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## 12th Ajyal Film Festival opens

The 12th edition of Ajyal Film Festival, presented by Doha Film Institute (DFI), opened on a poignant note, underlining the role of cinema in delivering the human struggles of the world to foster human understanding. HE Lolwah bint Rashid AlKhater, Minister of Education and Higher Education, dignitaries and some of the guests are seen at the opening of the festival in Doha yesterday. [Page 5](#)

## Israel kills 30 including 10 at UN-run school

Reuters  
Cairo/Gaza



A view shows the damage at a school sheltering displaced people, after it was hit by an Israeli strike, in Gaza City yesterday.

An Israeli strike killed 10 Palestinians and wounded at least 20 others yesterday at a school in Gaza City's Shati refugee camp currently sheltering displaced families, medics said.

The UN-run Abu Assi school, where rescue operations are ongoing, may still have people trapped under the rubble, health officials said.

Palestinian health officials said at least 30 people have been killed by Israeli military strikes across the enclave yesterday.

The Gaza health ministry said 43,799 people have been confirmed dead since Oct 7, 2023.

Khan Younis Municipality has affirmed that 1.2mm Palestinians are at risk of severe shortages of drinking water due to the halt in the supply of essential fuel needed to operate water and sewage facilities and pumps, after the Israeli occupation forces prevented the entry of these supplies to the UN agencies and organisations operating in the Gaza Strip.

In a statement, the emergency committee in Khan Younis warned that halting these supplies would lead to environmental and health disasters, including the failure of

sewage plants, which could result in sewage surging onto the streets and outbreaks of diseases and epidemics among Palestinians.

It called on the international community and human rights organisations to urgently intervene and put an end to the Israeli war on the Gaza Strip, which has devastated all sectors of life.

The statement stressed the importance of delivering the essential machinery, spare parts and equipment to prevent the service system from crumbling after it has been dramatically affected due to the ongoing Israeli war on the Strip.

The Israeli army said that its troops continued "their operational activity" in the northern areas of Jabalia and Beit Lahia.

## Qatar spotlighted at Web Summit Lisbon

Web Summit Lisbon 2024, the world's largest tech event, came to an end on Friday, having welcomed over 71,000 business founders, investors, entrepreneurs and tech leaders from around the world.

The global event featured the participation of a prominent Qatari delegation, led by HE Sheikh Jassim bin Mansour bin Jabor al-Thani, Director of the Government Communications Office and Chairman of the Permanent Web Summit Organising Committee. This participation is part of the preparations already underway for Web Summit Qatar 2025. The Qatari delegation featured speakers and representatives from various government and semi-government entities, alongside a dynamic group of entrepreneurs and startups from Qatar.

The participating entities included representatives from the Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Communications and Information Technology, Qatar Investment Authority, Invest Qatar, Qatar Free Zones Authority, Qatar Development Bank, Qatar Tourism, Visit Qatar in addition to the Qatar Financial Centre, Qatar Media City, Qatar Research, Development and Innovation Center and Qatar Manpower Solutions Co (Jusour).

Several Qatari speakers at Web Summit Lisbon shared their insights on a range of topics, including digital innovation, entrepreneurship and tourism. The speakers have additionally discussed the integration of AI into the business ecosystem, highlighted investment oppor-



HE Qatar Tourism Chairman Saad bin Ali al-Kharji attending a session at the Web Summit.

tunities in Doha and spoke about the global future of innovation as well as successful organisational cultures. These discussions have underscored Qatar's commitment to building a tech-driven and knowledge-based future as well as establishing itself as a leading hub for various key economic sectors.

In a panel with Paddy Cosgrave, CEO of Web Summit, titled 'Next Stop: Web Summit Qatar', HE Sheikh Jassim said: "The first edition of Web Summit Qatar has recorded astonishing successes, most notably the announcement by HE Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani, the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of investments worth \$1bn, demonstrating Qatar's commitment to providing an ideal environment for startups. [To Page 12](#)



A view of the Qatar Pavilion at the summit.

## Experts from 90 countries attend Aspetar conference

The Aspetar International Rehabilitation Conference, a prominent event in sports medicine, was launched yesterday at Khalifa International Stadium with participation of over 700 experts from 90 countries.

This year's conference attracted a record-breaking attendance, making it one of the most diverse and inclusive events in the field. The opening ceremony was attended by numerous dignitaries, Aspetar officials, and international experts who came to Qatar specifically for the event.

In his opening speech, Khaled Ali al-Mawlawi, acting director general of Aspetar, stated, "Qatar has established itself as a global centre for sports and sports medicine. This conference, which brings together renowned global experts to explore thigh muscle injuries, further enhances Aspetar's leadership in developing rehabilitation practices."

The two-day conference features 32 international speakers from 12 countries, providing an unparalleled platform for knowledge exchange and professional development in sports medicine and re-



Dignitaries at the opening session of the conference.

habilitation. The event's global appeal is evident in its diverse list of participants, including representatives from major football clubs, international sports federations, and prestigious academic institutions.

The conference includes several scientific sessions discussing various aspects related to thigh injuries, with presenta-

tions from global experts in interactive panel discussions. Preceding the main event, specialised workshops were held at Aspetar Hospital for elite Arab and international clubs.

Alongside the main event, an exhibition showcases advanced technologies, innovative products, and services in sports medicine and rehabilitation.

The conference covers a range of topics from fundamental concepts to sport-specific applications, including in-depth explorations of diagnosis, strength training, biomechanics, and optimising recovery responses.

The event attracts participants from renowned Premier League clubs, major European teams, leading sports fede-

tions, and prestigious universities worldwide. Representatives from Liverpool, Manchester City, Barcelona, Paris Saint-Germain, and the German Football Association, among others, are in attendance, reflecting the conference's global significance.

Dr Jonathan Power, Liverpool FC's doctor, commented: "The World Cup was amazing, and the whole world is looking at Qatar, speaking positively about the country. Now, everyone appreciates the value of Aspetar's projects and events. The global standards they adhere to inspire us, and it's wonderful to come here and learn from them."

As discussions continue into the second day, participants can look forward to a packed agenda with numerous sessions and debates. By the end of the conference, several key recommendations aimed at enhancing practices in sports medicine are expected to be announced.

The conference will conclude today with a reception for participants at the Qatar Olympic and Sports Museum 3-2-1, providing an excellent networking opportunity for attendees.

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# Summit to explore aspects of women's leadership in the digital era

QNA  
Doha

HE Chairperson of NHRC Maryam bint Abdullah al-Attiyah

The second session of the International Academy for Women Leaders titled 'Leadership in the Digital Era' will begin in Doha today with a high-level local, regional, and global attendance. Jointly organised by the National Human Rights Committee (NHRC), the Arab Network for National Human Rights Institutions (ANNHRIs), the UN Development Programme (UNDP), and the UN Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, the four-day session, which commences at the Wyndham Doha West Bay hotel, aims to promote a deep understanding of the role of equal opportunities in shaping leadership styles, including both strengths and challenges. It will also provide insights into how women leverage their leadership to achieve significant change in an increasingly interconnected digital world.

HE Chairperson of NHRC Maryam bint Abdullah al-Attiyah affirmed that the session primarily aims to leverage cutting-edge digital technologies to foster a spirit of transformational leadership, highlighting that the opening day of the academy's activities serves as the bedrock for understanding the Academy's framework, linking transformational leadership with Intergenerational leadership in a digital world full of challenges.

HE al-Attiyah pointed out that participants will explore how women leaders are addressing this changing reality, which is influenced by advanced digital

technologies such as AI, with a special emphasis on the dynamics of equal opportunities, by studying the challenges and opportunities faced by women leaders.

The discussions on the first day will focus on understanding the academy's framework, by introducing participants to the Academy's emphasis on transformational leadership and Intergenerational leadership in the context of a rapidly changing digital world marked by increasing instability, HE al-Attiyah said, adding that the discussions will explore leadership in times of instability by providing participants with insights on how to navigate the complexities of modern leadership, including the challenges arising from instability in a technology-driven environment.

The dynamics of equal opportunities in leadership will be studied, deepening the understanding of how equal opportunities impact leadership styles, opportunities, and challenges, in addition to exploring strategies that enable women to lead effectively in sec-

tors and environments lacking equal opportunities, HE al-Attiyah outlined, emphasising that the sessions on the second day will focus on empowering participants by presenting models of transformational leadership that foster innovation and collective intelligence.

She elucidated those participants will gain skills in harnessing the diversity of perspectives and adopting inclusive and forward-thinking leadership in a connected digital environment, through transformational and intergenerational leadership approaches, thereby empowering women to contribute to building resilience, inspiring others, and creating adaptable and thriving environments in the face of uncertainty.

The third day will address the concept of governance in the digital age, highlighting the political implications of digitisation and the skills required to lead digital transformation. The participants would acquire practical skills in utilising digital tools and AI-powered technologies, along with strategies for dealing with complexity and uncertainty, she stated.

HE al-Attiyah emphasised that based on the knowledge gained during the first three days of the second session, the fourth day will shine the spotlight on helping participants develop their unique leadership voice and build their personal brand, both in the real world and in the digital space to imbue them with the essential tools to express their vision and personal statements in an impactful way, inspiring others and creating a lasting influence. (QNA)

## Amir's visit to Ankara garners interest of Turkish media

Turkish media, across its various platforms, dedicated extensive coverage to the visit of His Highness the Amir of Qatar Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani to Ankara. His Highness chaired, alongside Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, the 10th session of the Qatar-Turkiye High Strategic Committee. The visit received significant attention in Turkish media's main stories on Friday.

The daily newspaper *Yeni Safak*, known for its proximity to the Turkish government, featured a prominent headline in its edition

that highlighted the tweet by His Highness on his official X account following the conclusion of the committee's meeting, emphasising that the visit would pave the way for further bilateral co-operation in various fields.

Meanwhile, both the government-run Anadolu Agency and TRT channel reported on the signing of eight agreements in different sectors, witnessed by the leaders of both nations.

They underlined the significant importance of the visit in further bolstering relations between Doha and Ankara.

For its part, the daily newspaper *Sabah* focused on the political discussions and agreements signed between Turkiye and Qatar. It highlighted Turkiye's strong interest in the visit of His Highness the Amir to Ankara, describing it as marking a significant new phase in the bilateral relationship.

The Turkish press also noted the remarkable development of Qatar-Turkiye relations over the past two decades, covering various fields, including economic, political, and military co-operation. They emphasised that these ties have grown stronger, since 2014. (QNA)

## Minister of communications meets officials from Amazon Web Services

HE the Minister of Communications and Information Technology, Mohammed bin Ali al-Manai, met with Vice-President of Global Public Sector at Amazon Web Services (AWS), Dave Levy, and Global Head of Financial Innovation and Digital Assets at AWS, Michael B Greenwald. The meeting discussed key topics, like the demands of expanding the digital market, and explored the role of artificial intelligence in driving digital transformation in Qatar and the opportunities for operational efficiency. The Ministry of Communications stated that the meeting with officials in AWS underscores Qatar's commitment to advancing its digital infrastructure and



building a knowledge-based economy. Through this collaboration, the ministry and AWS aim to foster digital innovation, aligning with the Qatar National Vision 2030. (QNA)

## Sheikha Alya meets UNRWA top official



Qatar's Permanent Representative to the UN HE Sheikha Alya Ahmed bin Saif al-Thani has met with the Commissioner-General of the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), Philippe Lazzarini, at the Permanent Mission's headquarters in New York. During the meeting, the commissioner-general thanked Qatar for its firm and supportive position towards the UNRWA. For her part, HE Sheikha Alya expressed Qatar's deep appreciation for the efforts made by UNRWA to support the brotherly Palestinian people in light of the deteriorating conditions in the Gaza Strip. (QNA)

*Congratulations*

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His Highness

**Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad Al Thani**

Amir of the State of Qatar

upon



Her Excellency

**Lolwah bint Rashid bin Mohammed al-Khater**

We extend warm congratulations on Her Excellency's appointment as  
**Minister of Education and Higher Education**

We wish her continued progress and success



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ENLIGHTENMENT THROUGH EDUCATION

**Qatar participates in 19th ICAO TRIP symposium**

Qatar participated in the 19th Symposium and Exhibition on the ICAO Traveller Identification Programme (TRIP), held in Montreal, Canada, at the invitation of the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO). The Acting Director of the Civil Aviation Authority, Mohammed bin Fahel al-Hajri, represented Qatar at the event. In his closing address at the conference, al-Hajri emphasised the critical importance of traveller identification and management, underscoring the role of advanced technologies and technical solutions

in enhancing the efficiency and seamlessness of travel. He also commended ICAO's ongoing efforts to improve the global travel experience. Furthermore, al-Hajri extended an invitation to all symposium participants to attend and actively engage in the upcoming Facilitation Conference, scheduled to take place in Doha from April 14-17, 2025. Qatar continues to be a global leader in air transport and facilitation, contributing significantly to ICAO's initiatives in these areas. (QNA)

