

Insurance made simple  Visit qic.online 

GULF TIMES  **TUESDAY** Vol. XXXV No. 13276
February 4, 2025
Sha'ban 5, 1446 AH
www.gulf-times.com 2 Riyals

Published in QATAR since 1978

Enjoy our fibre plans, now with OSNtv included! 

ROBSON The first Paint product that obtained Qatar Quality Mark

Robshield Topcoat Matt by ROBSON PAINTS
Used as Exterior Coat - Matt

www.npfqatar.com Tel: 44601602

RAWABI MINI MARATHON WALKING

REGISTRATION STARTED

SCAN THE QR CODE & REGISTER NOW

11th FEB 2025

SPORT | Page 1

Al Rayyan rally to beat Al Ain, Al Sadd lose on home soil



THE FRIED CHICKEN THAT SETS THE BAR

now on talabat

BAZOOKA

selfdrive 

NOW RENT A CAR

STARTING FROM **1199** PM

QAR



KNOW MORE!

Qatar, Kuwait to strengthen ties in all fields, sign MoUs



QNA
Doha

The Joint Supreme Committee for Co-operation between Qatar and Kuwait held yesterday its sixth session at the Amiri Diwan. The Qatar side was chaired by HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani, while the Kuwaiti side was led by Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah al-Yahya. The two sides discussed bilateral co-operation relations and explored ways to further enhance integration across various sectors. They also exchanged views on issues of mutual interest.

HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs highlighted the strong fraternal ties between Qatar and Kuwait, emphasising the two countries' commitment to strengthening these relations in all fields for the benefit of their peoples. On the sidelines of the session, Qatar and Kuwait signed several memoranda of understanding (MoUs) and the minutes of the sixth session of the Qatar-Kuwait Joint Supreme Committee, including an MoU on co-operation in standardisation activities, an executive programme for cultural and artistic co-operation for 2025-2026, a draft MoU on social insurance co-operation, and an MoU on industrial export development.

New Metrash App offers advanced features: MoI

The Ministry of Interior (MoI) has developed a new Metrash App according to the latest technologies, incorporating new features for a user friendly experience, said Communications and Information Systems Director General Brigadier Jassim al-Buhashim al-Sayed. Al-Sayed said the key newly added features covered services of profile, authorisation and notifications, in a bid to further streamline users' access to information and procedures. Also among the new features are address management for document delivery purposes, locations of different service centres, and passport scanning for visa issuance, he said. Al-Sayed added that new icons have been created to issue, reprint



and share certificates and to easily access all security services. There are also services specific to GCC nationals including renewing Qatar IDs and replacing lost or damaged ones. The Metrash App won in November the Arab Government Excellence Award as the best Arab smart government app, demonstrating its importance in stimulating innovation and digital development. Al-Sayed reiterated that the MoI has been fully digitising its services, offering time-saving and effortless transactions. **(QNA)**

Qatar launches air bridge from Jordan to Gaza

QNA
Amman

Qatar has launched an air bridge from King Abdullah II Air Base in Jordan to Al Qanah in Khan Younis Governorate, Gaza Strip, to address the urgent humanitarian and medical needs of the population. This initiative complements the land bridge previously established by Qatar. The launch of the air bridge was attended by HE the Minister of State for International Co-operation Maryam bint Ali bin Nasser al-Misnad, ambassador of Qatar to Jordan, Sheikh Saud bin Nasser bin Jassim al-Thani, CEO of Qatar Charity Yousef bin Ahmed al-Kuwari and representatives from the Qatar Fund for Development (QFFD) and the Qatar Red Crescent Society (QRCS). HE the Minister of State for International Co-operation also attended the signing of an agree-



ment between Qatar Charity and the Jordan Hashemite Charity Organisation (JHCO) to facilitate the entry of Qatari humanitarian aid via land through Jordan. The agreement ensures co-ordinated and secure transportation and distribution of aid. HE al-Misnad stated that since the beginning of the truce, Qatar has sent 65 relief trucks through the Jordanian border. Complementing this land bridge, two helicopter flights carrying vital medical aid will arrive in North Khan Younis, she added. She emphasised that this aid comes within the framework of joint co-operation among QFFD, Qatar Charity, and QRCS. HE al-Misnad added that Qatar has provided 20,000 tents, which were shipped via a land bridge from Qatar to Jordan, adding that in co-operation with JHCO, they are working to deliver these tents to the brothers in northern Gaza.



HE the Minister of State for International Co-operation Maryam bint Ali bin Nasser al-Misnad at the launch programme of the air bridge.

Gazans appeal for short-term shelter

With fighting in Gaza paused, Palestinians are appealing for billions of dollars in emergency aid - from heavy machinery to clear rubble to tents and caravans to house people made homeless by Israeli bombardment. One official from the Palestinian Authority estimated immediate funding needs of \$6.5bn for temporary housing for Gaza's population of more than two million, even before the huge task of long-term reconstruction begins. US special Middle East envoy Steve Witkoff estimated last week that rebuilding could take 10-15 years. But before that, Gazans will have to live somewhere. Palestinian resistance movement Hamas says Gaza has immediate needs for 200,000 tents and 60,000 caravans. In addition, it says there is urgent need for heavy digging equipment to begin clearing millions of tonnes of rubble left by the war, both to clear ground



Palestinian twins Mahmoud and Ibrahim al-Atout, who were separated during the war, make tea on a fire near the rubble of their destroyed house after being reunited, in Jabalia, northern Gaza Strip.

for housing and to recover more than 10,000 bodies estimated to be buried there.

UDST signs MoU with 4 leading aeronautical entities

Collaboration with Airbus, Enac, Isae-Supaero and Qatar Airways to propel advancements in aeronautics education, research, and industry-academia partnerships in Qatar



Officials at the signing of the MoU.

University of Doha for Science and Technology (UDST) has signed a landmark Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with four leading entities in the field of aeronautics: Airbus, the École Nationale de l'Aviation Civile (ENAC), the Institut Supérieur de l'Aéronautique et de l'Espace (ISAE-SUPAERO) and Qatar Airways. This collaboration is set to propel advancements in aeronautics education, research, and industry-academia partnerships, it was announced yesterday.

Under the agreement, the five organisations aim to work together in several strategic areas, including the creation of joint academic programmes at the undergraduate and postgraduate levels and the development of courses and programmes in

the field of aeronautics. In addition to organising joint events, conferences, seminars, symposiums, and talks, the partnership extends to include academic staff and student exchange programmes, research collaboration, internship opportunities,

and exploring other mutually agreed-upon areas in the future. The MoU highlights UDST's commitment to delivering world-class education and research opportunities in Qatar. President Dr Salem Al-Naemi, stated: "This partnership reiterates UDST's vision of being a leading institution in applied education focused on fostering innovation, addressing industry needs, and empowering the workforce. Collaborating with esteemed institutions such as Airbus, ENAC, ISAE-SUPAERO and Qatar Airways supports our aim to provide cutting-edge learning experiences and deliver innovative solutions that contribute to Qatar's economic diversification and advancement in line with Qatar National Vision 2030." **To Page 7**

Amir, Trudeau review ties

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani and Prime Minister of Canada Justin Trudeau discussed aspects of strengthening bilateral co-operation between the two friendly countries across various fields. This came during a phone call His Highness the Amir received yesterday from Prime Minister Trudeau. During the call, the two sides also discussed development in the Gaza Strip and the occupied Palestinian territories, and the updates in Syria, in addition to a number of regional and international issues and developments of common concern. **(QNA)**

Mentor Arabia gala dinner on Feb 18

Education Above All (EAA) Foundation, in collaboration with Mentor Arabia Foundation, officially announced yesterday that the Mentor Arabia Gala Dinner 2025 will be held on February 18, 2025. Under the patronage of Her Highness Sheikha Moza bint Nasser, the event will also be graced by Queen Silvia of Sweden, President of Mentor International, and Prince Turki bin Talal bin Abdulaziz al-Saud, Chairman of Mentor Arabia. The event aims to highlight the critical role of youth in building sustainable and healthy communities while raising funds for impactful projects. **Page 7**

USAID to be merged with State Dept

US President Donald Trump is considering merging the US Agency for International Development with the State Department to boost its efficiency and ensure its spending is in line with his administration's agenda, a senior White House official said. "President Trump has entrusted Elon (Musk) to oversee the efficiency of this agency," said the official.

Trump signs order on sovereign fund

President Donald Trump yesterday signed an executive order aiming to kickstart the creation of a US sovereign wealth fund, a move which would likely require congressional action. The order charges the secretaries of treasury and commerce "to begin a process that will hopefully result in the creation of an American sovereign wealth fund."

