisoners per capita than any other country in the world", he told AFP in Geneva, where he presented his latest report to the UN Human Rights Council yesterday.

Belarus was given the chance to respond to the report but did not attend the session. Reports from various non-governmental organisations and UN bodies indicate there are 852 known political prisoners in Belarus. "The real number is almost certainly much higher because the legislation is so broad," said Muiznieks. "How many more, we do not know." The Latvian political scientist said the Belarusian authorities were covering their tracks more than before, notably by stopping publishing information on certain judicial proceedings, and by intimidating the families of detainees. He said the crackdown now targeted new groups, notably cultural figures, volunteers from the Belarusian Hajun investigative project — which monitors Russian troop movements during Moscow's war in Ukraine — publishers, religious activists and others. The expert also condemned tightened restrictions on freedom of expression. Authorities have designated a growing number of groups, media outlets and social media accounts as "extremist", thereby exposing to potential prosecution anyone who views or shares their content. (AFP)

**Six killed in shooting at shelter in northern Germany**

Reuters  
Stade, Germany

A 45-year-old man in an apartment child custody dispute was the suspected shooter at a shelter for mothers and children in northern Germany that left six dead on Monday, officials said. The man had an appointment at the shelter in Stade, close to the port city of Hamburg, earlier on Monday before opening fire midday, they said. All the victims — four women and two men — were employees of the facility. The man's three-month-old daughter and the mother are safe. The alleged shooter, the mother, and another female are in custody, officials said.

**'I'm deeply shocked by the extent of violence in a place that is meant to provide protection,' — German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier**

"I'm deeply shocked by the extent of violence in a place that is meant to provide protection," said German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier.

man-Iranian man who was obsessed with mass killings killed at least nine people in Munich.

Mass shootings are rare in Germany, especially when compared to the United States. In 2023, a gunman in Hamburg shot dead six people before killing himself at a Jehovah's Witness worship hall.

Police had warned people to stay away from the area where the incident took place, but later said there was no danger to the general public.

In 2016, an 18-year-old Ger-

Police cordoned off the area near the facility in a cobbled street with red brick homes, and forensic experts in white suits and plain-clothes police were at the scene. Police were still collecting evidence on Monday evening.

Five of the victims died at the scene. The sixth died in hospital.

Footage released by the Bild newspaper showed police surrounding and detaining two people from a car that was driving down a road with a flat tyre.

The suspected shooter lives in the Hannover area, was born in Germany and has Turkish roots, officials said.

**Qatar Charity builds new mosques across several provinces in Pakistan**

As part of its ongoing efforts to support vulnerable communities and enhance religious and social life, Qatar Charity has constructed 11 new mosques across the provinces of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Punjab, and Sindh in Pakistan, benefiting more than 8,150 worshippers, including flood-affected people.

worshippers at a time. These were constructed across Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (two mosques), Punjab (three mosques), and Sindh (one mosque).

The project addresses the needs of underserved communities that previously lacked access to adequate places of worship, limiting their ability to perform daily prayers and restricting children's opportunities to receive proper Islamic education.

In addition, five smaller mosques were built, each measuring 80 sqm and accommodating approximately 256 worshippers. These were built across the three provinces, with two mosques each in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Punjab, and one in Sindh.

**Project Details**  
The initiative included the construction of six mosques, each covering an area of 180sqm and accommodating up to 1,145

Beyond serving as places of worship, the mosques function as community centres, providing Quran learning sessions for around 50 children per mosque, particularly after school hours. This contributes to strengthening Islamic values and promoting awareness among younger generations.



**Fully Equipped Facilities**  
All mosques have been fully equipped with essential facilities, including prayer mats, Quran shelves, ablution areas, washrooms, carpets, sound systems, ceiling and wall-mounted fans, digital wall clocks, electric water coolers, and 5kW solar power sys-

tems to ensure reliable and sustainable services.

**Positive Community Impact**  
The project has been warmly welcomed by local communities, with residents expressing deep appreciation for the initiative. For many villagers, having a mosque

nearby represents not only convenience but also a profound spiritual and social asset.

Muhammad Sharif, Imam of Khairpur Mosque, said: "Our mosque was partially damaged due to heavy rains last year, and we lacked sufficient copies of the Holy Quran as well as proper ablution facilities. We are grateful to Qatar Charity and the generous donors of Qatar for constructing a fully equipped mosque. We now also have proper WASH facilities."