**ARPM Tender Committee announces the following Tender**

Tender No.	Subject	Fees QR.	Tender Bond QR.	Opening Date	Closing Date
ARPM/203/2024/TEN/DOH	Maintenance Services for Central LPG Tank and Distribution Network at Banana Island Resort	500	5,000	17-Nov-24	08-Dec-24
ARPM/204/2024/TEN/DOH	Tender for Reupholstery and Cushion/Padding Replacement Services for Indoor & Outdoor Furniture at Banana Island Resort	500	10,000	17-Nov-24	08-Dec-24

- Interested parties can collect copies of the tender documents from ARPM Purchasing Department, via email to m.aseef@arpm.com.qa and L.cabral@arpm.com.qa during working hours 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. (Fri & Sat Closed)
- A payment of a non-refundable document's fees should be deposited in cash to:
  - Beneficiary Name: Al-Rayyan Projects Management (ARPM)
  - Account No.: 0013-022375-004 (Qatar National Bank)
  - IBAN No.: QA86QNBA00000000013022375004
- And the original deposit receipt should be submitted upon receiving of the terms and conditions.
- A tender bond (as stated above), issued by a bank operating in the State of Qatar and valid for 120 days from the closing date should accompany tenders. **The executed tender bond should be included with the technical offer.**
- All tenderers MUST collect their original bonds from ARPM – Purchasing department upon expiry of the Tender Bond, unless alternative instructions are issued by ARPM.
- Proposal to be submitted in sealed envelopes as per the RFP requirements in both HARD COPY & SOFT COPY on CD or USB.
- Copies of valid **Company Commercial Registration, Computer Card & Authorization Letter** must be submitted in order to collect the tender documents.
- The successful tenderer is required to submit a performance bond issued by a bank operating in the State of Qatar equivalent to 10% of the total contract sum and shall be valid for a period expiring 150 days after contract expiry.
- Offers should be valid for 120 days commencing from the closing date (as stated above).
- ARPM has the right to increase or decrease the scope of services by 20% with the same terms and conditions.
- ARPM is not bound to accept the lowest tender or any other tender and is under no obligation to show any reasons thereof.
- Bids should be submitted not later than 12:00 noon on the closing date and must be deposited into the Box, provided in the ARPM Purchasing office, located at the 9th Floor, ARPM, Head office and should be in sealed envelopes addressed to the Chairman - Tenders Committee, quoting the Tender Number and Subject.
- Offers arriving thereafter may not be considered.

CHAIRMAN – TENDER COMMITTEE

TEL: 40341804

**The Transport Company MOWASALAT (KARWA)****Mowasalat (Karwa) announces the following tender:**

Tender Ref. No.	Tender Title	Tender Fee	Electronic Tender Fee Payment Dates	Tender Bond	Bid Closing Date
TC-047-MTS-2024	Supply of Toyota Spare Parts on Call-off Basis	QAR 800	17 to 24 November 2024	QAR 36,000	22 December 2024
TC-048-ITC-2024	Provision of Managed Print Services	QAR 1,000	17 to 24 November 2024	QAR 60,000	23 December 2024

**CONDITIONS:**

- Interested bidder shall pay the tender fee to Mowasalat Bank Account details as shown:
- Bidder must submit proof of tender fee payment (Bank Deposit Slip + A Signed & Stamped Expression of Interest (indicating Tender Ref. No. and Title / Company Name and details of nominated contact person i.e., Tel. No., Fax No., and Email address) + Copy of valid Commercial Registration to Mowasalat Secretary - Tender Committee at email: tenders@mowasalat.com
- Tender documents will be released via email on the next working day after the tender fee payment date to all bidders who have submitted the bank deposit slip and other documents requested (i.e., 25 November 2024)
- Bonds: Tender Bond & Performance Bond:** Bids must be accompanied by Bonds issued by a local bank operating in the State of Qatar as per the Qatar Central Bank template. Further details of bonds can be found in the tender documents. **Bids without Tender Bond shall not be considered.**
- Tender validity: Bid validity period shall be 180 days from the bid closing date.
- Tender documents submission: Bids must be submitted in 3 separate sealed (IN RED WAX) envelopes addressed to Secretary - Tender Committee clearly highlighting the Tender Ref. No. & Tender Title:
  - Envelope 1# must include the Technical Bid submission (1 Original + 1 Non-Editable copy in a USB)
  - Envelope 2# must include Commercial Bid submission (1 Original + 1 Editable MS Excel spreadsheet copied in a USB)
  - Envelope 3# must include the Tender Bond (1 Original)
- Bid Closing Date:** Bid submission deadline is 12.00 noon Doha Local Time as on the Bid closing date shown above. The 3 envelopes must be handed over to the Office of The Secretary - Tender Committee, located at Mowasalat Head Office, Industrial Area, Any tender submitted after the deadline will not be considered.

Tel: 4458 8724 Fax: 4458 8850



# DICID renews commitment to promoting dialogue, tolerance

QNA  
Doha

HE the Chairman of the Doha International Center for Interfaith Dialogue (DICID), Dr Ibrahim bin Saleh al-Nuaimi, emphasised the DICID's dedication to spreading a culture of dialogue and tolerance to foster coexistence and harmony worldwide, as envisioned in the teachings of prophets and messengers.

Speaking to Qatar News Agency (QNA) marking the International Day for Tolerance on November 16, HE Dr al-Nuaimi stated that the DICID strives to promote a culture of dialogue and acceptance so that tolerance becomes the norm, reflecting the essence of religious teachings to build peace and reject violence and extremism.

He highlighted Qatar's commitment to this vision, noting the country's comprehensive efforts to foster successful experiences in dialogue and tolerance through diverse institutions, including religious, cultural, educational, and research centres. He explained that these entities focus on specialised roles while collaborating on broader, shared objectives in an integrative framework, pooling efforts to achieve collective success.

HE Dr al-Nuaimi stressed the importance of institutions that teach religious values and instil love for faith, as these contribute to shaping virtuous and reformative citizens. He noted that the successful endeavours of such institutions align with the DI-

CID's mission to promote tolerance. He added the DICID employs various methods to achieve its goals, including hosting annual conferences, roundtable discussions for local communities, and training programs for practitioners, students, and specialists in Qatar and abroad.

He pointed out that the centre conducts and publishes scientific research and produces publications. He elaborated on the centre's significant accomplishments, noting its contribution to promoting a culture of pluralism and peaceful coexistence and combating hate speech, violence, extremism, and exclusion.

He highlighted the centre's efforts to combat the phenomenon of Islamophobia and present an accurate image of Islam, while condemning acts of extremism and fostering strong, positive relationships with diverse communities worldwide, in addition to facilitating legal procedures for Muslims in the West by opening mosques and religious centres, highlighting the bright image of Qatar, and providing Qatari expertise in the field of dialogue and other things.

Reflecting on the state of religious tolerance today, HE Dr al-Nuaimi said that since the time of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) the foundation has been coexistence among religions, with an emphasis on tolerance and acceptance of the other, despite differences in doctrine.

He noted that most countries today demonstrate a reality of peaceful coexistence among followers of various faiths, driven by modern culture, glo-

balisation, and an acknowledgment of diversity and plurality as defining features of contemporary societies.

He emphasised that divine religions advocate high moral values and noble humanitarian principles, adding that honesty, justice, kindness, and good neighbourliness are virtues unanimously upheld by all religions.

He added that states, organisations, and civil society have increasingly embraced frameworks protecting both majority and minority rights, aligned with universal human rights principles. He clarified that interfaith tolerance does not imply compromising one's faith but rather meeting to benefit from shared teachings that serve humanity.

He highlighted the unique approach of the DICID, pointing out that the centre stands out for two key principles: first, the core tenets of Islam and its moderation in dealing with those of differing beliefs; and second, the customs, heritage, and reality of Qatari society, where many nationalities and followers of diverse religions coexist.

He pointed that Muslims recognise that many issues raised in the realm of dialogue and interfaith tolerance, often discussed under the banners of humanity and rights, are inherently part of our faith.

Therefore, the centre remains steadfast in adhering to the principles of Islam as derived from the Qur'an and Sunnah, guided by a spirit of moderation while drawing on Qatar's rich cultural identity in its endeavours, visions, and strategies.

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1.Copy of Commercial Registration (CR)	
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2.Copy of bank deposit slip of the Tender Registration Fee.	
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3.Copy of ICV Certificate	
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COMPANIES WHO HAVE PAID THE NON-REFUNDABLE REGISTRATION FEE BUT FAILED TO FORMALLY REGISTER AT THE DATE AND TIME STATED ABOVE WILL NOT BE CONSIDERED AS ACCEPTABLE TENDERER.

TENDER BOND SHALL BE ISSUED BY A BANK REGISTERED IN THE STATE OF QATAR.

Effective from 1st July 2023, bids from Local Suppliers and Contractors (companies established under the Laws of State of Qatar with local Commercial Registration) who are not in possession of an ICV score in the **ICV portal** by Tender Closing Date (or commercial bid submission date if separately mentioned/notified) will not be accepted. Local Company that have been established for less than 2 years are exempted from this requirement. For further details please visit ICV Digital Portal: <https://icv.qa/US>

For more information about ORYX GTL and its tenders, please visit our website: <http://www.oryxgtl.com.qa>

## Banned chewing tobacco seized

Customs inspectors at Hamad Port and the Southern Ports Department have been able to foil an attempt to smuggle 2,575kg of banned chewing tobacco, hidden inside a cargo of iron. The banned material was discovered after the cargo of iron was X-rayed and inspected with other equipment.

# Ajyal festival opens with call for human understanding

The 12th edition of Ajyal Film Festival, presented by Doha Film Institute (DFI), opened on a poignant note, underlining the role of cinema in delivering the human struggles of the world to foster human understanding.

The theme of this year's Ajyal, 'Moments that Matter' resonates powerfully as the region witnesses unprecedented human suffering, highlighting how every moment can carry the weight of a lifetime.

Opening Ajyal 2024, in the presence of over 600 young jurors from across the world, as well as distinguished guests and talents associated with the films, HE Lolwah bint Rashid AlKhater, Minister of Education and Higher Education, praised the resilience of women in Sudan and expressed solidarity with the suffering, par-

ticularly of the children, and the resistance of the people in Gaza. She presented an honorary award to a child from Gaza, Mahmoud Ajour, who was brought to Doha for medical treatment after losing both hands as a symbolic recognition of the courage and hope of all children in Gaza.

Fatma Hassan Alremaihi, chief executive officer, DFI and the festival director reflected on the journey of Ajyal since its inception in 2013, and unveiled plans for the 2025 Doha Film Festival. She said it will "echo the dreams and aspirations of filmmakers and creative storytellers from near and far, as we mark the next chapter of our cinematic journey."

Recalling how Doha Film Institute took the momentous decision to pause Ajyal last year following the events in Gaza, she said: "The horror and sheer

scale of destruction and massacres was mind-numbing ... tragedies that heartbreakingly continue to this day, and have expanded to Lebanon. Despite the cancellation, we organised and curated films and discussions to present the 'Voices from Palestine' programme."

The opening ceremony was attended by distinguished guests including HE Dr Hamad bin Abdulaziz al-Kawari, Minister of State and president of Qatar National Library; Sheikh Abdulaziz H al-Thani, director of National Museum of Qatar, HE Sheikh Abdulla bin Ali al-Thani, chairman of Media City Qatar; Hamad Ali al-Khater, chief operating officer of Hamad International Airport, and Jassim Mohamed al-Khori, CEO of Media City Qatar, and several high-ranking diplomats.



Doha Emergency Medical Centre.

## Qatar Charity launches diverse projects in Kosovo

A high-level delegation from Qatar Charity, headed by its CEO, Yusuf bin Ahmed al-Kuwari, inaugurated several development projects in Kosovo.

The delegation was received by Kosovo's Prime Minister Albin Kurti, in the presence of Qatar's ambassador to Kosovo Jaber Ali al-Dosari.

The inaugurated projects included the Doha Emergency Centre, the Qatar Residential Complex, the Qatar Islamic Centre, the Water Project, as well as the Al-Yafei Health Centre and a mosque.

Al-Kuwari, accompanied by Prime Minister Kurti, Deputy Speaker of Parliament Saranda Bogujevci, Kosovo's Minister of Health Arben Viti, and ambassador al-Dosari, inaugurated the Doha Emergency Medical Centre in the city of Podujeve.