Al Zain Jewellery showcases timeless elegance and contemporary designs at DJWE

The Doha Jewellery and Watches Exhibition (DJWE) is one of the largest international exhibitions in the region and the Middle East, featuring major local companies, international brands, and renowned names from the world of jewellery and watches. The event celebrates creativity, innovation, and luxury.

As in previous years, Al Zain Jewellery is showcasing an array of products at this year's DJWE, offering the brand a valuable opportunity to present its latest collections and engage directly with its elite clientele from the Gulf countries.

Al Zain Jewellery stands out for its exquisite designs that blend fine taste with the region's rich history and culture, while embracing modernity and innovation.

A distinguished name in the jewellery world, Al Zain Jewellery is one of the oldest and most prominent brands in the Kingdom of Bahrain and the Middle East. With nearly a century of creativity and innovation, the brand has carved a unique niche in designing and manufacturing luxury jewellery that seamlessly merges ancient heritage with contemporary styles. The Jewellery has also achieved international acclaim, displaying its creations at prestigious American exhibitions and other renowned events worldwide. Its collections have garnered significant attention from stars and jewellery enthusiasts who appreciate pieces that reflect the artistry of Arab civilization.

Al Zain Jewellery is committed to presenting fresh, innovative designs that embody the spirit of the Gulf and Arabia. The brand utilizes luxurious materials such as gold, diamonds, and precious stones, ensuring that each piece in its collection is a unique masterpiece. The designs reflect both traditional craftsmanship and modern details, appealing to the tastes of all age groups.

The DJWE offers a prime platform for Al Zain Jewellery to interact with its customers, especially those from the Gulf and beyond, further enhancing its reputation as a global brand in the jewellery industry. The exhibition also provides an opportunity to expand its regional and international presence, build strong business relationships, and connect with new audiences, including jewellery enthusiasts and potential partners.

This year, Al Zain Jewellery shines with its latest collection, which beautifully merges the past with the present. The highlight is a renewed version of the 'Arab Deco' collection, inspired by the glamour and elegance of the Art Deco era, infused with Arabic architectural elements and arabesque patterns. Al Zain's impeccable craftsmanship blends bold geometric shapes with the brilliance of diamonds and pearls, set in 18-carat gold. The result is a series of intricate designs that embody the essence of a woman—her beauty, grace, and inner strength.



مركز الدوحة
للمجوهرات والساعات
DOHA JEWELLERY &
WATCHES EXHIBITION

30 Jan - 5 Feb 2025 | Booth A16
Doha Exhibition & Convention Center



AL ZAIN



**THE VIEW
HOSPITAL**

In Affiliation With
 **Cedars
Sinai**

Innovations in Robotic Surgery

Earn

+ 6.5

American Medical Association
(AMA) PRA Category 1 Credit

The View Hospital,
in affiliation with Cedars-Sinai,
is delighted to announce
the upcoming annual symposium,
Innovations in Robotic Surgery.

- ✓ General Surgery
- ✓ Obstetrics & Gynecology
- ✓ Bariatric Surgery
- ✓ Gastroenterology
- ✓ Urology
- ✓ Thoracic Surgery

For more information,
Registration, and Booking



February

21st - 22nd 2025

Equestrian Club Doha-Qatar

+974 4144 2999
theviewhospital.com



Official

Qatar strongly condemns bombing in Syrian Manbij

Qatar strongly condemned the bombing that took place in Manbij, eastern Aleppo, Syria, resulting in deaths and injuries. In a statement yesterday, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs reiterated Qatar's stance rejecting violence, terrorism, and criminal acts, regardless of the motives and reasons. The ministry emphasised Qatar's solidarity with Syria and its support for all measures it may take to maintain security and stability in the country. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs expressed Qatar's condolences to the families of the victims and the government and people of Syria, wishing the wounded a speedy recovery. **(QNA)**

Al-Misnad meets JHCO president



HE the Minister of State for International Co-operation Maryam bint Ali bin Nasser al-Misnad met in Amman yesterday with the President of Board of Trustees of Jordan Hashemite Charity Organisation (JHCO) Prince Rashid bin El Hassan. Discussion during the meeting, focused on bilateral relations and ways to support and develop them and enhancing co-operation in providing humanitarian aid to the Gaza Strip, in addition to a host of topics of mutual interest. The meeting was attended by Qatar's ambassador to Jordan, Sheikh Saud bin Nasser al-Thani, and Acting Director of the International Co-operation Department at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Sultan bin Ahmed al-Asiri. **(QNA)**

Shura hails Amir's visits to Muscat, Damascus; clears health draft law

QNA
Doha

The Shura Council held yesterday its weekly session, under the chairmanship of its Speaker HE Hassan bin Abdullah al-Ghanem. At the outset of the session, the Council welcomed the outcomes of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani's state visit to Oman on Jan 28-29, praising the talks and the executive programmes and memorandums of understanding signed during the visit to enhance co-operation between the two countries.

The Council stressed the visit would contribute to strengthening the strategic partnership in a way that achieves the common interests of the two countries. Moreover, the Council hailed His Highness the Amir's official visit to Syria on Thursday, Jan 30, the first such a trip by a head of state to Damascus since the fall of the former regime.

The Council emphasised the visit reflects Qatar's steadfast commitment to support Syrian people, particularly during this pivotal moment in Syria's history, highlighting Qatar's role, under His Highness the Amir's leadership, in aiding the Syrian people and fulfilling their aspirations and stressing Qatar's dedication to Syria's stability to assume its active regional and international roles.

Meanwhile, the Council expressed its categorical rejection of calls to transfer the Palestinian people from the Gaza Strip, dismissing them as a flagrant violation of international legitimacy resolutions and the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, citing in this context the Fourth Geneva Convention, which prohibits the forcible transfer of protected persons from occupied territories, and the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, which classifies forced displacement as a war crime that requires prosecution.



The Council stated that the displacement of the Palestinian people and the deprivation of their rights threaten security and stability in the region, reiterating that the only guarantee for achieving sustainable peace in the region is to reach a just and comprehensive solution to the Palestinian issue, ensuring the restoration of rights to the Palestinian people and the establishment of their independent state on the 1967 borders with East Jerusalem as its capital.

Then, HE Shura Council Secretary-General Nayef bin Mohammed al-Mahmoud presented the agenda of the session, during which the minutes of the previous session were approved. During the session, the Council approved an amended draft law regulating health research and referred it to the esteemed government, after debating the Health, General Services and Environment Committee's report.

In this regard, the Council detailed a government bill on regulating meteorological activities and services and referred it to the Health, General Services and Environment Committee for further study.

On the other hand, the Council discussed reports on the participation of some of Their Excellencies the Council Members in parliamentary events held in November 2024. These events included

the 10th briefing session for parliamentarians on UN Operations (virtual), attended by HE the Shura Council Deputy Speaker Dr Hamda bint Hassan al-Sulaiti, the Arab Parliament Dialogue on protecting older persons from violence, abuse, and neglect (virtual), attended by Khalid bin Abbas Kamal al-Emadi and the Cairo-held Parliamentarians Round-table Meeting as part of the 12th World Urban Forum (WUF12), attended by Ali bin Ahmed al-Kaabi.

Moreover, the Council was briefed on the participation of its delegation in the 149th Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) Assembly and related meetings in Geneva in October 2024. At the end of the session, HE al-Ghanem informed the members about the visit of President of the Malaysian Senate, Senator Dato' Awang Beme Awang Ali Basah, to the state, at the invitation of the Shura Council.

He said the visit and the associated meetings and talks reflected the depth of bilateral relations between the two countries, and confirmed the Council's keenness to enhance parliamentary co-operation with friendly countries, facilitating the exchange of parliamentary expertise and supporting joint efforts for mutual interests.

The session was attended by a number of school students.

SESRI hosts workshop on consumption behaviour survey findings in Qatar

The Social and Economic Survey Research Institute (SESRI) at Qatar University (QU) organised a workshop to discuss the findings of the 2024 Qatar Values and Consumption Behavior

speech, Assistant Under-secretary for Consumer Affairs at the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Hassan al-Ghanim, underscored the importance of promoting a culture of conscious

consumption in alignment with Qatar National Vision 2030. He pointed to the rising reliance on online shopping and its impact on consumer behaviour, reaffirming the ministry's ef-

forts in consumer rights protection through strict regulations, digital transformation, and awareness campaigns aimed at fostering sustainable consumption practices. **(QNA)**

The workshop aimed to present key survey findings, offering unprecedented data on household consumption patterns, behavioural values, and the adoption of sustainable consumption practices.