Community activist Hafiz Ghulam Fareed added: "Previously, we had to travel long distances to offer our prayers. Today, we have a mosque in our village, which has brought us closer as a community and strengthened our faith. I can now bring my children for Quran classes, where they are learning

more about Islam and our culture. This mosque has made a real difference in our lives."

Mureed Hussain noted: "The mosque has become more than a place of worship; it is now a hub for social activities and a symbol of unity and progress in our village."

**Sustained Commitment**  
This initiative reflects Qatar Charity's continued commitment to improving the living conditions of underprivileged communities by strengthening both religious and social infrastructure. Through such projects, Qatar Charity helps foster community cohesion, preserve cultural identity, and promote values of solidarity and compassion.

Qatar Charity constructed 45 mosques in 2025 across Pakistan to benefit more than 16000 people.



## Joan bin Jassim Academy for Defence Studies hosts graduation ceremony

Under the patronage and attendance of HE the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Defence Affairs Sheikh Saud bin Abdulrahman bin Hassan a-Thani and in the presence of HE the Chief of Staff of the Qatari Armed Forces Lieutenant-General (Pilot) Jassim bin Mohammed al-Mannai, the Joan bin Jassim Academy for Defence Studies celebrated the graduation of the 6th National Defence Course, the 12th Joint Command and Staff Course, the Graduate Studies Programmes (Master's and Doctorate), and the Deanship of Graduate Studies and Scientific Research, at the academy's premises.

The participants in the two courses, graduate studies programmes, and the Deanship of Graduate Studies and Scientific Research, include senior-ranking officers from units of the Qatari Armed Forces, military and security agencies, and senior officials in ministries and institutions of the State, in addition to the participation of a number of officers from fraternal and friendly countries.

The ceremony was attended by a number of ministers, ambassadors, military attaches, and senior officer leaders and officials in the Qatari Armed Forces. - QNA



# Made-in-Pakistan FIFA World Cup balls dazzle at Katara

By Rizwan Rehmat  
Staff Reporter

Pakistan showcased its major role in the 2026 FIFA World Cup yesterday by premiering the tournament's official match ball at a specially decorated Katara pavilion.

The official ball of the 2026 FIFA World Cup, named "Trionda", designed by Adidas, is on display at the Pakistan Pavilion set up in Gallery 45.

The world's most technologically advanced match ball, complete with an artificial intelligence (AI)-powered chip for real-time refereeing data, is stitched by craftsmen in Pakistan's Sialkot city.

The pavilion was opened yesterday at Katara by general manager Prof Dr Khalid bin Ibrahim al-Sulaiti and Pakistan's ambassador to Qatar Muhammad Aamer.

"We've all been watching the FIFA World Cup matches that are on right now," the Pakistan ambassador told the assembled guests and media. "When Pakistan cheers from the sidelines, this (pointing towards the ball) is our quiet contribution to the game."

"Although Pakistan's football team isn't (playing) at the FIFA World Cup, remember we have been part of the 8 out of last 10 World Cup editions," he said. "All these balls are produced in one city - Sialkot. As you can see, we are part of this global celebration in the US, Canada and Mexico."

"We are happy to host this pa-



Prof Dr Khalid bin Ibrahim al-Sulaiti and Pakistan ambassador Muhammad Aamer at Katara's Pakistan Pavilion yesterday.

vilion with the ambassador of Pakistan," Prof al-Sulaiti said. "This pavilion is one of the corners that we share with brotherly countries like Pakistan. Today we opened a pavilion for Pakistan."

"We are very proud because this pavilion has three footballs on display that are being used at the 2026 FIFA World Cup," he said.

"These three balls were produced in Pakistan," the official continued. "These were produced in Sialkot, a city famous globally for other in-demand sports products. Sialkot also caters to the international needs for cricket equipment and surgical supplies that are traded around the world. Sialkot is famous for that."

"The Pakistan embassy is delighted by this opportunity to display made-in-Pakistan balls,"

Aamer said. "This has been possible because of the gracious help of HE Prof Khalid bin Ibrahim al-Sulaiti, general manager of Katara."

"We are proud to share our story in Qatar, a nation that showed the world how sports can bring people together, he added. "Thank you, once again to Katara for making this display possible."