The centre aims to manage emergency cases and provide comprehensive medical services of high quality, including

dental care and radiology. It is expected to benefit around 80,000 individuals. Kurti praised the project's significance, highlighting its strategic location, which will allow the centre to offer multiple medical services, including primary healthcare. Kurti expressed his gratitude to Qatar for this valuable project, emphasising Qatar's ongoing support for Kosovo in various areas.

The Qatar Islamic Centre project involves the construction of a central mosque, the headquarters of the Islamic Sheikdom of Kosovo, a multi-purpose hall, and Waqf stores. The centre will provide cultural, educational, and social services, benefiting around 20,000 people.

The mosque's opening ceremony was attended by the head of the Islamic Sheikdom, Naim Ternava, ambassador al-Dosari, and several officials. The Grand Mufti expressed his gratitude for the continuous support from Qatar and Qatar Charity.

## QRCS scientific conference ends

The 2nd Qatar Red Crescent Society (QRCS) Annual Scientific Conference concluded yesterday.

The three-day conference held under the theme 'Gastrointestinal Disorders in Primary Health Care' was organised in strategic partnership with the Ministry of Public Health (MoPH), Hamad Medical Corporation and Primary Health Care Corporation.

The event was attended by 35 speakers, 15 facilitators, and 624 participants from QRCS and other primary healthcare providers in Qatar.

The opening ceremony was attended by Dr Ahmed bin Hamad al-Mohannadi, member of the Shura Council, Abdullah Ibrahim al-Emadi, assistant undersecretary, Common Services Affairs at MoPH, Sheikh Dr Mohamed bin Hamad al-Thani, director of Non-Communicable Diseases Prevention Programmes at MoPH, among others.

In a recorded speech, Yousef bin Ali al-Khater, president of QRCS, said, "Almost one year ago, we met at the 1st QRCS Annual Scientific Conference. Back then, we were just taking our first steps on this path. Today, we meet again on more solid ground, with better experience and a



One of the conference sessions.

clearer vision. The conference proved itself among doctors and specialists as an innovative platform for learning, development, and exchange of experience."

Al-Khater emphasised QRCS's auxiliary role in supporting the Qatari healthcare system, undertaking several national, social, and developmental responsibilities, such as operating Workers' Health Centres, EMS ambulance fleet, training and awareness-raising events by the Training and Development Centre, contribution to the national Covid-19 control efforts, and supporting the health authorities in the medical coverage of FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022. He also referred to QRCS' large-scale international healthcare outreach in many conflict and poor zones.

## QIB holds awareness initiatives to mark 'World Diabetes Day'



The bank's initiative is a testament to QIB's CSR strategy aligned with Qatar National Vision 2030, recognising the importance of healthcare provision and the improvement of the overall health of the population.

Qatar Islamic Bank (QIB) has collaborated with Aman Hospital to organise an awareness initiative for its employees on the occasion of World Diabetes Day.

Throughout the day, Aman Hospital staff conducted blood glucose and blood pressure screenings, as well as Body Mass Index (BMI) assessments to provide a well-rounded health profile to each employee. Additionally, the hospital's dietitians engaged with the employees in one-on-one consultations,

offering personalised advice on managing diabetes risks, balanced diets, and lifestyle adjustments.

In addition, QIB utilised its social media platforms to initiate a series of engaging stories to educate the community about diabetes and highlight the importance of adopting healthy lifestyle practices.

Mashaal Abdulaziz al-Derham, assistant general manager, head of Corporate Communications & Quality Assurance, at QIB, said: "We are committed

to supporting our employees by fostering health awareness and encouraging a proactive approach to well-being. "With diabetes posing a significant health challenge, we feel a responsibility to champion programmes that promote prevention and elevate public health. We would like to thank Aman Hospital for their valuable collaboration and their efforts in advancing impactful health initiatives." This initiative is a testament to QIB's CSR strategy aligned with Qatar National Vision 2030.

## City Center Doha opens new pedestrian bridge to link with DECC metro station



Officials at the opening ceremony.

The City Center Doha shopping centre has celebrated the official inauguration of its newly-built pedestrian bridge which directly connects it to the DECC Station located on Doha Metro's Red Line.

The event highlighted the bridge's state-of-the-art design and advanced features, including escalators, an elevator, and a fully air-conditioned passageway, designed to deliver unmatched convenience for commuters and City Center Doha visitors.

A distinguished group of leaders and dignitaries attended the ceremony, including Sheikh Mohammad bin Faisal al-Thani, vice-chairman of Aamal Company, Rashid bin Ali al-Mansoori, CEO of Aamal Company, and Murat Kayman, general manager of City Center Doha, along with representatives of Qatar Rail. Together, they marked this significant milestone, celebrating a major addition to City Center Doha's infrastructure.

The newly-opened bridge has already been enhancing access and convenience for visitors from across Doha, offering a seamless connection from the DECC Metro Station directly to the heart of the shopping centre.

This project reflects City Center Doha's ongoing commitment to providing the best possible shopping experience and to full accessibility for all.



The new bridge.

Kayman commented: "The new pedestrian bridge is a proud achievement for us, embodying our dedication to ensuring City Center Doha shopping centre is accessible, comfortable, and

convenient for every visitor. By directly connecting to the metro station, we are redefining the journey for our guests, making it smoother and more enjoyable from start to finish."



### QatarEnergy LNG Tender Invitation

No.	TENDER NUMBER / DESCRIPTION	TENDER ISSUE PERIOD	TENDER FEE (QAR)	TENDER BOND (QAR)	TENDER CLOSING DATE
1	LTC/C/MNT/6830/24 CATALYST REPLACEMENT WORKS ON CALL-OFF BASIS	17/11/2024 to 05/12/2024	0	1,000,000	23/12/2024

#### Scope of Work:

Providing Catalyst / Molecular sieve /Activated Carbon replacement services on a call off basis for a period of five (5) years tentatively from 3Q2025, with an option for Company to extend for a further period of two (2) years.

**Bid Validity:** Bid should be valid for 180 calendar days from the Tender Closing Date.

#### Place for Tender Collection and Bid Submission:

ITT document for this tender will be available in QatarEnergy LNG website under Suppliers tab >Current Open Tenders. The bids shall be submitted through the QatarEnergy LNG online platform (SMART by GEP).

**Note:** Effective from 1st July 2023, bids received from Local Companies (established under the Laws of State of Qatar with local Commercial Registration) who are not in possession of an ICV score in the ICV portal by Bid Closing Date (or commercial bid submission date if separately mentioned/notified) will not be accepted. Local Company that has been established for less than 2 years and insurance companies are exempted from this requirement. For further details please visit ICV Digital Portal: <https://icv.qa/en-US/>



# Uncertainty ahead for UN agency's students in West Bank camp

**AFP**  
Qalandia

In the crowded Qalandia refugee camp, UNRWA's training centre is an island of calm where young people from the occupied West Bank master trades, but a recent Israeli ban on all co-operation with the UN agency has left the centre in limbo.

On the spacious campus a stone's throw from the wall separating the West Bank and Israel, plumbers in training assemble pipes, future electricians wire circuits and carpenters hammer together roof frames.

But how long these scenes will last is an open question after Israel last month banned UNRWA, founded in 1949, from operating on Israeli soil or co-ordinating with Israeli authorities.

UNRWA's ban in Israel and occupied east Jerusalem has raised fears that its West Bank employees could face problems not only accessing those areas, but also moving around more generally because they would lose the ability to co-ordinate with the Israeli authorities manning checkpoints.

The same fears apply to visas and permits delivered by Israeli authorities.

Eighteen-year-old Ahmed Naseef, a refugee from the Jalazone camp north of nearby Ramallah, said he didn't know what he and his classmates would do should the Qalandia training centre close as a result of the law.

"It would disrupt my fellow students. Many don't have the financial means to go to another institute for study. Here, it's almost free," he said during a class in which he was learning how to install lights in a room.

"We imagine that we're setting up a bedroom and a bathroom, installing lights, outlets and power points," said the student, who has been a trainee for two months after graduating high school.

"If it closes, I might consider going to university," he said, adding that this had been his original intention, but his current circumstances "don't allow for that".

#### LEFT WITHOUT OPTIONS'

Jonathan Fowler, UNRWA spokesman in Jerusalem, warned that if some of the services were unable to continue, the socio-economic consequences could be "potentially disastrous".

"If these services are not able to operate... who is going to provide education for the children and the adolescents in this camp?"

Baha Awaad, the school's principal, said it trains 350 students but cannot provide for more due to the lack of permission to expand buildings.

Asked whether the students would be able to finish their school year, Awaad admitted: "Frankly, we don't know." "We're operating as usual, not wanting to spread fear. We reassure students that we're doing our best to continue teaching here," he said, adding that worried students had already approached him.

As for what would happen should the school close, Awaad said: "That depends. If it's a permanent closure, they'll be left without options."

Fowler said there was no sustainable alternative to his agency's varied work on such a large scale.

"You can't just flick a switch and UNRWA disappears and someone else steps in," he said.

"The law is very unclear on many fronts," he continued, so "what the intention is, how that would be operationalised is extremely uncertain".

Tensions between UNRWA and Israel began after Israel accused about a dozen of the agency's staff of taking part in Hamas' unprecedented storming of southern Israel in October 2023.

A series of probes found some "neutrality related issues" at UNRWA, and determined that nine employees "may have been involved" in the October first week storming, but found no evidence for Israel's central allegations.

A quarter of the West Bank's 912,000 refugees live in 19 camps, according to UNRWA, and many rely on a variety of services provided by the agency's 3,800 West Bank staff.

One such recipient, teenager Naseef, graduated from an UNRWA school and received health-care from one of its clinics.

In his camp, he said, "the situation is especially hard for the clinic, which many people rely on for medications and treatments. If it shuts down, they'll be cut off." Back in Qalandia camp's narrow alleys, among murals of deceased Palestinian fighters, a nurse at the crowded UNRWA clinic said there was no viable alternative for residents should her facility close.

At the nearby UNRWA primary school for girls, headmaster Rana Nabhan said she "doesn't know" whether her students will finish off the school year.

Unaware of the challenges, a crowd of giggling schoolgirls run around in bright-coloured bibs during gym class, bringing the courtyard to life.

Just over their shoulders is another mural in Arabic: "I love my beautiful school," it reads.



Baha Awaad, the principal of UNRWA's training centre, poses for a picture in front of the school's gate in the refugee camp of Qalandia, south of Ramallah, in the occupied West Bank.



A visitor walks past a mycelium-based modular shelter, designed by the ReRoot initiative, as an alternative to the shelters now housing many thousands of Gazans displaced by more than a year of war, during the annual Design Week in Dubai, recently.

## Mushroom houses for Gaza? Arab designers offer home-grown innovations

**AFP**  
Dubai

As winter descends on Gaza's tent cities, emergency housing made from mushrooms could keep out the cold – just one of several sustainable, home-grown innovations put forward by Arab designers at an expo in Dubai.

Lightweight, warm and versatile, mushroom-based structures are an appealing alternative to the flimsy shelters now housing many thousands of Gazans displaced by more than a year of war, according to Dima al-Sroui, a member of the ReRoot initiative.

"Right now, there is a huge problem with the shelters that they're receiving from NGOs," she said at Dubai Design Week, which featured a range of environment-friendly innovations.

"When the winter comes, when it rains, when it's too cold, they're not working really."

Mycelium, the root-like part of a fungus, can be grown in combination with organic matter to fit different-shaped moulds, producing a strong building material that can be cultivated anywhere.

It's "a healthy material because it's fully natural", urban planning expert Sroui, who is Palestinian, said next to a prototype shelter –

a roomy, enclosed structure with windows and a sloping roof.

"It's something that can provide the solution to extreme weather conditions to protect them from the extreme cold."

ReRoot's emergency housing was not the only example of sustainable Arab design at the annual exhibition in Dubai, which closed last Sunday.

Contrasting with the towering high-rises that dominate the city's skyline, Emirati architect and designer Abdalla Almulla is championing a very different approach: low-rise buildings made from recycled construction waste.

Almulla has teamed up with the Swiss company Oxara, which makes a low-carbon cement replacement, to create structures built with discarded concrete from demolished buildings and roofing made from palm fronds – a nod to the Gulf's ancient construction techniques.

"When I look back, especially in the region where I'm living, a lot of the architecture and designs were based on finding what's surrounding you, finding material around you and then being innovative and creating out of it," Almulla said.

The model is intended as a response to the "world of abundance" that has come to characterise modern design, he added.

"Whenever you want... some-

thing, you need to ship it from halfway around the world."

As well as the large-scale installations, smaller objects were on display, including furniture made from recycled materials and a 3D-printed electric motorcycle.

Faheem Khan, a Qatar-based designer, developed a bottle that minimises water consumption during Wudu, the ritual washing performed by faithful before prayer.