It also examined the impact of economic and social factors on consumer decision-making while highlighting SESRI's crucial role in supporting public policy in Qatar through population surveys and policy research studies.


In his opening remarks, Vice-President for Research and Graduate Studies at QU Prof Aiman Erbad emphasised the increasing interest of various stakeholders in consumption practices due to their significant impact on the environment and society. He noted that SESRI's study sought to understand the behaviour of a segment of the population, particularly white-collar professionals, and to explore awareness mechanisms addressing the risks of unregulated luxury consumption a trend fuelled by economic prosperity and Qatar's multicultural demographic landscape.

The workshop began with a welcoming address by Director of SESRI, Prof Kaltham al-Ghanim, who highlighted the unique features of this study, which investigates the social, cultural, psychological, and economic factors influencing values and consumption behaviour. She explained that traditional Household Consumption and Expenditure Surveys (HCES) often overlook fundamental questions about how individuals allocate their financial resources between essential and non-essential expenditures. During his keynote

speech, Assistant Under-secretary for Consumer Affairs at the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Hassan al-Ghanim, underscored the importance of promoting a culture of conscious

consumption in alignment with Qatar National Vision 2030. He pointed to the rising reliance on online shopping and its impact on consumer behaviour, reaffirming the ministry's ef-

forts in consumer rights protection through strict regulations, digital transformation, and awareness campaigns aimed at fostering sustainable consumption practices. **(QNA)**



Dolphin Energy Limited

Invitation to Tender

| Tender Number | Description | Tender Bond | Deadline for Tender Submission, 12 Noon (Qatar Time) on |
|-----------------|--|-------------|---|
| ITT-QC-OPU-1824 | Call-Off Agreement For Onshore & Offshore Gas Plant Coating, Insulation, and Access Services | QAR 250,000 | 10 th March 2025 |
| ITT-QC-OPU-1832 | Call-Off Agreement For Cathodic Protection Monitoring Services | QAR 10,000 | 13 th March 2025 |

Dolphin Energy Limited (Qatar) is inviting companies to participate in the above Tenders.


Only companies registered in the State of Qatar with proven experience, technical knowledge, as well as a demonstrated track record in the supply of the services required should apply.

How to Tender

Expression of Interest (EOI) Form and Scope of Services/Works can be downloaded from the company's website
www.dolphinenergy.com/procurement

Interested companies must complete the EOI Form and submit to company's email address within two (2) working days from the publication date of this advertisement.

Following receipt of completed EOI Form, interested companies will receive a Request for Proposal (RFP) through Dolphin Energy's SAP Ariba to tender.



INVITATION TO TENDER

| Tender Reference | Description | Tender Fee (QAR) | Tender Bond Value (QAR) | Bid Closing Date |
|------------------|--|------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| CO-RFQ-252 | Supply, Installation, Testing and Commissioning of Fire/Smoke Curtain (Fire Safe 240) compatible motors, control panels and other necessary components | 500.00 | Nil | 05-March-2025 2:00 PM |
| QNL-RFQ-29 | Archive Management Solution for QNL Distinctive Collections | 500.00 | Nil | 03-March-2025 2:00 PM |

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

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


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

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

Tender Fee Payment Dates: Payment of Tender Fee online will be from 04th February until 12th February 2025.

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

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



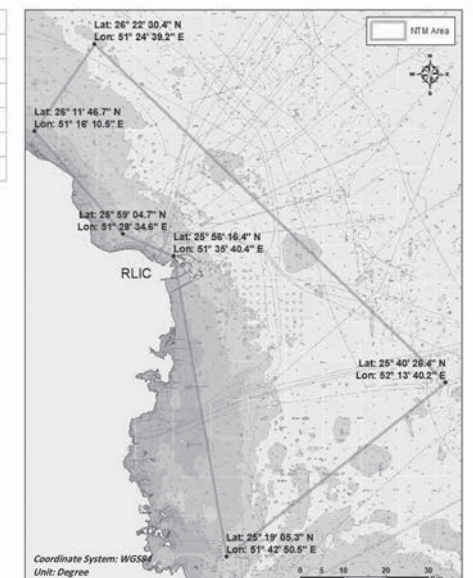
Public Announcement
To all Ships, Fishermen and Mariners
Seismic Survey Acquisition by Vessels AOS Glory, Stanford Hawk, GMS Apollo, Voyager Explorer, BGP Honor, and Safa Searcher
Seismic Survey Works Offshore Qatar from 27th November 2024 – 27th November 2025

Pursuant to and under directives from the Department of Seafarers Affairs & Registration, Ministry of Transport, State of Qatar, this announcement is to inform all Vessels, Mariners and Fishermen that QatarEnergy LNG intends to perform Ocean Bottom Node Seismic Survey Works with Vessels AOS Glory, Stanford Hawk, GMS Apollo, Voyager Explorer, BGP Honor, and Safa Searcher in the locations bound by the coordinates shown in the diagram below.

All Vessels, Mariners and Fishermen are expected to keep clear of the survey locations during the operations.

QatarEnergy LNG takes no responsibility for any loss or damage caused to outside parties in association with this operation, following publication of this notice.

| Point | LATITUDE | LONGITUDE |
|-------|----------------|----------------|
| 1 | 26° 22' 30.4"N | 51° 24' 39.2"E |
| 2 | 25° 40' 26.4"N | 52° 13' 40.2"E |
| 3 | 25° 19' 05.3"N | 51° 42' 50.5"E |
| 4 | 25° 56' 16.4"N | 51° 35' 40.4"E |
| 5 | 25° 59' 04.7"N | 51° 28' 34.6"E |
| 6 | 26° 11' 46.7"N | 51° 16' 10.5"E |



Any further inquiries should be addressed to: Tel. +974 44531797

Ministry holds consultations on Job Nationalisation Plan in private sector

QNA
Doha

The Ministry of Labour held a series of consultative workshops on the 2025 Job Nationalisation Plan, bringing together representatives from the manufacturing, logistics, and healthcare sectors.

This initiative aims to strengthen strategic partnerships with the private sector and facilitate the exchange of ideas on boosting national workforce participation in the labour market.

These workshops are part of the ministry's ongoing efforts to enhance collaboration with private sector stakeholders, fostering structured partnerships that drive labour market growth and increase employment opportunities for Qatari nationals and the children of Qatari women. In her remarks, Assistant Undersecretary for Man-

power Affairs Shaikha Abdulrahman al-Badi reaffirmed the Ministry's commitment to sustained engagement with private sector partners. She highlighted that the Ministry has been organising these workshops for several years and will continue to do so regularly to strengthen co-operation.

She further emphasised that collaboration with the private sector is a cornerstone of the nationalisation strategy, given its critical role in economic growth and sustainable development. Strengthening joint efforts is essential to achieving the nation's workforce objectives.

Shaikha al-Badi also noted that the ministry is establishing sector-specific councils to facilitate ongoing dialogue between the ministry and private sector institutions. These councils will assess workforce requirements, collect and analyse labour market data, and support the development of tailored human capital strategies.



Addressing the attendees, Director of the National Manpower Recruitment Department Abdulrahman Mohammed Telfat underscored that the Nationalisation Plan is driving an unprecedented shift in private sector employment strategies. He further elaborated on the comprehensive framework of the Job Nationalisation Plan, which

includes key incentives such as salary subsidies, pension contribution coverage, and performance-based rewards for companies that excel in workforce nationalisation.

Furthermore, the ministry is rolling out targeted training and skills development initiatives to prepare job seekers for both current and future demands in the private sector.



These programmes aim to develop a highly skilled national workforce capable of enhancing productivity and innovation in the labour market. The Ministry of Labour aims, by organising consultative workshops periodically with the private sector, to enhance partnership, co-operation, and continuous interaction with this vital sector, support it to participate

effectively in the development process, and enable it to benefit from employing qualified national cadres, in line with the Third National Development Strategy, and Qatar National Vision 2030, which aims to develop the national workforce and enhance its role in supporting the national economy, and the development process.

NHRC holds consultative meeting with co-ordinators of communities' offices

QNA
Doha

The National Human Rights Committee (NHRC) held a consultative meeting on work environment in Qatar, an analysis of 2024 and a forecast for 2025, with co-ordinators of the communities' offices at the NHRC's premises in Doha, namely the African, Indian, Nepalese, and Filipino communities.

In a statement yesterday, NHRC highlighted that the co-ordinators emphasised that over the past year, the work environment in Qatar has witnessed a remarkable progress through enforcing a series of comprehensive legislative adjustments.