Quat Ul Ain Zafar, the trade and investment attache at the embassy of Pakistan, said: "For decades, Sialkot has been a global football manufacturing centre. Since 1990, match balls for eight of the ten FIFA World Cup editions have been produced in Pakistan."

"This reflects not only the scale but the craftsmanship, skills and trust at the highest level of the sport," she continued. "From traditional handstitched balls to today's advanced thermally-bonded technology, Pakistan's manufacturers have met the most demanding international standards."

"Pakistan's football industry has evolved from traditional hand stitching to advanced manufacturing technologies, earning the confidence of leading international sports organisations," she added.

The Pakistan Pavilion is located in Building 45, which also hosts the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 Legacy Exhibition.

## Fire Station talk highlights how museums preserve and interpret cultural memory

By Joseph Varghese  
Staff Reporter

Ways of protecting, as well as promoting heritage and culture through the artworks at the museums, was in focus at a discussion yesterday organised by the Fire Station and Qatar Creates.

"I think our role is not just preserving and protecting the art collections but also promoting and making it relevant to people who visit to watch them," said Bouthayna Baltaji, director of Museography and Heritage Museums Development at Qatar Museums (QM).

"It is like coming to experience a story, a story that is told either through collections or personal accounts, or travellers' accounts," she said. "For me, it is about how museums work on making the past relevant for our lives today and how that experience impacts our lives."

Baltaji was joined by the head of Lusail Museum's Conservation Section Carmen Blanco and Hadeer Omar, new media artist and associate professor at Virginia Commonwealth University School of Arts in Qatar.

The session was moderated by Nicoletta Fazio, curator of Iranian Lands at the Museum of Islamic Art.

Museums have long been defined by the objects they collect, but showcasing culture extends far beyond the material.

Memory, ritual, storytelling, sound, and digital practices all shape how heritage is created and transmitted, often in ways that resist traditional collection and display.



Participants at the panel discussion. PICTURE: Shajai Kayamkulam

Speaking about heritage sites, Baltaji said that activating heritage sites across the country needs to be done very carefully.

"You are activating a site," she said. "Maybe some sites have descendants still living today, (while other) sites have (none). I think as we activate heritage sites, we are trying to shoot a different research component that can turn into stories and experiences."

"This is an opportunity now to bring in the community to co-research the doors with us," Baltaji added.

"Indirectly, they are rediscovering their history and their heritage through the lens not just of a museum, but also through the lens of their grandparents or their parents. And then it translates into contemporary practice," she said.

According to Blanco, the main focus of the conservatory is to preserve the objects for the future.

"Sometimes we want to protect so carefully that the connection with the people disappears," she said. "So one way to try to create this connection with the object is by sharing knowledge and to share it and to show some aspects of the object that normally are not visible, but we can document

and share with the public." Blanco said that when documentation of an art collection is shared with the public, knowledge is shared, arousing curiosity and leading to new artists and new concepts, among other things.

"When it comes to storytelling, it is all about emotions, it is all about the impact, it is like a journey that you walk people through it," Omar said. "It is all about what you are trying to say, and how you are going to package it to the audience, how you want them to be part of your journey or part of what you are trying to say."

She noted that a lot of the time in her work, there is something like a momentary thing, like whatever is happening as a performance.

"It is like whatever the audiences are getting to experience with me as an artist," Omar stated. "It is like, you are not getting to experience it again. And if we repeat it, it is going to be a completely different experience, even if we do it exactly the same."

Moderator Fazio meanwhile highlighted that conservation should be approached more like training because it is not about the specific treatment but about the approach.

## DFI awards Spring 2026 grants to 48 projects from 39 countries

The Doha Film Institute (DFI) has awarded grants to 48 film projects from 39 countries in its Spring 2026 funding cycle, reaffirming its support for independent cinema and emerging filmmakers from Qatar, the Mena (Middle East and North Africa) region, and beyond.

Announcing the recipients yesterday, the institute said the selected projects include works by Qatari and Qatar-based filmmakers alongside emerging and established directors from across the region and the wider international film community.

The biannual DFI Grants Programme, one of the region's longest-running film development initiatives, supports first- and second-time filmmakers worldwide as well as established Mena directors in post-production.

The latest funding round includes projects from Algeria, Djibouti, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia and the United Arab Emirates.

International recipients include those from Cuba, Canada, Chile, France, Peru, the Philippines, Rwanda, South Africa, Spain, Thailand and the United Kingdom.