Elif Resitoglu of Isola Design, the Milan-based studio that organised the exhibition, said sustainability was a "new thing" for Arab designers.

But they "blended it into their culture", designing objects that "a Western designer could not actually design", she said.

While the region is more concerned with conflicts than environmental matters, tackling the issue "is not a luxury", said Sroui.

"For me, I always believe that the best way to do activism is through your work," she said.

"You don't have to shout out loud on the streets... Sometimes the solution can be through your knowledge and expertise and sharing it to solve other people's challenges."

According to climate data, the Middle East is warming at a rate nearly twice as fast as the global average.

#### REBUTTAL

### Iran 'categorically' denies envoy's meeting with Musk

Iran's foreign ministry spokesman yesterday "categorically" denied *The New York Times* report on Tehran's ambassador to the United Nations meeting with US tech billionaire Elon Musk, state media reported. AFP reported from Tehran. In an interview with state news agency IRNA, spokesman Esmail Baghaei was reported as "categorically denying such a meeting" and expressing "surprise at the coverage of the American media in this regard". *The Times* reported on Friday that Musk, who is a close ally of President-elect Donald Trump, met earlier this week with Iran's ambassador to the UN, Amir Saied Iravani. It cited anonymous Iranian sources describing the encounter as "positive". Iranian newspapers, particularly those aligned with the reformist party that supports President Masoud Pezeshkian, described the meeting in positive terms before Baghaei's statement.

## ANNOUNCEMENT

I, SAISHA

holder of

**INDIA Passport No. W0277654  
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**THE PERMANENT COMMITTEE FOR NATIONALITY AFFAIRS**  
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## TRAGEDY

### Death toll in Tanzania building collapse rises to five

At least five people were killed and dozens injured after a four-storey building collapsed in the centre of Tanzania's commercial capital Dar es Salaam yesterday, rescuers said. AFP reported from Dar es Salaam. The building in Kariakoo, the East African country's busiest market, caved in as people were shopping in the morning. Hundreds of rescuers using their bare hands, drills and sledge hammers, combed through the rubble in a multi-agency hunt for survivors, alongside excavators. "There is possibility that more people are still trapped in the basement," fire brigade commander Peter Mtui told reporters. At least 56 people had been rescued and rushed to various hospitals, Tanzania Red Cross Society said on X. Witnesses told *The Citizen* newspaper that the building started expanding its underground business space on Friday before it collapsed a day later.

## LEGAL

### SA court orders end to police blockade

A South African court yesterday ordered an end to the police blockade of a former gold mine, where hundreds, possibly thousands, of illegal miners are thought to be underground, AFP reported from Johannesburg. Police and ambulances have been at the site, in Stilfontein, about 140 kilometres southwest of Johannesburg, for several days. Police called in experts yesterday to assess the safety of the mine shafts to help decide if officers could carry out a forced evacuation, police spokesperson Athlenda Mathe told reporters. But the court order effectively rules out that option.

## ANNOUNCEMENT

I, MAHEESA UMAYANGANA

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## ANNOUNCEMENT

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## ANNOUNCEMENT

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**PATRICK JOSEPH DE JESUS CARRERA**

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## ANNOUNCEMENT

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QID No. 29064300167**

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IRINA MOROZOVA

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**IRINA FOSTER**

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مجوهرات الفردان  
Alfardan Jewellery70th ANNIVERSARY  
 عاشر

## Exclusive private viewing event at the House of Yessayan Jewellery



### Showcasing Elegance, Craftsmanship, and Versatility

The House of Yessayan Jewellery, an iconic name in luxury craftsmanship, hosted an exclusive private viewing at its boutique at Doha Festival City. The remarkable event, co-hosted by Amal Ameen, welcomed an elite gathering of high-profile guests for an unforgettable evening filled with elegance and insight into the exquisite world of high and fine jewellery.

The boutique was transformed into a luxurious space with a refined ambiance, providing the perfect setting for guests to discover the fascinating history of the House of Yessayan. Guests had the opportunity to explore a curated selection of Yessayan's exquisite jewellery collections, which ranged from stunning bridal sets and high jewellery masterpieces to elegant, everyday pieces – ensuring options to suit various budgets and tastes.

A highlight of the evening was the captivating panel discussion led by Hovig Yessayan, managing director and owner of Yessayan Jewellery, alongside Amal Ameen.

The engaging conversation covered topics such as the inspiration behind Yessayan's collections, styling tips for different occasions, and an insightful exploration of large, statement stones. Guests were deeply intrigued by the expertise shared, making this panel one of the most memorable parts of the event.

The evening was a resounding success, leaving guests with a deeper appreciation for the artistry and legacy behind each Yessayan piece.

The House of Yessayan continues to uphold its reputation as a beacon of luxury, offering unmatched quality, elegance, and exclusivity.



A highlight of the evening was the captivating panel discussion led by Hovig Yessayan, managing director and owner of Yessayan Jewellery, alongside Amal Ameen.



The boutique offers a perfect setting for guests to discover the fascinating history of the House of Yessayan.



The boutique was transformed into a luxurious space with a refined ambiance.

## The Swiss Business Council Honors Mohamed Youssef Al-Jaber with the “Lifetime Achievement Award 2024”



In a distinguished event reflecting the spirit of excellence and innovation, attended by Dr. Faribor Samadian, Chairman of the Swiss Business Council, and H.E. Florence Tingueley Matti, the Swiss Ambassador to Qatar, along with several embassy members, the Swiss Business Council in Qatar celebrated exceptional achievements within the framework of the “Swiss Excellence Awards 2024,” held under the theme “Unity and Growth.” This ceremony honored a select group of individuals who have contributed

to strengthening Qatari-Swiss relations and made a tangible impact in the fields of innovation, sustainability, and business.

At the forefront of the honorees was Mr. Mohamed Youssef Al-Jaber, CEO and Managing Partner of Al-Jaber Group, who received the “Lifetime Achievement Award 2024” in recognition of his outstanding contributions and exemplary leadership in building strong and fruitful connections between Qatar and Switzerland. Al-Jaber

is seen as a symbol of fruitful partnership and embodies the values of leadership, as reflected in his efforts to enhance economic cooperation between the two countries. His remarkable leadership and visionary insight have paved the way for long-term and active collaboration between Qatari and Swiss companies.

This award is a well-deserved acknowledgment of years of effort and dedication, positively impacting the joint

endeavors to strengthen robust and enduring relations between Qatar and Switzerland, leaving a lasting mark on the distinguished economic relations between the two nations.

Additionally, Tariq Eido, CEO of UBS Qatar, and Adam Yaya, General Manager of Sika Qatar, were honored by the Swiss Business Council with the 2024 Excellence Award. Each has demonstrated excellence in their field, with Eido leading UBS to new levels of distinction in the financial sector,

while Yaya has showcased his pioneering role in sustainable construction, representing the future of the industry in Qatar. Both embody the Swiss values of precision, quality, and integrity.

Since its establishment in 2015, the Swiss Business Council in Qatar has become a unique platform aimed at promoting collaboration between the two countries in various fields, including economy and cultural exchange. The Swiss Excellence Award, launched in 2016, has become a symbol of high-level competition and a commitment to high standards of excellence, encouraging Swiss companies to continue innovating and contributing to Qatar's growing economy.

As it celebrates its tenth anniversary, the Swiss Business Council reaffirms its commitment to expanding avenues of cooperation and creating new opportunities for Swiss companies wishing to invest and operate in Qatar. This comes within a forward-looking vision that reflects Swiss values of innovation and Qatar's aspirations for a more diverse and growing economy, leveraging mutual support to achieve economic ambitions that serve the interests of both nations.





## March for Global Climate Justice and Gaza



Protesters hold up placards as they gather for a combined March for Global Climate Justice, organised by the Climate Justice Coalition, in London yesterday, "to demand the UK government ends our reliance on fossil fuels, pays up for climate finance - and ends its complicity in Israel's escalating genocidal violence".

## Police probe into UK journalist's tweet sparks free-speech debate

AFP  
London

**U**K Conservative leader Kemi Badenoch demanded yesterday a review of the law after a police investigation into a journalist's social media post sparked a debate over free speech. Essex Police in southeast England is investigating *Daily Telegraph* writer Allison Pearson for allegedly stirring up racial hatred over a post she made last November and visited her house on Sunday to invite her for a voluntary interview.

She says police had not told her who made the complaint or the

post at the centre of the probe.

But UK media, including the BBC, reported that Pearson retweeted an image of two police officers at a protest standing next to two men holding a flag purported to be in support of Gaza. The post carried the words: "Look at this lot smiling with the Jew haters" but X added a notice stating that the flag was of a Pakistani political party and the protest was "not related to Palestine". Pearson later deleted the post.

She claims that police were treating it as a so-called non-crime hate incident (NCHI).

But the force denied that and said it was conducting a criminal

investigation into "uttering words that were intended to cause racial hatred". The case has sparked a furor, with senior politicians, lawyers and even X owner Elon Musk weighing in.

Musk, a frequent critic of the UK state, shared the article on X, writing: "This needs to stop!"

Badenoch told the right-wing *Telegraph*: "There has been a long-running problem with people not taking free speech seriously" adding: "We need to look at the laws."

Conservative ex-prime minister Boris Johnson also tweeted yesterday that current UK leader Keir Starmer should "tell the cops - 'police the streets, not the tweets'".

International lawyer Geoffrey Robertson told the *Telegraph*: "Any judgement must await the revelation of her actual words." Some social media racists have rightly been convicted over disinformation which actually stoked the recent riots," he said.

"But it is right to watch closely and consider whether the quickly deleted opinion could be such as to justify the intervention of the state."

He added it was "silly to blame the government... for what may simply be a case of overzealous or under-competent policemen".

Former Labour MP Ian Austin wrote in the *Telegraph* yesterday

that he too had been investigated for using the word "Islamist" in a social media post. He added that police would have recorded his comment as an NCHI had the rules not been changed to raise the threshold.

NCHIs have long been a source of controversy in the UK, with the *Times* reporting on Friday that a nine-year-old had been probed over an insulting remark to a fellow pupil.

NCHIs are recorded by the police "to collect information on 'hate incidents'... that do not constitute a criminal offence" according to government guidelines.

They involve incidents which

are perceived by any person "to be motivated - wholly or partly - by hostility or prejudice towards persons with a particular characteristic". More than 13,200 hate incidents were recorded in the 12 months to June this year, according to police figures.

Starmer's spokesman said Thursday that the government was reviewing guidance to ensure "the fundamental right to free speech" but said it was important that police recorded NCHIs where "proportionate and necessary". Critics, including Robertson, argue that people can end up with an NCHI record without "a fair opportunity for challenge".

## Super Typhoon Man-yi pounds the Philippines

AFP  
Manila

**S**uper Typhoon Man-yi battered the Philippines yesterday, with the national weather forecaster warning of a "potentially catastrophic and life-threatening" impact as huge waves pounded the archipelago's coastline.

More than 650,000 people fled their homes ahead of Man-yi, which is the sixth major storm to hit the disaster-weary country in the past month. Man-yi brought maximum wind speeds of 195km per hour as it made landfall on the sparsely populated island province of Catanduanes as a super typhoon, the weather service said, adding gusts were reaching 325 kilometres an hour.

"Potentially catastrophic and life-threatening situation looms for northeastern Bicol region as Super Typhoon 'Pepito' further intensifies," the forecaster said hours before it made landfall, using the local name for the storm and referring to the southern part of the main island of Luzon.

Waves up to 14m high pummeled the shore of Catanduanes, while Manila and other vulnerable coastal regions were at risk from storm surges reaching up to more than three metres over the next 48 hours, the forecaster said. The weather forecaster said winds wallowing Catanduanes and north-



People react as large waves break along a seawall ahead of the expected landfall of Super Typhoon Man-yi, in Legazpi City, Albay province yesterday.

eastern Camarines Sur province - both in the typhoon-prone Bicol region - posed an "extreme threat to life and property".

Power was shut down on Catanduanes ahead of the storm, with shelters and the command centre using generators for electricity. "We're hearing sounds of things falling and things breaking while here at the evacuation centre," Catanduanes provincial disaster operations chief Roberto Monter-

ola told AFP after Man-yi made landfall.

"We are unable to check what they are as the winds are too strong. They could be tree branches breaking off and falling on rooftops," Monterola said, adding there had been no reports of casualties.

At least 163 people died in the five storms that pounded the Philippines in recent weeks, leaving thousands homeless and wiping out crops and livestock.

Climate change is increasing the intensity of storms, leading to heavier rains, flash floods and stronger gusts. About 20 big storms and typhoons hit the Southeast Asian nation or its surrounding waters each year, killing scores of people, but it is rare for multiple such weather events to take place in a small window.