These reforms were intended to promote the workers' rights, ensure their protection and maximise production, update labour laws, apply flexible systems in the public sector, in addition to establishing effective regulations in the private sector, thereby leading to a positive impact on economy and community and boosting Qatar's standing as an enduring and attractive work environment, the statement added. The statement highlighted that the meeting discussed workers' aspirations for advancing the work environment through enforcing new overhauls and strategies to enhance integration between the public and pri-



ate sectors, with a sharp focus on elevating the occupational health and safety standards to promote Qatar's stature as a leading destination for work in the region.

The consultative meeting deliberated on the fourth goal of NHRC's Strategic Plan 2024-2030, which stresses the importance of promoting widespread human rights awareness and building capacity across staff, workers, and companies, highlighted NHRC.

It added that the meeting tackled the executive activities that intersect with the role of labour-intensive communities in Qatar in alignment with the fourth goal of the NHRC's strategic plan, through setting a plan to include human rights in programmes at the Institute of Public Administration based on the memorandum of understanding between the parties, alongside co-ordina-

tion with the Ministry of Labour and the Qatar Chamber of Commerce and Industry to strengthen human rights awareness.

The statement noted that the aforementioned meeting highlighted the importance of capitalising on the NHRC's expertise on institutionalising numerous human rights activities, along with the issued evidence on handling complaints, including human rights in health services, as well as educational institutions and so forth. It discussed the foremost joint activities that NHRC will organise with the co-ordinators in the coming period.

In May 2015, NHRC opened offices for labour-intensive communities at its premises in recognition of the need to strengthen its enduring commitment to safeguarding human rights, with a particular emphasis on the protection of workers' rights.

Al-Ansari meets UK official



Adviser to the Prime Minister and Official Spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Dr Majid bin Mohammed al-Ansari met yesterday with the visiting British Foreign Secretary's Representative for Humanitarian Affairs in the Occupied Palestinian Territories Mark Bryson-Richardson. During the meeting, the two sides discussed bilateral relations and ways to support and enhance them. They also discussed the latest developments in the region, especially in the Gaza Strip and the Occupied Palestinian Territories, in addition to several topics of common interest. UK ambassador to Qatar Nirav Patel attended the meeting. (QNA)

Fossil's Watch Rings, a unique fusion of Jewelry and timekeeping

Fossil's Watch Rings redefine vintage charm with a modern twist. First launched in 2019 as the iconic Starlite Watch Ring, these timeless pieces seamlessly blend functionality and style.



"By 2022, they became a cornerstone of our collection—and now, they're leading the trends of 2025. With seasonal updates in striking colorways, unique case shapes, and exclusive collaborations, Fossil's Watch Rings ensure the wearer remains both fashionable and timeless", stated Asifulla Khan, Marketing Manager of Al Futtaim Watches & Jewellery.

Fossil's Watch Rings are a unique fusion of jewelry and timekeeping, offering a



stylish and functional accessory. These rings feature a compact watch face set into a stainless steel band, available in various finishes such as gold-tone, rose gold-tone, and silver-tone. The flexible expansion band ensures a comfortable fit for different finger sizes.

The Watch Rings come in multiple designs, including round, rectangular, and heart-shaped cases, catering to diverse style preferences. Each piece is equipped with a quartz two-hand movement and is water-resistant up to 5 ATM, combining practicality with elegance.

Doha Marketing Services Company W.L.L (DOMASCO), part of Al Futtaim group is a prominent retailer and wholesaler of watches in Qatar, operating for over 27 years. "We offer a diverse range of international watch brands, including Fossil, Kolber, Westar, Casio, and Titan. DOMASCO serves the market through a network of 10 directly-owned showrooms and kiosks, along with more than 150 dealer shops across Qatar. Our clientele has access to a wide selection of timepieces to suit various tastes, needs, budgets, and occasions", informed - Anastasia Kozlova, Senior Marketing Manager of DOMASCO in a press release.



Judicial Services Center opens in Al Khor

The Judicial Services Center of the Supreme Judiciary Council began operating in Al Khor yesterday, as a part of the council's plan to expand judicial services and facilitate access to services for the public.

The centre provides all types of family documentation and estate services, in addition to court services, including the opening of lawsuits and related judicial requests, as well as following up on requests and inquiries. It also offers services related to the implementation of Execution Court rulings. The centre aims to meet the needs and requirements of individuals and litigants from Al Khor, neighbouring areas, and all northern regions.

As part of its efforts towards the digital transformation of all services and the expansion of remote litigation, the council is im-



plementing a synchronised plan that aligns with the diverse needs of litigants and individuals. This plan includes establishing branch headquarters for the courts. Additionally, the council provides technical and logistical support to users of the electronic portal and is working on preparing the remote transmission of sessions for litigants.

The council previously announced that it would gradually move its services provided at the Government Services Complex in Al Daayen to the Al Khor building, thus providing and offering an integrated service to individuals and litigants according to the nature of the services associated with the specialised judicial and administrative staff. (QNA)

Seabream released into Khor Al Udaid Reserve

The Ministry of Environment and Climate Change has released 200 Silver Seabream fishes into the marine environment of Khor Al Udaid Reserve as part of an initiative to support fish stocks and enhance marine biodiversity within the reserve. The initiative saw the participation of the Natural Reserves Department and the Marine Protection Department at the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change, alongside the Aquatic Research Centre of the Fisheries Administration at the Ministry of Municipality.



New cancer hospital to provide comprehensive services for patients

By Joseph Varghese
Staff Reporter

The proposed cancer hospital will help provide comprehensive care for cancer patients, said the director of the National Centre for Cancer Care and Research (NCCCR), part of the Hamad Medical Corporation (HMC).

"The government is now building a new hospital, which will be comprehensive and everything will be under one umbrella," NCCCR director Dr Mohamed Salem al-Hassan said yesterday. "This is very good, because now the cancer treatment is taking place at different places, some here at the NCCCR and some at Hamad General Hospital."

He was interacting with the media during a tour of the facilities at the NCCCR as part of the "Your Health, Our Priority Campaign - Cancer Care".

Dr al-Hassan said that the new hospital is going to be built in the same campus along with other HMC hospitals in the Medical City.

"Surgery, treatments without surgery ... all will be under one umbrella, and it will be convenient for patients," he said. "We have already started the work now, and hopefully, we will be able to complete in 2-3 years. It will be a great project."

According to the NCCCR official, cancer patients at the hospital will benefit from advanced facilities equipped with the latest technologies.

"Our treatment options, including chemotherapy, radiation, immunotherapy, and targeted therapies, are personalised to ensure expert care throughout the journey," Dr al-Hassan said. "The HMC is a national and regional leader in cancer care, offering unique technologies that set us apart."

"Our facilities feature advanced treat-

ment modalities, such as robotic-assisted surgery and innovative imaging techniques, enabling precise interventions that enhance patient outcomes," he added.

Dr al-Hassan also revealed that the NCCCR has started a survivorship programme clinic.

"This refers to patients who have completed five years after cancer treatment," he explained. "(These are patients whose) last treatment was five years ago ... we call them 'survivorship patients'."

"For such patients, we have arranged special clinics with the Primary Health Care Corporation, and they are being followed up in the primary healthcare," Dr al-Hassan said.

Cancer, he stated, is very much a treatable disease if diagnosed early.

"We cannot diagnose early if the patient does not offer himself to come and do the early test," he stressed.

"We want all the patients living in Qa-



TrueBeam facility at the NCCCR.

PICTURES: Shaji Kayamkulam



NCCCR director Dr Mohamed Salem al-Hassan.



Awqaf lectures to promote values among students

The Ministry of Endowments (Awqaf) and Islamic Affairs, represented by the Department of Da'wa and Religious Guidance, is continuing efforts to promote educational and faith values among the youth.

The ministry, according to an official statement, launched yesterday its "Gheras ... Qiyam Wa Qimam" lecturing programme for 2025.

The programme is one of the pioneering educational initiatives targeting students of the Qur'an centres across the country.

The programme is supervised by the Department of Da'wa and Religious Guidance, and presented by a group of specialised preachers.

"It aims to instil correct faith concepts and

enhance Islamic morals among our students, by providing qualitative educational lectures and interactive cultural programmes and competitions," the statement said.

Through the programme, Awqaf has so far conducted 1,000 lectures covering different topics and guiding objectives for the students of Qur'an centres across the country.

The programme establishes purposeful initiatives, values and lectures throughout the year while covering educational, Qur'anic and moral topics in addition to faith-based benefits that aim to build a balanced personality in students.

The programme is held between Asr and Maghrib prayers from Sunday to Wednesday in

Doha, Al Shamal, Al Ruwais, Dukhan, Al Shaniya, and Mesaieed.

The programme will be available virtually through the "Taahud" platform.