DFI chief executive Fatma Alremaihi said that culture remains "one of our most powerful anchors" in a rapidly changing world, preserving memory, shaping identity and connecting generations.

She said the filmmakers selected in the Spring 2026 grants cycle represent "the storytellers of tomorrow", whose work will document the present, challenge perceptions and create a lasting cinematic record for future generations.

"Their work carries the responsibility and the opportunity to document our present, challenge perceptions and create a lasting cinematic record for future generations," she said, adding that the institute remains committed to supporting diverse voices from Qatar, the region and around the world.

The Doha Film Institute grants cover projects

## مؤسسة الدوحة للأفلام Doha Film Institute

at development, production and post-production stages across feature narratives, documentaries, short films, television series, web series and experimental works.

Qatari projects featured prominently across several categories.

In the short narrative development section, grants were awarded to *Moments We Lived* by Ibrahim Albuainain, *Harf Esem: Forced Landing* by Mohammed A al-Suwaidi, and *Spooky Saeko*, a Qatar-China co-production directed by Alhanoof Mubarak Alnaemi.

Other Qatari-backed projects receiving support include feature narratives such as *Bayt Rabab*, *About Love & September Laws*, and *When Blood Calls*, documentaries including *Land Keepers*, *Searching for Nidal*, *Voy y Vuelvo (I'll Be Right Back)* and *Before Our Diaspora*, as well as production-stage projects including *Accept My Plea for Burial*, *The Tanjawi*, *Blue Card* and *Faux Bijoux*.

Among the Qatari productions supported by the Doha Film Institute in the short narrative production category are *Qadar* by Aisha al-Khanji and *Intuition* by Aysha Alabdulla.

The programme also backed a range of non-Mena projects in post-production, including feature films *Haven of Hope*, *Strawberries*, *9 Temples to Heaven*, *The Rift* and *Ben'Imana*, alongside documentaries such as *Magnetic Letters*, *Az Zeeb*, *The Lions of Canaan* and *The Hummingbird Paints Fragrant Songs*.

The DFI said that the Spring 2026 grants reflect its continued commitment to supporting independent film-making, encouraging international co-productions and strengthening Qatar's position as a regional and global hub for cinema and creative storytelling. - QNA

## Registration opens for milestone 15th Doha Marathon by Ooredoo

Ooredoo has officially opened registration for the 15th edition of the Doha Marathon by Ooredoo, set to be the biggest yet, with an expected 25,000 runners of all ages and abilities, on Friday.

The event will be held on January 15, 2027 along Doha's Corniche.

The 2027 edition marks a landmark moment in the journey of the Doha Marathon by Ooredoo, celebrating 15 years of this leading community sporting event.

The event will feature a new 42km marathon route, taking runners past some of Doha's most iconic landmarks, including the Sheraton Hotel Park, The Amiri Diwan, Souq Waqif, and Doha Port.

The 15th edition will also introduce enhancements designed to enhance the race-day experience for both participants and spectators alike, including the launch of two new race categories: the Family Run (approximately 1km) and the 42km Relay Race.

The Family Run allows children aged 4-10 to participate alongside a parent or guardian, giving families the opportunity to enjoy the race experience together, while the Relay Race enables teams of three or four runners to work together to complete the 42km (full marathon) distance, with each participant covering a designated leg of the course.

In addition, a new Arab category has been introduced for the 42km (full marathon) distance.



Created to celebrate and incentivise elite talent from across the Arab world, the category is open to participants holding a valid passport from any Arab country.

Runners competing in the Arab category will also remain eligible for the Open c(overall) prizes, allowing them to compete for both overall honours and dedicated Arab category awards.

The upcoming edition will also feature an expanded and enhanced Marathon Village, with additional facilities, entertainment, interactive activations, and services for runners and spectators.

The 2027 edition will feature five race categories: the Full Marathon (42km), Relay Race (42km), Half Marathon (21km), 10km, 5km, and the Family Run, which covers a distance of approximately 1km.

Sabah Rabiha al-Kuwari (pictured), vice-chairman of the Doha Marathon by Ooredoo organising committee and senior director (Marketing Communications) at Ooredoo Qatar, said: "The 15th edition of the Doha Marathon by Ooredoo marks an important milestone in the journey of an event that has become an established part of Qatar's sporting and community landscape."

Early bird discounts are available across all race categories, while participants who register four or more people in a single booking will receive an additional 25% discount.