Man-yi could hit Luzon - the country's most populous island and economic engine - as a super

disaster officer Rei Josiah Echano lamented that damage caused by typhoons was the root cause of poverty in the region. "Whenever there's a typhoon like this, it brings us back to the medieval era, we go (back) to square one," Echano told AFP, as the province prepared for the onslaught of Man-yi.

The mayor of Naga city in Camarines Sur province imposed a curfew from midday yesterday in a bid to force residents indoors. All vessels - from fishing boats to oil tankers - were ordered to stay in port or return to shore. The volcanology agency also warned heavy rain dumped by Man-yi could trigger flows of volcanic sediment, or lahars, from three volcanoes, including Taal, south of Manila.

Man-yi hit the Philippines late in the typhoon season - most cyclones develop between July and October.

Earlier this month, four storms were clustered simultaneously in the Pacific basin, which the Japan Meteorological Agency told AFP yesterday was the first time such an occurrence had been observed in November since its records began in 1951.

## Internet cut in India's violence-hit Manipur

Reuters  
Guwahati

### At least 250 people have died and 60,000 been uprooted in Manipur since May last year in inter-communal clashes over government grants and quotas in jobs and education

**A**uthorities in the northeast Indian state of Manipur suspended Internet and mobile services and imposed an indefinite curfew yesterday in areas where protesters were besieging politicians' homes over deadly inter-ethnic violence.

In the latest deaths, security forces found three bodies believed to be members of the majority Meitei community in a river on Friday.

Meitei representatives said they were from a family of six captured by men from the Kuki ethnic group. At least 250 people have died and 60,000 been uprooted

residences were vandalised.

"My house is currently under attack," BJP lawmaker L Sushindro Meitei told Reuters by phone from another location, saying he had information a crowd had surrounded his home. "There has been some damage to my house, glasses (windowpanes) broken, but the security forces were able to disperse the mobs before they could enter," he said.

The six family members were reported missing in the aftermath of violence on Monday when 10 armed Kuki men died in a gunfight with security forces. Last

week, a 31-year-old woman of the Hmar group within the Kuki tribal community was burned alive in the state's Jiribam district. Kuki groups blamed Meitei militants.

The government has sent extra security forces and promised firm action against violent members of both communities in the state of 3.2mn people. Manipur has become divided into two ethnic enclaves: a valley controlled by the Meiteis and hills dominated by the Kukis. The areas are separated by a stretch of no-man's land monitored by federal paramilitary forces.



People run past burning vehicles of India's Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) MLA during a protest to condemn the alleged killing of women and children in Imphal, capital of India's violence-hit northeastern state of Manipur yesterday.

# Xi, Biden meet as Trump return looms

AFP  
Lima

US President Joe Biden and Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping were to hold their last meeting yesterday, a day after both leaders warned of turbulent times ahead as Donald Trump returns to the White House.

Both men arrived last morning for the second and final day of an Asia-Pacific economic summit in Peru overshadowed by the prospect of fresh trade wars and diplomatic upheaval when Trump starts his second term.

Trump's comeback has cast a cloud of uncertainty over efforts – launched at a historic meeting between Xi and Biden in California a year ago – to ease a tense relationship between Washington and Beijing.

The White House said yesterday's Xi-Biden meeting on the sidelines of the Asia-Pacific Economic Co-operation (Apec) summit would focus on a "delicate period of transition" and ensuring that competition with China "doesn't veer into conflict."

Trump's crushing election win over Democrat Kamala Harris sent shock waves around the globe and dominated the meeting of heads of state of the 21-member Apec group.

Before their face-to-face meeting, Biden and Xi were to take part in a closed-door "retreat" with other leaders from countries including Canada, Chile, Singapore, Australia, Malaysia and Japan.

Xi and Biden, who met for the third time overall, have warned separately at the summit of choppy waters ahead.

The Chinese president reiterated concerns yesterday about mounting "protectionism" and urged Apec nations to "unite and co-operate" in remarks distributed by state broadcaster CCTV.

Biden said Friday the world had "reached a moment of significant political change."

## Trump ex-lawyer turns over assets in libel settlement

Donald Trump's former personal lawyer Rudy Giuliani has agreed to hand over his Mercedes to settle \$148mn in damages owed to two election workers he defamed in 2020, but is holding on to a collectible baseball jersey, his lawyer said. Giuliani, a key figure in the former Republican president's efforts to overturn the 2020 election results, was ordered to compensate election worker Ruby Freeman and her daughter Wandrea "Shaye" Moss in December 2023. Giuliani filed for bankruptcy afterwards but was ordered by a federal judge in New York last month to surrender part of his assets, including his New York apartment, a 1980 Mercedes Benz, jewellery, numerous luxury watches, and collectible items. In a letter to the New York judge on Friday, his lawyer stated that Rudy Giuliani had begun complying by handing over the watches, a ring, and the Mercedes that same day. However, he argued that some items should be exempt from the court-ordered seizure, particularly a jersey signed by baseball legend Joe DiMaggio. The lawyer also requested that a court appearance scheduled for January 16 be postponed until January 22 so that Giuliani could attend Donald Trump's inauguration as the 47th president of the United States on January 20. Giuliani was judged guilty of defaming the two women as they took part in a vote count in the swing state of Georgia after the presidential election in 2020.

## Trump's Republican allies tread lightly on Paris pact at COP29

AFP  
Baku

Donald Trump's Republican allies in Congress showed up at UN climate talks to tout natural gas and nuclear energy, but they tiptoed around the elephant in the room: a looming US withdrawal from the Paris agreement.

President Joe Biden's climate envoy has sought to reassure delegates in Baku this week, telling them that Trump's planned pullout from the pact would have little impact on the global battle against climate change.

The handful of Republican lawmakers who made the trip to Azerbaijan's capital yesterday represent states that are home to oil fields, coal mines and auto manufacturing.

Morgan Griffith, a congressman from Ohio and member of the House energy committee, told AFP that he has supported the Paris agreement in the past.

Asked if he would back a withdrawal, he said: "We don't want

get in front of the president.

"It just depends on, you know, what we deem is in the best interest of the United States," he added. Under the Paris agreement, signatories aim to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050 in the hope of reaching the ideal target of limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius from pre-industrial levels. The Republicans, with their

## Apec family photo



US President Joe Biden (top, second right) and other leaders participate in a family photo during the Asia-Pacific Economic Co-operation (Apec) Leaders' Retreat summit in Lima, Peru, yesterday. (AFP)

### Rivals say Scholz's phone call handed Putin 'propaganda win'

Political rivals of Germany's embattled leader Olaf Scholz argued yesterday that his phone call with Vladimir Putin on the Ukraine war had handed a "propaganda win" to the Russian president.

Scholz and the Kremlin chief spoke on Friday for the first time in almost two years.

The German chancellor condemned the war and called for both peace talks and a troop withdrawal, according to his office.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky quickly accused Scholz of playing into the hands of Putin, who has been shunned by Western leaders, and said the call had opened a "Pandora's Box".

In Germany – where Scholz faces federal elections in February after his three-party coalition collapsed last week – the conservative opposition CDU voiced similar criticism of the Social Democratic Party (SPD) chancellor.

Putin will "understand the fact that Scholz called him as a sign of weakness rather than strength", CDU foreign policy spokesman Juergen Hardt told Deutschlandfunk radio.

He accused Scholz of having helped Putins to a "propaganda win" for German domestic political reasons, pointing out that he had apparently "not made any concrete new proposal or even issued an ultimatum".

Germany has been Ukraine's second biggest supplier of weapons after the United States but has refrained from sending it long-range weapons that could strike deep inside Russia to avoid further escalating the conflict.

CDU politician Johann Wadephul also argued in comments to AFP that, as elections loom, "Scholz himself was more concerned with PR than with protecting Ukraine".

## Zelensky seeks end to war by diplomatic means by next year

AFP  
Kyiv

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said yesterday that Kyiv would like to end the war with Russia next year through "diplomatic means" as both countries prepare for Donald Trump's return to the White House.

February 2025 would mark the third anniversary of Moscow's invasion of Ukraine, with Russia's troops gaining ground in recent months against Kyiv's outmanned and outgunned soldiers.

The prospect of Trump returning to power in the United States next year has raised questions about the future of the conflict, as the Republican president-elect has been critical of US military aid to Kyiv.

Meanwhile North Korea – a key Kremlin ally – has sent thousands of its soldiers to help Moscow repel a Ukrainian offensive ongoing in Russia's border Kursk region, according to Western officials.

Zelensky spoke a day after saying the war will end "sooner" than it otherwise would have done once Trump becomes president. He also spoke a day after Russian President Vladimir Putin held his first phone call with a major Western leader in nearly two years, speaking to German Chancellor Olaf Scholz who initiated the call despite Kyiv's objections.

"For our part, we must do everything we can to ensure that this war ends next year. We have to end it by diplomatic means," Zelensky

said in an interview with Ukrainian radio. "And this, I think, is very important."

There have been no meaningful talks between Russia and Ukraine, but Trump's re-election has plunged the brutal conflict's future into uncertainty, with the Republican repeatedly promising to cut a quick deal to end the war.

"We have to understand what the Russians want," Zelensky said.

Russian President Vladimir Putin has said he will only accept talks with Ukraine if Kyiv surrenders Ukrainian territory that Moscow occupies.

The Kremlin said he repeated that demand in the phone conversation with Scholz on Friday.

Zelensky has rejected Putin's conditions.

With North Korea sending troops into the most significant conflict on European soil since World War II, Russia's invasion has sent shockwaves reverberating far beyond the continent.

For weeks, the West and Ukraine have warned that thousands of Pyongyang's troops were already helping Moscow's forces in the Kursk region, where Kyiv has taken swathes of Russian territory since early August.

It follows months of tightening military ties between the two former Communist allied nations, with Moscow and Pyongyang ratifying a landmark defence pact on Tuesday.

South Korea has slammed its nuclear-armed hermit neighbour's involvement, with Japan's foreign minister joining the chorus of condemnation while on a

visit to Ukraine yesterday.

"This will not only deepen the severity of the Ukraine situation, but also have extremely significant implications for east Asia's security situation," Takeshi Iwaya said, pledging further support.

Iwaya's diplomatic visit took him to Bucha, a town outside the capital where Russia's army is accused of committing horrific atrocities against civilians early in the war.

Following Russia's retreat after a month-long occupation, the bodies of dozens of civilians were found shot dead in the street, some with their hands tied behind their backs.

Ukraine was angered after Germany's Scholz reached out to Putin on Friday.

Berlin said Scholz "condemned Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine and called on President Putin to withdraw troops".

It also said Scholz "urged Russia to show willingness to negotiate with Ukraine with the aim of achieving a just and lasting peace".

But Ukraine accused Scholz of an "attempt at appeasement" and said the call would not achieve anything other than minimise Putin's "isolation".

The chancellor – whose fragile coalition government collapsed last week – also faced blowback at home, with the conservative opposition party accusing the centre-left leader of handing Putin a "propaganda win".

Scholz said he had spoken to Zelensky before calling the Kremlin chief and also informed other Western allies of the call.



US Senators Sheldon Whitehouse and Ed Markey attend a session of the UN climate change conference COP29 in Baku yesterday. Right: An environmental activist takes part in a protest to urge world leaders to commit to a strong climate finance deal. (Reuters)



Right: An environmental activist takes part in a protest to urge world leaders to commit to a strong climate finance deal. (Reuters)

that, then we would want to look at that. But that's for the president to say."

At the US pavilion in the cavernous stadium housing the conference, Griffith and two other congressmen, including a Democrat, sang the praises of nuclear energy as part of the solutions to lowering global emissions.

Heather Reams, president of the Citizens for Responsible Energy Solutions, a conservative non-profit that engages Republicans on climate policy, moderated the panel. She told AFP that her organisation wants the United States to remain in the Paris agreement as it was "symbolic in a lot of ways for the United States to be a leader" on climate.

US officials and Democrats told COP29 delegates that the hundreds of billions of dollars in tax credits and clean energy investments in Biden's signature climate law, the Inflation Reduction Act, would cushion the blow from Trump's withdrawal from the Paris pact.

"We are very supportive of those tax credits," Reams said.

backing of the oil and gas sectors, offered a contrasting vision of the fight against climate change to many of the delegates and activists attending the COP29 conference.

"In our country there's a blind rush just to eliminate all fossil fuels and I don't think that's practical for the developing world or the already industrialised world,"

Griffith said. Texas Congressman August Pfluger, who led the House energy committee delegation, said the US election had sent a clear signal.

"The people in the United States overwhelmingly supported President Donald Trump and his promise to restore American energy dominance," Pfluger said at a news conference.