The latest edition focuses on core values of supervision, mastery of work, and tolerance.

Last year 573 lectures were held within the Qur'an centres and through "Taahud" platform students for distance learning to enhance the access of educational content to a wider segment of students.

The previous edition addressed several values such as responsibility, the Muslim role model, strength of character, and co-operation, in addition to organising awareness campaigns.

Ministry celebrates Tunisian heritage

By Tawfik Lamari
Staff Reporter

Beit Al Sulaiti, affiliated with the Ministry of Culture, hosted a cultural evening for members of the Tunisian community to expand the horizons of cultural communication and highlight the value of Tunisian heritage.

The event, an initiative reflecting the depth of cultural relations between Qatar and Tunisia, is aimed at reviving the spirit of belonging to the homeland, highlight Tunisian cultural heritage, and introduce the community in Qatar to

Tunisia's cultural diversity.

The evening witnessed a diverse and rich programme that celebrated Tunisian cultural heritage.

The ceremony began with the recitation of verses from the Holy Qur'an, followed by a musical piece performed by student Maryam Yousofi.

Poet Bilal Bouani presented the poem *In Love with Beloved Qatar*, expressing feelings of gratitude and love for Qatar.

This was followed with *Committed* by poet Ali Attri, which carried intellectual and human dimensions in its meanings.

The evening also witnessed a

talk by Palestinian Dr Wael Shadid about the Palestinian cause.

There was a poem by Shawqi Mashli in a distinctive recitation that reflects the brilliance of words and sincerity of feelings.

The cultural evening for the sons of the Tunisian community included the anthem of the Tunisian School Choir in Doha in a lyrical performance on the beauty and love for the homeland.

The Ministry of Culture organises cultural events targeting different age groups and works to support artists and intellectuals, encouraging creativity and innovation.

Iraqi Cultural Week to kick off on Thursday

By Tawfik Lamari
Staff Reporter

The Ministry of Culture has announced the launch of the Iraqi Cultural Week, which is being organised at the permanent headquarters of Darb Al Saai in Umm Salal, next Thursday.

The Iraqi Cultural Week comes within the framework of enhancing bilateral cultural co-operation between Qatar and Iraq.

There will be many activities from February 6-9 that highlight the richness and diversity of Iraqi cultural heritage, with the participation of an elite group of craftsmen and specialists from Iraq.

The Iraqi Cultural Week offers a unique experience that allows members of the public to experience Iraqi heritage through artistic and theatrical performances that are held daily, in addition to exhibitions of fine arts and traditional crafts.

These activities are aimed at introducing the public to the different Iraqi cultures, enhance dialogue between cultures, and encourage cultural and artistic communication between creators from different countries.



It also seeks to highlight local and international cultural and artistic heritage, and support talents in various creative fields.

"The Iraqi Cultural Week comes within the framework of the ongoing efforts to enhance cultural diplomacy, and represents an opportunity to explore the cultural and artistic diversity of Iraq, which combines ancient heritage and contemporary creativity," said Abdulrahman al-Dulaimi, the director of the Department of Culture and Arts at the ministry.

"It also reflects the strength of cultural relations between Qatar and Iraq, and the Ministry of Culture's keenness to present events that enrich the local cultural scene, and open new horizons for cultural dialogue and artistic exchange," the official said.

Culture ministry set to hold 4th symposiums season this month

The fourth symposiums season is set to be held on February 10 to 25, in partnership with Qatar University (QU) and the Arab Centre for Research and Policy Studies (ACRPS), with the participation of a host of local and international experts and academics, the Ministry of Culture announced yesterday.

The ministry said that the organisation of this season comes as part of its efforts to establish a platform for profound cultural dialogue on the foremost cultural and societal issues to reach overriding visions and ultimately figure out enlightened approaches on culture and thought, challenges of contemporary civilisational relations, social changes, and other cultural topics.

Assistant Undersecretary for Cultural Affairs at the ministry, Dr Ghanim bin Mubarak al-Ali, highlighted that the fourth season intends to promote the cultural and innovative scene, in addition to broadening the scope of influence through the forging of contractual partnerships with major think tanks in the world, thereby enhancing Qatar's cultural presence in academic and intellectual circles, and broaden horizons for productive discussion and conversation.

For the first time, the event will feature the participation of the Arab World Institute (AWI) in Paris, including by former French culture minister and AWI president Jack Lang, along with a symposium by prominent US academic and professor of the political science Roy Casagrande.

Dr al-Ali added that the season has become a leading annual platform that promotes values of culture, dialogue and knowledge, replete with visions of cultural, artistic, literary, social and thought leaders.

He highlighted that this approach echoes the ministry's vision to advance the cultural scene and encourage individuals and institutions interested in culture to engage in a constructive conversation, thereby forging communications with a variety of community segments.

The ministry indicated that this year's event features seven symposiums, alongside a training workshop with a prolific content to maximise the merits of conversations.

The first symposium will be at the Sheraton Grand Doha, in collaboration with the AWI, where Professor Lang is set to deliver a lecture on the Arab cultural discourse in the west, with an emphasis on mechanisms of advancing this culture and exploring the challenges that are faced by the global cultural scene.

The second symposium on "Gulf and its historic

memory" will kick off on February 12, in partnership with the ACRPS, to highlight the dimensions of historic memory in the Arab Gulf region and its role in shaping the cultural and social identity.

The symposium will feature the participation of the Member of the Shura Council Khalid bin Ghanem al-Ali, QU Assistant Professor of Gulf Studies Amna Sadiq, and ACRPS researcher Alanoud al-Khalifa.

On February 17 the ministry will organise a symposium at the QU on "How to fathom out the impact of Islamic civilisation in today's world, with a lecture by Casagrande to shine a spotlight on the major contributions of the Islamic civilisation to the areas of humanitarian science and thought, along with its pivotal role in shaping the track of human progression.

On February 18, a symposium on "Social changes and transformations in the Eastern Arabia" will be held at the ACRPS, with the participation of ACRPS director of political studies Dr Marwan J Kabalan, ACRPS researcher associate Dr Harith Hasan, and the Qatari researcher and writer Abdulaziz al-Khatir.

On February 19, the ministry will organise a symposium on "Human values and challenges of contemporary civilisational relations", in partnership with the QU, with the participation of professor of Islamic Studies and Islamic Political Thought at the QU's College of Sharia of Islamic Studies, Dr Mohammed Amezmezian; professor of Contemporary Jurisprudence at the QU's College of Sharia and Islamic Studies, Dr Abdel Qader Jedy; and professors of Sharia and Islamic Studies at the QU, Alaa Hailat and Omar Alkhatib.

On February 23, the season will feature a training workshop at the QU on "How to narrate a story to the other", with a lecture by journalist, writer, and documentary filmmaker Asaad Taha.

It primarily targets media practitioners and content producers to create innovative content, in addition to providing practical counselling on methods of advancing story-telling ideas.

On the same day Kuwaiti preacher Othman al-Khamees will be welcomed as a guest of honour at Ritz-Carlton Hotel in Doha.

He will highlight the basics of building life based on an integrated approach and culture that impacts the multi-faceted aspects of human life, in addition to addressing ethical and social values in Islam and the role of Islam in shaping the cultural identity.

On February 25, the season winds up with a symposium delivered by HE the Minister of Education and Higher Education, Lolwah bint Rashid AlKhatir, at the ACRPS's cultural building. - QNA

From the Qatari Theatre book launch at CIBF 2025

By Tawfik Lamari
Staff Reporter

The Levant House pavilion at the Cairo International Book Fair (CIBF) 2025 witnessed the signing ceremony of the book *From the Qatari Theatre* by Saud Ali al-Shammari (pictured).

The book includes two theatrical texts, *Lafeef* and *Ibn Maskeen*.

Al-Shammari said on the sidelines of the signing ceremony that this work is part of a series that he started in 2018 to document theatre scene in Qatar.

"This is the second book in the series, and it contains two theatrical texts, *Lafeef* is a new text, while *Ibn Maskeen* was inspired by the idea of the book *Inspiration of the Pen*," he said. "The challenge for me was to transform the story into a dramatic theatrical text that can be performed on stage."

"The text of *Lafeef* revolves around an 80-year-old man who falls into a coma, and when he wakes up, he recalls his memories and reviews his entire life," al-Shammari said. "*Ibn Maskeen* deals with a story inspired by Arabic literature, in an artistic experiment in an attempt to transform classical texts



into a lively theatrical work."

Theatre critic Dr Hassan Rashid, who wrote the introduction to the book, said: "I consider Saud al-Sham-

mari my 'son', and my role as a critic is to support all young creators in Qatar, to prove that our country is not only an oil country, but has creative energies that communicate with thought and culture."