When asked about the Paris agreement, Pfluger said American voters "spoke very loud and clear" about their desire to see inflation come under control when they elected Trump on November 5.

"Energy is the foundation of that," he added.

"If an agreement is going to hurt, if something is going to actually decrease our ability to do

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**GULF TIMES**

## Climate change disproportionately affects the world's poor

Global poverty and climate change are deeply interlinked. The relationship among human, ecological and climate systems is multidimensional, as climate change disproportionately affects the world's poor, and poverty exacerbates vulnerabilities to climate change.

Our jobs, health, and even cultural values all stem from our natural surroundings. As a result, climate change has emerged as the most significant challenge of our lifetime and is fast becoming the new paradigm for global development.

Climate change worsens economic instability by damaging agriculture, fisheries, and natural resources that many low-income communities rely on for livelihoods.

Extreme weather events, such as floods, droughts, and hurricanes, often destroy infrastructure, homes, and businesses in poor regions, setting back development.

Impoverished communities often depend on deforestation, over-fishing, and unsustainable farming for survival, contributing to biodiversity loss and increased greenhouse gas emissions.

Poor regions obviously lack infrastructure, technology, and financial resources to adopt climate-resilient practices, increasing their carbon footprint through inefficient means.

That said, governments, multilateral banks, and other major development actors around the world have all stepped up financial commitments for climate change.

However, many of these commitments still miss a key ingredient – a distinct focus on the poor and vulnerable, according to some economists at the World Bank.

Currently, 90% of climate finance goes towards climate mitigation including clean energy and sustainable transport. While these investments are critical in slowing down the pace of climate change, often, they do not solve the persistent challenges that the poor face.

The world's poorest people typically lack resources – money, physical assets, and knowledge – to cope and adapt to climate shocks, noted World Bank's

Timothy Clay, Nazia Moqueet and Victoria Strokska.

They often respond in ways that further degrade their surrounding environment, creating a vicious cycle of poverty and environmental deterioration. Women are particularly vulnerable and are at a greater risk of losing their livelihoods due to a climate shock than men. Therefore, governments must work hard to include the poorest, particularly women, in climate initiatives, ensuring they have the resources to cope with immediate shocks, adapt to long-term climate impacts, and benefit from the budding green revolution.

If the poor are left to handle the climate crisis alone, the consequences will be clear: migration, civil disruption, and famine – all of which are already beginning to unfold.

As climate impacts become increasingly visible, governments recognise the need to adopt climate-resilient development strategies that holistically address the intertwined challenges of poverty and climate change.

It is important to note that tackling both challenges simultaneously cannot be achieved through one-off interventions. Reforesting vast landscapes alone does not guarantee improved outcomes for the poor, just as cash transfers, while essential in times of climate disasters, do not ensure enhanced biodiversity.

Ideally, programmes should provide an integrated approach that combines poverty and climate objectives, involving various sectors and actors, including social protection, environment, and agriculture.

Undoubtedly, governments must work hard to include the poorest, particularly women, in climate initiatives, ensuring they have the resources to cope with immediate shocks, adapt to long-term climate impacts, and benefit from the budding green revolution.

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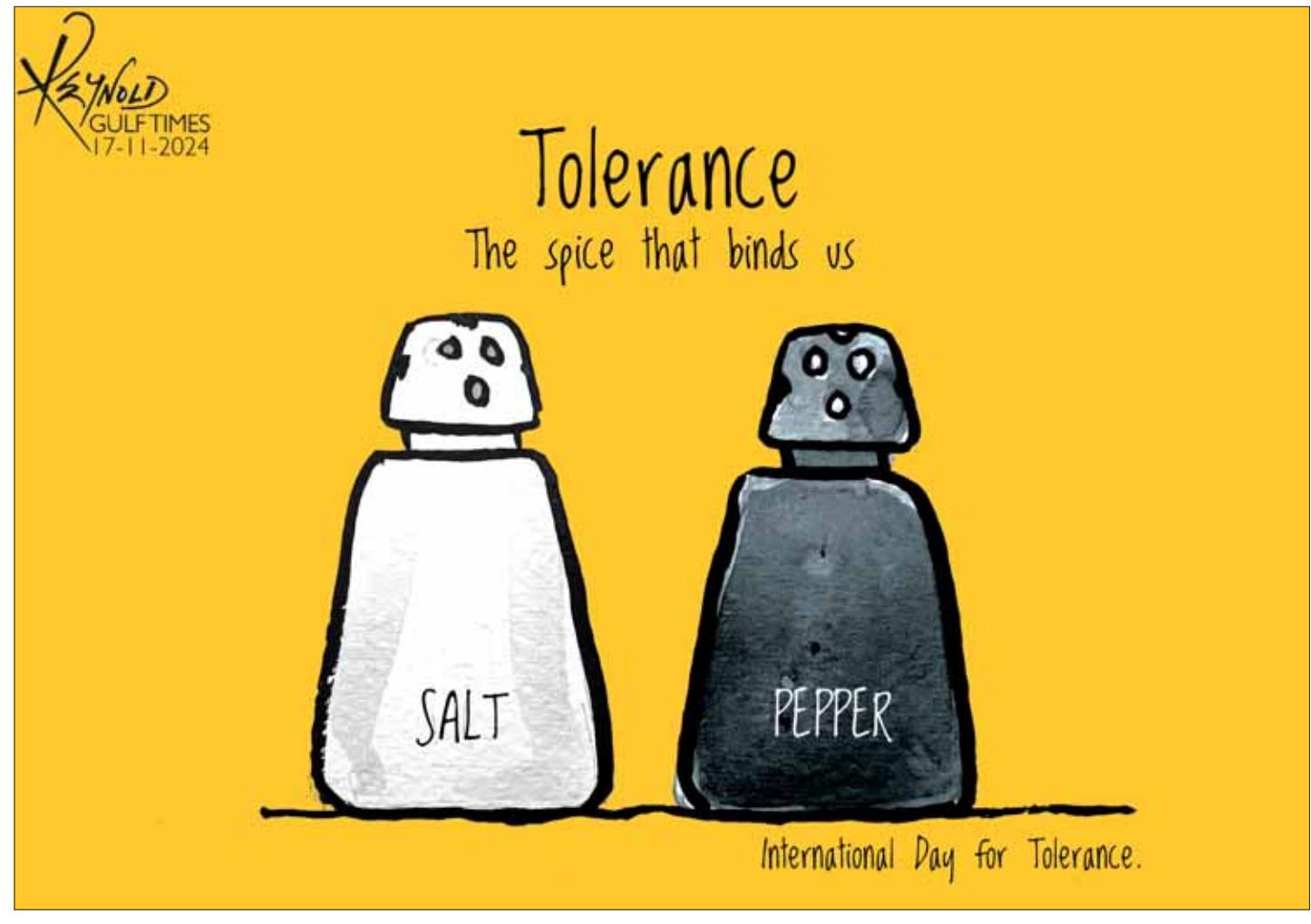
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## How Trump plans to crack down on immigration in second term

By Ted Hesson

Washington

**R**epublican Donald Trump is expected to crack down on illegal immigration and try to restrict legal immigration when he returns to the White House on January 20, following up on campaign promises and unfinished efforts from his 2017-2021 presidency.

Here are some of the policies under consideration, according to Trump, his campaign and news reports:

**Border enforcement**

Trump is expected to take a slew of executive actions on his first day as president to ramp up immigration enforcement, including deploying National Guard troops to the US-Mexico border and declaring a national emergency to unlock funds to resume construction of a wall on the US-Mexico border.

Trump has said he would restore his 2019 "remain in Mexico" program, which forced asylum-seekers of certain nationalities attempting to enter the US at the southern border to wait in Mexico for the resolution of their cases. The program was terminated by Biden, a Democrat who ended his faltering re-election campaign in July, making Vice-President Kamala Harris the candidate. Biden defeated Trump in 2020, pledging more humane and orderly immigration policies, but struggled to deal with record levels of migrants caught crossing the US-Mexico border illegally.

Immigration was a top voter issue heading into last week's election, in which Trump defeated Harris in a stunning political comeback.

Edison Research exit polls showed 39% of voters said most immigrants in the US illegally should be deported while 56% said they should be offered a chance to apply for legal status.

Trump also would reinstate the Covid-19-era Title 42 policy, which allowed US border authorities to quickly expel migrants back to Mexico without the chance to claim asylum, he told *Time* magazine in an interview.

He would use record border crossings and trafficking of fentanyl and children as reasons for the emergency moves, *Time* reported, citing comments from advisers.

Trump has said he will seek to detain all migrants caught crossing the border illegally or violating other immigration laws, ending what he calls "catch and release". At an October campaign event, Trump said he would call on Congress to fund an additional 10,000 Border Patrol agents, a substantial increase over the existing force. Harris criticised Trump for helping kill a bipartisan border security bill earlier this year that could have added 1,300 more agents.

Trump criticised a Biden asylum ban rolled out last June and pledged to reverse it during a campaign event in Arizona. He said the measure would not adequately secure the border, even though it mirrored Trump-era policies to deter would-be migrants and has contributed to a steep

drop in migrants caught crossing illegally. Trump also said at the campaign event that he would consider using tariffs to pressure China and other nations to stop migrants from their countries from coming to the US-Mexico border.

**Mass deportations**

Trump has pledged to launch the largest deportation effort in American history, focusing on criminals but aiming to send millions back to their home countries, an effort that is expected to tap resources across the US government but also face obstacles. As part of his Day One executive actions, Trump is expected to scrap Biden's immigration enforcement priorities, which focused on arresting serious criminals and limited enforcement against people with no criminal records.

During a rally in Wisconsin in September, Trump said deporting migrants would be a "bloody story" rhetoric that sparked criticism from immigrant advocates.

Trump told *Time* he did not rule out building new migrant detention camps but "there wouldn't be that much of a need for them" because migrants would be rapidly removed.

Trump would rely on the National Guard, if needed, to arrest and deport immigrants in the US illegally, he said. When questioned, he also said he would be willing to consider using federal troops if necessary, a step likely to be challenged in the courts. Trump has also vowed to take aggressive new steps to deport immigrants with criminal records and suspected gang members by using the Alien Enemies Act, a 226-year-old statute last utilised for interning people of Japanese, German and Italian descent during World War Two.

Trump called for the death penalty for migrants who kill US citizens or law enforcement officers at an October rally in Aurora, Colorado. Stephen Miller, the architect of Trump's first-term immigration agenda who reportedly will return in a top White House role, said in an interview last year with a right-wing podcast that National Guard troops from co-operative states could potentially be deployed to what he characterised as "unfriendly" states to assist with deportations, which could trigger legal battles.

Vice-President-elect J D Vance said in a New York Times interview published in October that deporting immigrants per year would be "reasonable". Biden in the 2023 federal fiscal year outpaced Trump deportation totals for any single year – with a total 468,000 migrants being deported to their home countries or returned to Mexico by US immigration authorities – and is on pace for even more this year, a tally that includes migrants returned to Mexico.

**Travel bans**

Trump has said he would implement travel bans on people from certain countries or with certain ideologies, expanding on a policy upheld by the Supreme Court in 2018. Trump previewed some parts of the world that could be subjected to a renewed travel ban in an October 2023 speech, pledging to restrict people from the Gaza Strip,

Libya, Somalia, Syria, Yemen and "anywhere else that threatens our security." During the speech, Trump focused on the conflict in Gaza, saying he would bar the entry of immigrants who support the Hamas and send deportation officers to protest Hamas protests.

Trump said last June he would seek to block communists, Marxists and socialists from entering the US.

**Legal immigration**

Trump plans to end Biden's humanitarian "parole" programmes, including one that allowed hundreds of thousands of migrants with US sponsors to enter the US and obtain work permits. He has called Biden's programmes an "outrageous abuse of parole authority." Trump said last year that he would seek to end automatic citizenship for children born in the US to immigrants living in the country illegally, an idea he flirted with as president.

Such an action would run against the long-running interpretation of an amendment to the US Constitution and would likely trigger legal challenges. During his first term, Trump greatly reduced the number of refugees allowed into the US and has criticised Biden's decision to increase admissions. He would again suspend the resettlement program if elected, the New York Times reported in November 2023.

Trump has said he would push for a merit-based immigration system that protects American labour and promotes American values. In his first term, he took steps to tighten access to some visa programmes, including a suspension of many work visas during the Covid pandemic. The Trump campaign criticised a Biden programme – currently blocked by a federal judge – that offered a path to citizenship to immigrants in the US illegally who are married to an American citizen and have lived in the US for at least a decade.

Trump said on a podcast in June that he backed giving green cards to foreign students who graduate from US colleges or junior colleges, but Trump campaign spokesperson Karoline Leavitt later said the proposal "would only apply to the most thoroughly vetted college graduates who would never undercut American wages or workers."

He would seek to roll back Temporary Protected Status designations, the New York Times reported, targeting a humanitarian programme that offers deportation relief and work permits to hundreds of thousands. Trump tried to phase out most Temporary Protected Status enrolment during his first term, but was slowed by legal challenges. A federal appeals court in September 2020 allowed him to proceed with the wind-down, but Biden reversed that and expanded the programme after taking office.

**Family separation**

In a town hall with CNN last year, Trump declined to rule out resuming his contentious "zero tolerance" policy that led thousands of migrant children and parents to be separated at the US-Mexico border in 2018.

He defended the separations again in November 2023, telling Spanish-language news outlet Univision that "it stopped people from coming by the hundreds of thousands." While Trump has refused to rule out reinstating a family separation policy, Trump's incoming "border czar" Tom Homan told Reuters last year that the separations "caused an uproar" and that it would be better to detain families together. The Biden administration last year reached a settlement agreement with separated families that would offer them temporary legal status and other benefits while barring similar separations for at least eight years.

**DACA**

Trump tried to end a programme that grants deportation relief and work permits to "Dreamer" immigrants brought to the US illegally as children, but the termination was rebuffed by the Supreme Court in June 2020. Following the Supreme Court ruling, the Trump administration said it would not accept any new applications to the programme, known as Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, or DACA, and would explore whether it could again attempt to end it.

Trump plans to try to end DACA if elected, the New York Times reported.



Stamford Schools Superintendent Tamu Lucero addresses immigrants, rights groups and concerned citizens at a public meeting to discuss the uncertain future following President-elect Donald Trump's win in the election, on Tuesday in Stamford, Connecticut. Leaders, including the AG, as well as the Stamford city mayor, police chief and school superintendent addressed high levels of anxiety in the immigrant community, especially undocumented people. (AFP)



# Trump inherits waning US strength in Africa as it lags behind China, Russia

By Jessica Donati

Dakar

A decline in US influence in Africa means US President-elect Donald Trump's administration will have to grapple with blind spots in its understanding of a fast-changing continent increasingly allied with China and Russia and threatened by spreading jihadist insurrections.

Interviews with eight current and former officials along with a review of US government watchdog reports show that a dearth of staff and resources under President Joe Biden at embassies in Africa undermined efforts to implement Washington's goals. The US racked up diplomatic setbacks over the past four years, including losing America's major spy base in Niger and failing to negotiate a deal with any ally to reposition those assets. It is now caught without a foothold among the Sahel region's Russia-backed military juntas just as the region becomes the world's terrorism hotpot.

In soft power terms, a Gallup poll published this year showed that China surpassed the US in popularity in Africa.

Cameron Hudson, a former CIA analyst who worked on Africa in a number of roles for both Democrat and Republican administrations, said the lack of resources had led to missteps.

These include being caught by surprise when war erupted in Sudan in April last year, he said, and bungling talks with Niger's junta over its airbase.

"We have huge blind spots in our understanding of political dynamics, military dynamics in the countries where we are active," Hudson, now at the Centre for Strategic and International Studies in Washington, told Reuters. "This is a mega issue that U.S. diplomacy faces, and it's particularly acute in Africa."

In response to Reuters questions, the US State Department said applicants for posts in Africa were dissuaded by insufficient schools, health care, and the remote nature of many postings, adding that monetary and non-monetary incentives were in place to



President-elect Donald Trump has nominated Marco Rubio (left) as the next secretary of state. (Reuters)

encourage service in what it called difficult posts.

Other signs point to America's decline in a region long considered to be a low priority for US foreign policymakers. Washington has made little progress towards advancing access to vast reserves of African minerals that it says are critical for national security. A flagship US-backed railway project to export resources through Angola to the West is still years from completion.

Biden made sweeping political promises to Africa that he has yet to keep, including visiting during his presidency, which ends in January. He vowed to support the addition of two permanent seats for Africa at the UN Security Council and for the African Union to join the G20, but neither has happened.

Two former senior officials that served in Trump's 2017-2021 administration said they expected him to pursue a more pragmatic approach than Biden, seeking tangible returns for US spending in the region.

Competition with China will be a major focus, they both said, along with fresh support for US businesses. The US may also

revisit its politics towards military leaders in the troubled Sahel, with less focus on democracy and human rights, they said.

"Africa policy needs a bit of realism," said Tibor Nagy, a retired career ambassador and former Trump envoy to Africa. "I'm hoping that with a second Trump administration, where policy is more transactional, you can actually end up with more successes."

The Trump campaign did not respond to emails requesting information about its plans for Africa. Brian Hook, a former Trump official overseeing the diplomatic transition at the State Department, did not respond to a request for comment.

#### The lights were off

The troubled US diplomatic footprint on the continent is visible in US government data and official reports that are publicly available but have not appeared in the media.

Numerous reports by the State Department's watchdog, the Office of the Inspector General, detail staffing problems at embassies that undermine US goals including promoting political and economic stability.

One example is the situation in the Central African Republic, a gold-producing increasingly authoritarian state that pays Russian mercenaries for protection while receiving millions in US aid, according to a watchdog report in June.

The report described how embassy staffing shortages meant the US ambassador in the country often had no note-taker at meetings. Sending documents could take hours due to a weak internet connection at the embassy.

Over \$2mn worth of inventory was lost in 2023, linked partly to theft and fraud by local hires, the report said. Even in places where the US wants to compete with Beijing, a top national security priority, staffing problems are severe. At one point in 2023, a US congressional official said, the political section was vacant in Guinea, home to the world's largest bauxite reserves, with exports mostly destined for China.

"The entire department was empty, the lights were off," the official told Reuters, on condition of anonymity to speak candidly.

In Togo, a coastal West African nation threatened by jihadists, the small US embassy was unable to keep up with Washington's demands after Togo was selected to pilot the bipartisan Global Fragility Act, a US strategy to promote political stability around the world through 10-year plans, an inspector general report published in mid-2023 described.

The report blamed a lack of both staff and experience, with almost every US official at the post serving in their job for the first time. The embassy declined additional funding for security assistance because it didn't have the resources to spend it, the report said.

The State Department declined to comment on specific questions about embassy operations in the Central African Republic, Guinea and Togo.

#### Cuts, cuts, cuts

With major wars raging in Ukraine and the Middle East, Africa may well be low on Trump's foreign policy priorities. He has yet to appoint an Africa team, in contrast to his defeated opponent US Vice-President Kamala Harris, who named a team for the

region in the days before the November 5 election. During his last administration, many in the region were enraged when Trump reportedly referred to African nations in a derogatory way. Close allies were hit with travel bans. Eritrea, Nigeria, Somalia, Sudan and Tanzania were among 13 countries on the list when he left office.

Peter Pham, a former top Trump envoy to Africa's Great Lakes and Sahel region, said he did not expect a major drop in US aid for Africa with the new government but that with Trump there was a higher chance assistance would be cut off if a country was perceived to be acting against US interests.

"We have to be more intentional about that, and that means capable partners and accountability," he said in an interview. The first Trump administration proposed sweeping cuts to the State Department and the US Agency for International Development and struggled to fill posts during its time in office. It also pulled funds from the United Nations and healthcare organisations that supported family planning.

The American Foreign Service Association, the union that represents US diplomats, said that a shortage of mid-level staff, red tape and other institutional issues all contributed to the problems in Africa.

The State Department has been hiring above attrition for the first time in 15 years, Marcia Bernicat, the foreign service director general, said in an interview in September, citing initiatives to address mid-career shortages.

A quarter of the workforce is now made up of people hired since 2020, she said. Two studies are underway to review incentives to draw people to hard to fill jobs.

Despite these efforts, staffing levels in Africa changed little overall during Biden's time in office after falling during the global pandemic.

Limited State Department data provided to Reuters shows the number of foreign service officers in Africa dipped to 2,057 in 2023 from 2,175 in December 2018.

"It's frustrating for everyone involved," Tom Yazgerdi, the foreign service union president, told Reuters. "It's not just a staffing issue - it's a national security concern." - Reuters

## How Musk's govt efficiency panel might work

President-elect Donald Trump has tasked billionaire Tesla CEO Elon Musk with setting up a panel to streamline the US government. Although Trump has said little about how this group would operate, Musk previously set an ambitious goal of cutting \$2tn of federal spending. Musk, the world's richest person, will head the new panel along with former Republican presidential candidate Vivek Ramaswamy. Here is how it might work.

#### What does Musk want to cut?

Musk said at a Trump rally at Madison Square Garden in October that the federal budget could be reduced by "at least" \$2tn. That ambitious goal exceeds total discretionary spending, including defence spending, which is estimated to total \$1.9tn out of \$6.75tn in total federal outlays for fiscal 2024, according to the Congressional Budget Office. Musk, whose companies include the electric vehicle maker Tesla and commercial space company SpaceX, has extensive federal contracts for rockets and other space operations with the National Aeronautics and Space Administration and the Pentagon.

Musk has also tussled with various federal regulators. The Federal Aviation Administration has a say in SpaceX rocket launches and the Environmental Protection Agency has fined the company over pollution near a launch site in Texas. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration is investigating autonomous driving functions in Tesla's cars. The Securities and Exchange Commission disciplined Musk for a 2018 tweet about taking Tesla private. Ramaswamy, who founded pharmaceutical company Roivant Sciences, has worked with the Food and Drug Administration, an agency he has called "corrupt". On social media site X in 2023 he wrote: "Countless FDA regulations and actions are hypocritical, harmful & unconstitutional."

#### What have Musk and Trump said about the panel?

Trump in a statement on Tuesday said the panel would "provide advice and guidance from outside of government" on slimming down the government, cutting regulations, reducing spending and restructuring federal agencies. Trump wants to abolish the Department of Education, giving states greater control of schooling. He also wants to sharply cut the "deep state" — career federal employees he says are clandestinely pursuing their own agendas. Trump and Musk have suggested the panel will make dramatic cuts. However the US Constitution gives Congress the power over the federal budget. Congress can take or disregard advice from outside panels like the proposed efficiency group.

In an effort to be transparent, Musk said the panel will post its "actions" for public comment.



Tesla CEO and X owner Elon Musk speaks during a rally for President-elect Donald Trump at Madison Square Garden, in New York, in October. (Reuters)

"Anytime the public thinks we are cutting something important or not cutting something wasteful, just let us know!" he said on X. He also mentioned creating a list of "dumb" spending, which he noted would be "extremely entertaining".

On Tuesday, Ramaswamy said the panel would "soon begin crowdsourcing" examples of government waste and alleged fraud.

#### What is the precedent for the efficiency panel?

In February 1982, former president Ronald Reagan announced he would form a group of private sector experts to recommend ways to eliminate inefficiency and waste. That June, his executive order formed a panel that became known as the Grace Commission for its chairman J Peter Grace, former CEO of WR Grace and Co.

Grace raised money to fund the effort through a foundation. About 150 business leaders volunteered time on an executive committee that oversaw 36 Grace Commission task forces, which reviewed agencies or functions. The Commission issued a report in January 1984 with 2,500 recommendations. The task forces came out with reports as well. "Most of the recommendations, especially those requiring legislation from Congress, were never implemented," the Reagan Library said. In March 2017, Trump signed an executive order aiming to improve efficiency, effectiveness, and accountability and "eliminate or reorganise unnecessary federal agencies." It directed each agency to submit a plan to reorganise. He signed a separate executive order to place "regulatory reform" task forces and officers within agencies. Trump unsuccessfully tried to kill at least 19 agencies during his first term. He called for eliminating the Overseas Private Investment Corporation that helps spur private investment in foreign development projects and the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. He also tried to cut funding for Amtrak, subsidies for rural airline service and the Special Olympics.

#### What experience does Musk have with cost cutting?

After Musk bought the social media app Twitter, he laid off roughly 3,700 employees, half its workforce. Revenue shrank as advertisers pulled spending and hundreds more employees subsequently resigned. He later renamed the social media site "X", but its valuation has slumped under his ownership.

Musk has had much greater success with SpaceX. Its Falcon 9 rocket slashed launch costs with its reusability. This sprouted new satellite markets, giving rise to the company's fast-growing Starlink constellation, which has disrupted the established satellite communications industry and helped shape modern military strategies. SpaceX is now a major defence contractor.

"I would hope that he will look for places to do what he did at SpaceX," said Steve Grundman, a deputy under secretary at the Pentagon under president Bill Clinton.

"The way to save big money is to delete stuff, close things," Grundman said, adding the task is complicated because, "you're never going to find a thing that is pure dead weight."