"This work delves into Islamic history and reflects the identity of Qatari theatre," he added.

Rashid stressed that al-Shammari's participation in the CIBF 2025 is an important opportunity to present his creativity to a wide audience, considering that the exhibition represents a cultural platform of great value in the Arab world.

ANNOUNCEMENT

I, CRISTIANA MARIA DE MACEDO FONTES

holder of

Brazil Passport No. YE579174

QID No. 27707600112

hereby change my name

from

CRISTIANA MARIA DE MACEDO FONTES

to

CRISTIANA MARIA REZENDE DE MACEDO

Any objection, please contact
THE PERMANENT COMMITTEE FOR
NATIONALITY AFFAIRS
within 15 days from the publication of this notice.

UDST signs MoU with four leading aeronautical entities

From Page 1

Gabriel Semelas, president of Airbus in Africa and Middle East, remarked: "We are proud to partner with the University of Doha for Science and Technology, ENAC, ISAE-SUPAERO, and Qatar Airways, fostering innovation and developing the next generation of aviation talents."

"This agreement reflects our commitment to advancing education and technology in Qatar, shaping the future of aerospace together," he said.

ENAC vice-president Nicolas Cazalis shared his enthusiasm for the collaboration.

"This international partnership among the University of Doha for Science and Technology, ISAE-Supaero, Airbus and Qatar Airways, will strengthen our collaboration with Qatari higher education to better support the civil aviation industry," he said. "Indeed, this partnership is highly relevant to training the high-potential graduates that civil aviation needs, thanks to a very dynamic industry in Qatar."

Didier Delorme, the Isae-Supaero vice-president for Advancement and Innovation, highlighted the significance of this partnership.

"Isae-Supaero is delighted to contribute to the development of human capital in Qatar and in the region," he said. "The creation of such innovative educational programmes will allow to train in Qatar top-level graduates able to meet the needs of the local aeronautical players."

"Our collaboration with Airbus, ENAC, Isae-supero and UDST marks a significant step forward in advancing aeronautics education and innovation in Qatar," said Captain Khalid Issa al-Hamadi, the senior vice-president (Flight Operations) at Qatar Airways. "By leveraging the expertise of these world-leading aviation institutions, we are equipping the next generation of aerospace professionals with the skills and knowledge needed to drive the industry forward."

Qatar partakes in GCC rights bodies' meeting

Qatar participated yesterday in the 18th meeting of the heads of government agencies concerned with human rights in the Gulf Co-operation Council (GCC) countries in Kuwait. Qatar's delegation to the meeting was led by Human Rights Department director Sara Abdulla al-Saadi. The meeting discussed the progress of Gulf co-operation, particularly with regards to human rights. - QNA



Swedish queen among the dignitaries for EAA's Mentor Arabia Gala Dinner

By Joseph Varghese
Staff Reporter

Queen Silvia of Sweden, the president of Mentor International, will be among the high profile dignitaries at the Mentor Arabia Gala Dinner 2025 held under the patronage of Her Highness Sheikha Moza bint Nasser, Chairperson of the Education Above All Foundation (EAA).

The EAA, a global development and education foundation, in collaboration with the Mentor Arabia Foundation, will host the Mentor Arabia Gala Dinner 2025 on February 18.

Details of the event were announced at a press conference yesterday.

The gala dinner is set to bring global leaders, sponsors, and changemakers together to support youth empowerment and sustainable development.

Mentor Arabia chairman Prince Turki bin Talal bin Abdulaziz al-Saud will also be attending the event, which aims to highlight the critical role of youth in building sustainable and healthy communities while raising funds for impactful projects.

Mentor Arabia chief executive Thuraya Ismail and Abdulla al-Abdulla, the executive director of the EAA's Rota (Reach Out to Asia) programme, with representatives of key sponsors such as Katara Hospitality, Qatar Airways, Doha Bank, LuLu Group,

Place Vendôme, Vodafone Qatar, Chopard, Al Abdulghani Motors, Marriott Worldwide Business Councils Qatar, and Snoonu, were at the press conference.

They shared insights into the events' objectives and significance of the gala dinner.

Attendees also received a preview of high-profile guests, auction items, and participating celebrities of the upcoming event.

Swedish ambassador Gautam Bhattacharyya said that it would be the first time a Swedish monarch is coming to Qatar.

"We are proud and very excited about the visit," he said. "It is a private visit, but an important (one), for Her Majesty, for Sweden and for the foundation and for the youth."

"It is just the start of a long collaboration, I hope, which will lead to positive impact for youngsters across the Arabian countries," he said.

He also highlighted the visit of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani to Stockholm in September.

Proceeds from the gala dinner will benefit thousands of youths in Qatar and Lebanon through the Youth Empowerment and Employment for Development (Yeed) project, a joint initiative between the EAA and Mentor Arabia.

The project underscores the shared commitment to equipping youth with the skills and opportunities to build sustainable futures.

"The Yeed project exempli-



Officials at the press conference.

fies the transformative power of education and collaboration," said Rota executive director al-Abdulla, adding: "By equipping youth in Qatar and Lebanon with critical skills and pathways to employment, we are not just changing individual lives ... we are empowering a generation, too."

"Create sustainable, thriving communities," he continued. "By fostering education-to-employment pathways and supporting green skills development, we aim to provide meaningful employment opportunities that contribute to a brighter, more sustainable future for the region."

"The essence of everything we do is to make a positive impact on the lives of children and youth through our targeted awareness programmes and our strategic partnerships with the govern-



Some of the attendees at the event. PICTURES: Thajudheen

ments, private sector, international organisations, media and academic institutions and others," said Mentor Arabia chief executive Ismail. "Contributing to sustainable communities and empowering youth is what we aim to achieve throughout our joint venture with Education Above All in

Qatar, Lebanon, and the region." The Mentor Arabia Gala Dinner 2025 promises an unforgettable evening, featuring thought-provoking keynote speeches, captivating cultural performances, and unparalleled networking opportunities with global leaders, dignitaries, and changemakers.



First group contests of Al Galayel Traditional Hunting 2025 takes off

The 14th Al Galayel Championship for Traditional Hunting for 2025 kicked off yesterday with the participation of 16 teams divided into four groups that will compete at Al Eraq Reserve until February 25.

Held annually in February, the championship is one of the most consequential and suspenseful events that showcases the precision marksmanship of Qatari snipers in conventional hunting methods.

This year's championship is sponsored by the Social and Sport Contribution Fund (Daam) under the umbrella of Katara - The Cultural Village.

Based on the championship's rules, contenders should hunt a substantial number of species like antelopes, bustards and stone-curlews, with the organising committee pledging that it will bring those birds in place and release them within the designated area.

All game species are fitted with tracking chips inscribed with the designation of Al Galayel, and the scoring system for the game is delineated based on each species, whereby a team securing an antelope accrues 80 points, while the capture of every single bustard bestows 30 points, and the successful hunting of a stone-curlew yields 25 points.

The championship began with the first group of hunters, in four teams, and will continue until Thursday to determine the team that will compete in the final during the period of February 22-25.



Organising committee chairman Khalid bin Mohammed al-Maadeed said that this year's event features horses, alongside camels, while hunting should be done with peregrine falcons.

He stated that the public anticipates a powerful start to the tournament, with the first group comprising strong teams, including Al Tahaddi, and another team that comprises members of the erstwhile Al Saliya team.

Al Tahaddi team leader Saeed Mohammed al-Somali al-Nabit said the first group will feature strong participation from the teams, making this year's tournament more competitive.



He highlighted that there are numerous challenges that falconers will encounter at the reserve, such as fluctuation of weather which equally affects all teams.

Al Dhaen team leader Salm Idham al-Kuwari said his team has prepared well for this year's tournament, with foremost efforts in falcon training and physical readiness, giving them confidence for a robust performance.

The team crowned with the first place will receive the tournament banner and a cash reward of QR1mn, with the second winner receiving QR700,000, and QR500,000 will go to the winner of the third place.

Additionally, QR100,000 will be paid to each team that qualifies for the final.

QR10,000 will be awarded to local newspapers that provide the best press coverage. - QNA





Invitation

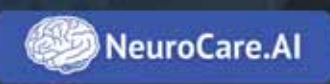
Dear Healthcare Practitioners,


We are delighted to invite you to an enlightening Continuing Medical Education (Non-Accredited CME) session hosted by **Micro Health Laboratories** in collaboration with **Hearts Medical Solutions** on:


AI in Healthcare - REVOLUTIONIZING RADIOLOGY REPORTING with AI





Keynote Speaker:
Dr. Junaid Kalia
Neurocritical Care, Stroke, and Epilepsy Specialist
Founder of NeuroCare AI – A Global Healthcare AI Factory Dallas, TX
Harvard Medical School Executive Education



 **Friday, 7th February, 2025**



 **3 PM - 5 PM**

 **CME Hall, 2nd Floor, MHL C-Ring**




Location

Join us for this impactful session where Dr. Junaid Kalia will shed light on how AI is transforming radiology reporting, enhancing diagnostic accuracy, and shaping the future of healthcare.

Targeted Audience:
Radiologists & Key Decision Makers of Healthcare Organizations

Scan The Qr code To Register

The Journey Continues.

Prosper in 2025 - Drive Away in a New Car Today!



Sonet starts from
QAR **62,000**



Sportage L 2.0L starts from
QAR **105,000**



Seltos starts from
QAR **70,000**



Grab It Today, Pay 50% Now, 50% in 2 Years!



- ✓ Interest Free
- ✓ Free 1st year Registration
- ✓ Promotion valid until January 30, 2025

 شركة العطية للسيارات والتجارة
AL ATTIYA MOTORS AND TRADING CO.

Shop with Confidence
For Complaints and Suggestions: 16001
License number: 2024 / 23467

*Offer Valid on Model Year 2024 and Select 2025 Models

THE MANAGEMENT OF AL RAWABI GROUP
PROUDLY PRESENTS

★ **RSL** ★
2025 | SEASON - 2

TITLE SPONSOR:  Meridian Constructions Qatar

POWERED BY:  (JBS)  Pena Branca

 **RAWABI SPORTS LEAGUE** ★ RSL ★

2nd Feb to 11th Feb 2025

RAWABI SPARKS | RAWABI ROYALS | RAWABI STARS | RAWABI KINGS

TEAM SPONSORS:  Kerbal,  Fine,  Sstar,  Pepsi,  Gulf Eye,  777,  Winn,  Green Wealth,  Friendly Food Qatar

ASSOCIATES SPONSORS:  Eastern,  CMP,  Ajmal,  English Ovens,  English,  BCool

REFRESHMENT PARTNER:  Hot Chicken

MEDIA PARTNERS:  GULF TIMES |  RAWABI MEDIA |  inkfinity

 RAWABI RSL

 AL RAWABI GROUP OF COMPANIES W.L.L.

RAWABI MINI MARATHON
WALKING

 RAWABI MINI MARATHON WALKING

SEASON-2

11th FEBRUARY 2025



EAT HEALTHY, BE ACTIVE
LOSE FAT BY WALKING 3000 STEPS DAILY

REGISTRATION STARTED
SCAN THE QR CODE REGISTER NOW



World Cancer Day 2025: United in the Fight Against Cancer



Dr. Noushad Ck
Global CEO
Micro Health Laboratories

But prevention remains the most effective tool in this battle. The majority of cancers are preventable with lifestyle changes such as avoiding tobacco, reducing alcohol intake, eating a balanced diet, staying physically active, and maintaining a healthy weight. By making these changes, individuals can lower their cancer risk and help reduce the global burden of the disease.

At Micro Health Laboratories we stand firmly in this fight. Through our cutting-edge precision diagnostics, we aim to provide early, accurate cancer detection, enabling timely interventions. We are dedicated to educating the public on the importance of cancer prevention, screening, and early detection, offering accessible services that empower individuals to take control of their health.

make informed decisions that could save lives. Together, we have the power to overcome cancer, one patient, one community, and one victory at a time.

As we unite, we also take a moment to honor the resilience of survivors, the unwavering courage of those currently battling, and the legacy of those we've lost. Their stories are our inspiration and our call to action, pushing us to drive research, advance treatments, and improve patient care so that fewer lives are cut short. Education and awareness remain cornerstones in this fight, ensuring that communities everywhere have the knowledge they need to recognize early symptoms and seek timely care. Cancer affects us all, but together we can change its course. Let's continue our mission to build a future where cancer is no longer a threat, where every person has access to the knowledge, support, and care they need to fight this disease. Take action today, and help create a world where no one faces cancer alone. With Micro Health Laboratories leading in early diagnosis, prevention efforts, education, and community outreach, we stand by your side, committed to making this vision a reality. Together, we will overcome cancer, step by step, united in hope.

Our commitment goes beyond just providing diagnostics. We are deeply involved in raising awareness about cancer through ongoing campaigns, outreach programs, and educational initiatives. We are determined to spread knowledge about cancer prevention, risk factors, and the life-saving benefits of early detection, making sure that everyone has access to the information they need to make informed decisions about their health.

On this World Cancer Day, we urge everyone to prioritize their health and take decisive action. Get screened, know the risks, and empower yourself with knowledge -because prevention, early detection, and precision diagnostics are our greatest allies in this fight. Whether it's scheduling a screening, understanding lifestyle changes that reduce risk, or simply being aware of cancer's warning signs, each step is crucial. Under this year's theme, "United by Unique," we come together, individuals, families, communities, and nations -to stand stronger in our commitment to eradicating cancer.

Education plays a pivotal role in this journey, as understanding the risk factors, treatment options, and preventive measures equips individuals to

On February 4, 2025, the world unites for World Cancer Day, with a call to action to tackle one of the most critical health challenges of our time. This year's theme, "United by Unique" emphasizes that while each journey with cancer is distinct, we are all united in the collective fight against it.

Cancer is responsible for nearly 10 million deaths worldwide each year, making it a leading cause of death globally. However, there is hope. With early detection and precision diagnostics, the survival rate for many cancers can be significantly improved. For instance, early-stage breast cancer boasts a 90% survival rate, while late-stage cases see survival drop to as low as 25%. Early intervention is a game changer.

Precision diagnostics is at the forefront of cancer care, enabling healthcare providers to pinpoint cancers at their earliest and most treatable stages. With cutting-edge technology, we can tailor treatments more effectively to individual patients, boosting recovery rates and reducing the spread of the disease. The power of precision lies in its ability to detect cancer before it advances, giving patients the opportunity for more successful treatments.

So, what will you do today to change tomorrow?

Every small action matters in this global fight against cancer. Whether it's spreading awareness, supporting a loved one, or making healthier lifestyle choices, each step brings us closer to a world free from cancer's grip. The future of cancer care lies in early detection, education, and empowerment -tools that we all have access to. It's not just about treatment but about prevention and resilience. By joining hands, we ensure that no one has to face cancer alone. Let's make 2025 the year of change, together.

Micro Health Laboratories - For Precious Life

PUT YOUR Brand PRODUCT IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Seize the opportunity to give your brand/product an exclusive boost by featuring an ad on our TUESDAY special advertising page.

Contact: gtadv@gulf-times.com or 444 666 21

Wagh Bakri Tea - India's Most Trusted Tea Brand

SERVING THE FINEST QUALITY TEAS SINCE 100 YEARS

WAGH BAKRI Tea Group



AVAILABLE AT ALL LEADING STORES

ISO 9001:2000 HACCP, NPQF14000, BRC GLOBAL FOOD SAFETY

Imported & Distributed by: **AL MAYA INTERNATIONAL W.L.L.**
P.O. Box 37366, Doha, Qatar. Tel: +974 4441 6441 - Email: almaya@almayaqatar.com.qa

T77 ATTRACTIVE DRIVE

ALWAYS TEMPTING AND URBAN ADVENTURES



STARTING FROM 67,000 QR








SCAN NOW 

HOTLINE 800 7553

Showroom Timing: Sat. - Thu. 8:30 am - 9:00 pm

Bestune Qatar | [bestune.qatar](https://www.bestune.qatar) | [bestune_qatar](https://www.bestune_qatar) | [bestuneqa](https://www.bestuneqa)

الريادة للسيارات ذ.م.م. | مجموعة المانع ذ.م.م. | PIONEER MOTORS W.L.L. | ALMANA GROUP W.L.L.