#### What are the rules for a panel like this?

The committee would likely operate under the Federal Advisory Committee Act, a 1972 law ensuring panels provide advice that is prompt, objective and open to the public. It mandates cost control and record keeping requirements that apply to the roughly 1,000 committees with some 60,000 members advising the president and the executive branch at any given time. Ramaswamy said on Wednesday, again on X, that the panel will have a legal mandate given recent decisions by the Supreme Court that curtailed the power of regulators.

## What is the latest science on climate change?

By Gloria Dickie

Baku

This year's UN climate summit - COP29 - was held during yet another record-breaking year of higher global temperatures, adding pressure to negotiations aimed at curbing climate change.

The last global scientific consensus on climate change was released in 2021 through the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, however scientists say that evidence shows global warming and its impacts are unfolding faster than expected.

Here is some of the latest climate research:

#### 1.5C reached?

The world may already have hit 1.5 degree Celsius (2.7F) of warming above the average pre-industrial temperature — a critical threshold beyond which it is at risk of irreversible and extreme climate change, scientists say.

A group of researchers made the suggestion in a study released last Monday based on an analysis of 2,000 years of atmospheric gases trapped in Antarctic ice cores that extends the understanding of pre-industrial temperature trends.

Scientists have typically measured today's temperatures against a baseline temperature average for 1850-1900. By that measure, the world is now at nearly 1.3C (2.4F) of warming.

But the new data suggests a longer pre-industrial baseline, based on temperature data spanning the year 13 to 1700, the study published in the journal *Nature Geoscience* said.

Either way, 2024 is certain to be the warmest year on record.

#### Supercharged hurricanes

Not only is ocean warming fueling stronger Atlantic storms, it is also causing them to intensify more rapidly, for example, jumping from a Category 1 to a Category 3 storm in just hours.

Growing evidence shows this is true of other ocean basins.

Hurricane Milton needed only one day in the Gulf of Mexico in October to go from tropical storm to the Gulf's second-most powerful hurricane on record, slamming Florida's west coast.

Warmer air can also hold more moisture, helping storms carry and eventually release more rain. As a result, hurricanes are delivering flooding even in mountain towns like Asheville, North Carolina, inundated in September by Hurricane Helene.

#### Wildfire deaths

Global warming is drying waterways and sapping moisture from forests, creating conditions for bigger and hotter wildfires from the US West and Canada to southern Europe and Russia's Far East creating more damaging smoke.

Research published last month in *Nature Climate Change* calculated that about 13% of



Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni speaks during the UN climate change conference COP29, in Baku, Azerbaijan, on Wednesday. (Reuters)

deaths associated with toxic wildfire smoke, roughly 12,000 deaths, during the 2010s could be attributed to the climate effect on wildfires.

#### Coral bleaching

With the world in the throes of a fourth mass coral bleaching event — the largest on record — scientists fear the world's reefs have passed a point of no return.

Scientists will be studying bleached reefs from Australia to Brazil for signs of recovery over the next few years if temperatures fall.

#### Amazon alarm

Brazil's Amazon is in the grips of its worst and most widespread drought since records began in 1950. River levels sank to all-time lows this year, while fires ravaged the rainforest.

This adds concern to scientific findings earlier this year that between 10% and 47% of the Amazon will face combined stresses of heat and drought from climate change, as well as other threats, by 2050.

This could push the Amazon past a tipping point, with the jungle no longer able to produce enough moisture to quench its own trees, at which point the ecosystem could transition to degraded forests or sandy savannas.

Globally, forests appear to be struggling.

A July study found that forests overall last year failed to absorb as much carbon dioxide from the atmosphere as in the past, due largely to the Amazon drought and wildfires in Canada.

That means a record amount of CO2 entered the atmosphere.

#### Volcanic surge

Scientists fear climate change could even boost volcanic eruptions.

In Iceland, volcanoes appear to be responding to rapid glacier retreat. As ice melts, less pressure is exerted on the Earth's crust and mantle.

Volcanologists worry this could destabilise magma reservoirs and appears to be leading to more magma being created, building up pressure underground.

Some 245 volcanoes across the world lie under or near ice and could be at risk.

- Reuters



## Safari Toastmasters Club celebrates 50th meeting

Safari Toastmasters Club marked its 50th meeting, celebrated as the "Halfway to 100" milestone recently at Bharath Taste Restaurant.

The event brought together members for an evening filled with humour, inspiration, and community spirit, celebrating the club's journey of growth and unity.

The success of the event was a testament to the dedication of all role players. TM Mhjiah and TM Thanveer, who served as Masters of Ceremonies, energised the room with their enthusiasm, while DTM Thirumurugan, the current Division F director and general evaluator, provided insightful feedback that enhanced the quality and impact of the session.

One of the highlights was a lighthearted, humorous speech by TM Sandeep, whose reflections on his own quirks entertained and inspired

the audience, reminding everyone of the power of humour. DTM Rajend Menon evaluated his speech, adding further depth with constructive insights and encouragement.

In a message to the members, Shaheen Backer, managing director of Safari Group, underscored the value of continuous learning. "Continuous learning is vital for people with a growth-oriented mindset, and Toastmasters is one such platform for learning leadership and enhancing career goals." Backer also emphasised his role in establishing Safari Toastmasters, creating a space for employees and the community to develop their communication and leadership skills.

From the welcoming address by TM Praveen, the Club president, to the engaging activities coordinated by Event Chairs TM Varun Balu and TM Biju Gangadharan, every role player's efforts contributed to a memorable event.

## Qatar spotlighted at Web Summit Lisbon

From Page 1

"Our success in attracting startups to Doha showcases Qatar's capabilities, and we remain optimistic about increased positive engagement when hosting the second edition of the summit next February." He added: "Startups benefited from around \$12mn in funding, as part of the Startup Qatar initiative, which was launched during Web Summit Qatar 2024 earlier this year. The first Web Summit edition in the Middle East and Africa has helped establish us as a regional hub for innovation and technology. Some 95% of the summit's participants expressed interest in attending next year's event, while two-thirds of participants showed their interest in relocating to Doha."

Cosgrave said: "The first-year event was really incredible, and it couldn't have gone better. For the second year, I think all indications are, the event will grow to the limit of the venue. That will be driven by inter-

national participation, not just from across the Middle East, but from India, from Africa, from the US, North America, Europe." He continued: "You can't ignore a market with nearly half a billion people in the Middle East. So, the event isn't just a local event. It's a global event in an incredibly important market, and so if you have ambition, one of the markets most companies will want to grow into includes the Middle East. Then you have to ask yourself, what is a good opportunity to go and meet most of the key players in that region? And I think Web Summit Qatar is the best opportunity in the year."

Qatar's participation in Web Summit Lisbon 2024 reflects its commitment to fostering innovation and technological advancement, in line with the Qatar National Vision 2030. Through its strategic focus on entrepreneurship and startups, Qatar aims to build a robust tech ecosystem that drives comprehensive national development, ensuring prosperity for generations to come.

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# QSTP set to host 'AI Week' to mark 15th anniversary

Qatar Science & Technology Park (QSTP), part of Qatar Foundation (QF), will host the inaugural 'QSTP AI Week 2024' from November 24-28 at the QSTP premises.

The five-day event, which coincides with QSTP's 15th anniversary, will offer a deep dive into advances in AI, its applications and potential, as well as encourage dialogue and collaboration around AI-driven innovation.

Al Jazeera (AJ) Media Institute, part of AJ Media Network, will be joining the event as the official media partner.

QSTP AI Week 2024 will engage technology specialists, industry leaders, innovators, and academia over a broad and diverse programme separated into expert-led masterclasses, panel discussions, practical workshops, live tech demonstrations, and inspirational talks.

Dan Jeavons, VP of Computational Science and Digital Innovation at Shell, will share insights into the future of AI and emerging trends in his keynote address on the opening day of the event. Jeavons has been a key contributor to Shell's digitalisation programme and has been recognised for his industry-leading work in the field of digital transformation.

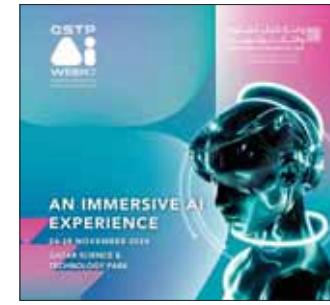
Under four distinct themes, 'The Future of AI', 'AI Foundation Model/Technologies (Machine and Deep Learning)', 'AI in Applied Tech', such as unmanned vehicles, and 'AI in Sustainability', the event will deepen knowledge of AI and emerging technologies and create pathways for further innovation in this area. The discussion topics include scaling AI in government services, harnessing AI to drive sustainability in urban planning and ethical challenges presented by AI.

QSTP's flagship Ride & Pitch Competition will return with its second edition as part of the event. This edition will be open to startups (university alumni and founders with established AI-driven startups in the early stages of development), in addition to Qatar-based university students (with AI-driven business ideas in the early stages of development). Selected participants for both groups will join pitching workshops and rehearsals, as well as expert-led mentorship sessions before pitching in front of a panel of judges on a moving tram inside QF's Education City.

An AI Hackathon, organised in partnership between QSTP, Qatar Scientific Club, and Qatar's Ministry of Sports and Youth, will engage students at various edu-



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cational levels in Qatar in exploring the role of robotics in tackling real-world environmental challenges.

Grouped into teams, the students will undertake technical challenges, such as programming robots to collect and sort waste, and to provide sustainable agricultural solutions, among others. A series of technical workshops will be held to equip participating teams with technical knowledge and skills to develop their projects. Students will present their final projects during a demo day on the final day of QSTP AI Week 2024.

Participants will have the opportunity to experience and enjoy the first-ever QSTP AI Immersive Experience presenting a series of groundbreaking AI-driven technologies focused on driving sustainability in various industries including transport and logistics, healthcare, marine, and automotive.

Several local and international tech startups and SMEs are set to exhibit at the event, show-

ing their products and providing live demonstrations that will include level-four autonomous cars.

Dr Jack Lau, president of QSTP, said: "We are beyond thrilled to deliver QSTP AI Week 2024 as part of our firm commitment to nurture the local tech landscape and strengthen Qatar's role as a premier hub of innovation and tech development on the global stage. As we commemorate 15 years of serving as a technology gateway to the Middle East and beyond, we are eager to celebrate this milestone with the community we serve."

"We have carefully curated the event programme to offer attendees opportunities to join thought-provoking discussions, immerse themselves in trailblazing technologies and explore prospects for future collaborations. This is a unique opportunity for everyone to first-hand experience the transformative power of AI and emerging technologies that are rapidly shaping our future. We highly encourage the public to attend and engage."

QSTP will continue to take its AI innovation and tech development agenda forward through its participation in the World Summit AI Qatar to be held in Doha from December 10-11.

For the full programme for the QSTP AI Week 2024 and registration, visit <https://qstp.org.qa/ai-week-2024/>

## Role of youth in South-South co-operation discussed in Paris

QatarDebate Center, in collaboration with the Paris Peace Forum, organised a discussion session titled "The Role of Youth in strengthening South-to-South Co-operation" at the Champs Elysees in Paris.

The session was part of the seventh edition of the Paris Peace Forum, an annual event aimed at fostering capacity-building and global co-ordination.

The session aligned with the forum's theme, focusing on the potential of strengthened partnerships between developing countries. It emphasised how such alliances can drive economic growth, innovation, and sustainable development without relying on traditional dependencies on developed nations.

Discussions centred on empowering youth to harness shared strengths and tackle challenges in the Global South. Participants explored strategies employed by the least developed countries to secure financial, technical resources and to implement innovative solutions, aiming to create a fairer and more resilient Global South.

The session also delved into the critical role of partnerships among developing nations in addressing global challenges, highlighting the urgent need for effective international governance amidst global crises and geopolitical tensions. Enhancing youth collaboration across borders was presented as a key pathway to building a more



balanced and inclusive global system.

### EMPOWERING YOUTH FOR A RESILIENT FUTURE

Director of Programmes at QatarDebate, Abdulrahman al-Subaie, highlighted the centre's joint strategy with the Paris Peace Forum. He noted that the forum serves as a vital platform for promoting dialogue and providing opportunities for youth to actively engage in international co-operation.

In turn, Director of the 'Mexico Evala Foundation', Mariana Campos lauded the session as a valuable opportunity to address shared challenges and to explore creative solutions for the Global South. She expressed confidence

in youth as agents of change, emphasising their critical role in advancing human rights, gender equality, and digital transformation.

Youth are not just stakeholders but essential partners in building democratic governance structures that respond to both present and future challenges, she said.

Moderated by Hind al-Muftah from QatarDebate, the session reinforced the importance of engaging youth in shaping global policies and promoting their initiatives in a rapidly changing world. It also underscored the necessity of creating platforms for open dialogue to ensure that young voices contribute meaningfully to global solutions. (QNA)