Qatar welcomes more than 190,000 during H1 2024-25 cruise season

Qatar Tourism (QT) has announced that during the first half of the 2024-25 cruise season, Qatar welcomed over 55 cruise ships, bringing 191,944 cruise passengers to the country's shores. This includes 20,951 turnaround passengers who have used Doha as a starting point for their cruise journeys. In a statement, the QT said that this remarkable mid-season (until January 20) success for the 2024-25 cruise season reaffirms Qatar's position as a growing hub for cruise tourism in the GCC (Gulf Co-operation Council) region. It added that to date, visitors from Ger-

many led arrival figures (30.2%), followed by Russia (10.8%) and Italy (9.2%). The top 10 nationalities collectively account for 69.2% of the total number of passengers. The QT said that this season was further enriched by the arrival of four new cruise ships visiting Doha for the first time: Resorts World One, MSC Euribia, Celestyal Journey, and Costa Smeralda. Additionally, Norwegian Sky is expected to call on April 12. The Costa Smeralda, ranked the 8th largest cruise ship in the world, is scheduled to make 10 calls this season, bringing an esti-

mated total of 82,000 passengers. Commenting on this development, chief of the Tourism Development Sector at the QT, Omar al-Jaber, said: "The impressive growth of Qatar's cruise sector is a testament to our strategic vision as part of the National Tourism Strategy 2030." "Looking ahead, more than 30 cruise ships are expected by the end of the season in April 2025, bringing approximately 185,000 (visitors and) demonstrating the rising demand for Qatar's exceptional cruise offerings combined with strong partnerships with global cruise operators," he said.

"These record-breaking numbers reflect Doha's growing prominence as a regional turnaround hub," al-Jaber said. "As we continue to invest in state-of-the-art infrastructure and enrich the visitor experience, our commitment to positioning Qatar as a premier cruise destination remains steadfast," the QT official added. The cruise industry has become a cornerstone of Qatar's national tourism strategy, experiencing remarkable growth in recent years. Doha Port's strategic location in the heart of the city allows visitors to maximise their short stays. - QNA



Robotics competition sports 2,200 students from over 220 schools

The 17th School Robotic Competition, organised by the Ministry of Sports and Youth, represented by the Qatar Scientific Club (QSC), in co-operation with the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MoEHE), kicked off on Sunday at the Lusail Multipurpose Hall. The three-day championship saw significant improvements in organisation and a notable increase in participants, with more than 2,200 students divided into more than 800 teams from 227 public and private schools, reflecting the organisers' commitment to hosting an exceptional championship. The QSC aims to present a distinctive version of the championship by introducing new updates in both organisation and competitions.

The 2025 edition includes main competitions such as the Open Robotics Competition, Robot Arm Competition, FLL Competition, Explore Competition, Discovery Competition, Ball Collecting Competition, Line Tracing Competition, Submarine Challenge, Drone Competition, Sumo Competition, and Football Competition. All competitions are either internationally or regionally recognised, or are local competitions with specific participation criteria for all educational levels. On this occasion, HE the Undersecretary of the Ministry of Sports and Youth, Yasser bin Abdullah al-Jamal, emphasised the ministry's commitment to supporting events that empower students in modern science and technology fields, aligning with Qatar's Vision 2030. He praised the outstanding level demonstrated by students during the championship, stressing Qatar's significant interest in developing youth skills in science and technology, which positively impacts Qatar's participation quality in international scientific forums.

The Assistant Undersecretary for Educational Affairs, Maha Zayed Qaqa al-Ruwaili, stated that the School Robotic Championship is one of the leading educational events that embody the MoEHE's vision to develop students' skills in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). It is more than just a competition; it provides a platform for enhancing critical and creative thinking, fostering teamwork and leadership, and stimulating innovation, in line with Qatar National Vision 2030. She added that the significant turnout reflects students' awareness of the importance of technology and its role in their future. In a speech during the opening ceremony, QSC executive director and chairman of the championship's High Organising Committee, engineer Rashid al-Rahimi, described the championship as a milestone in the journey of challenge and determination to achieve the best for students and Qatar's future. QSC managing director and chairman of the operations committee of the Schools Robotic Championship, Sheikh Ali bin Salman al-Thani, said that the participating teams will compete in various skills related to robotics. He described the current edition of the championship as being characterised by a huge number of participants. He added that there is a new addition to the contest: the submarine robot, which has been allocated to high school students only. It is a new competition that aims to keep pace with the modern era and allows students to experience engineering challenges in the real world, and develop the skills necessary to solve those challenges in the depths of the seas using a submarine. - QNA



Jan Gimroth exhibition at Katara explores the beauty of horses, falcons

An exhibition, "Jan Gimroth: In the Realm of Falcons and Horses", has opened at Katara - the Cultural Village as part of the ongoing Katara International Arabian Horse Festival 2025.

Katara general manager Prof Dr Khalid bin Ibrahim al-Sulaiti inaugurated the exhibition on Sunday.

Internationally renowned artist Gemrot is one of the most prominent painters in modern art in Central Europe.

The exhibition offers an exceptional artistic experience, as Gemrot's paintings provoke thought about the contemporary world. His works are rooted in realism but infused with distinctive artistic creativity, blending a personal vision of the rise and fall of human culture, the origins of nature and ancient art, and the impact of modern technologies.

In this new collection, the artist explores aspects of traditional Arab culture, particularly the deep admiration for horses and falcons. With his artistic ingenuity and technical mastery, Gemrot creates a visual effect that immerses viewers in his paintings, making them feel as though they are part of the artwork.

Czech ambassador to Qatar Peter Chalupsky noted that the exhibition features an artistic collection that marries traditional themes of falcons and horses with contemporary creativity, enhanced by the unique artistic touch of the young artist Gemrot, who is one of the most celebrated artists of his generation in the Czech Republic.

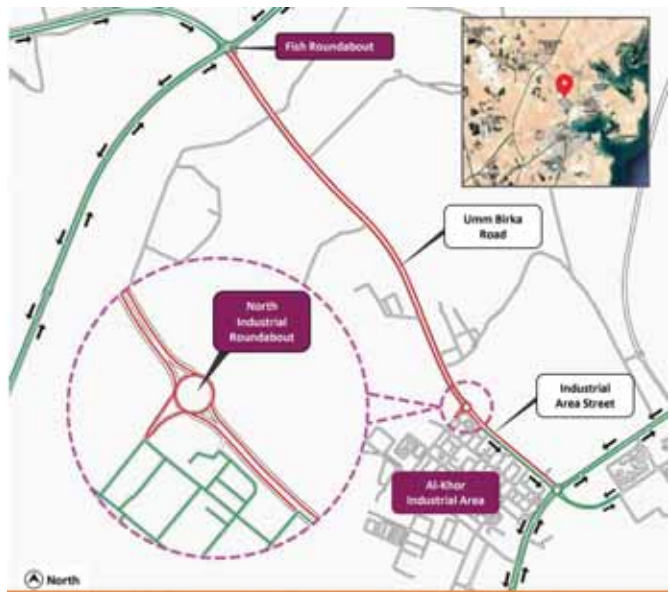
Gemrot has said that this exhibition reflects the cycle of the human psyche.

His paintings also incorporate elements of dynamism and movement, inspired by the shared cultural passion for horses and falcons.

He added that some works were specifically created to embody this legacy.



Closure at North Industrial Roundabout in Al Khor



The Public Works Authority (Ashghal) has announced a temporary traffic closure at the North Industrial Roundabout in Al Khor area on February 7-10, from 12 midnight until 5am.

The closure is in co-ordination with the General Directorate of Traffic to carry out periodic maintenance works.

Ashghal will install road signs advising motorists of the temporary closure and requested all to follow them and abide by the speed limit to ensure safety.



Sealine Area, a unique tourist attraction

The Sealine Area has recently seen an influx of visitors enjoying the excellent weather to explore the various desert sports or to relax or fish at the beaches.

Local Arabic daily *Arrayah* reported that, according to many tourist companies, the top activities include camel riding, driving dune buggies over the sands with friends, and taking photos with falcons.

Ahmed Khairideen, a service provider at the Sealine Area, said that dune buggies are in high demand these days, especially those that can accommodate four persons, for friends and family to explore the surroundings

of the desert and enjoy a sense of adventure together. He said that tourist companies often provide a professional driver for these vehicles to ensure the highest standards of safety for the passengers.

Further, these companies also provide the visitors with value-added services, such as installing umbrellas by the seashore and providing assistance for fishing enthusiasts.

Fellow service provider Omar Bashir said that his company provides tourists with falcons to take photos with, in addition to a number of lounges that allow them to experience traditional desert life comfortably.



Ali Jabir, also a service provider, said that tourists love the Sealine Area for its unique nature and scenery, where the sea meets the desert. He said that many of them are keen to go camel riding.



LuLu celebrates 6mn members across GCC

LuLu Hypermarket, the region's leading retail chain, is celebrating a remarkable milestone, 6mn "LuLu Happiness" members across the GCC countries.

"This achievement is a testament to the unwavering trust and loyalty of our valued customers who have made LuLu their preferred shopping destination," a statement said yesterday.

To mark this special occasion, LuLu Hypermarket is hosting celebrations across all its stores

in the GCC countries, featuring exclusive discounts, surprise giveaways, and a grand cake-cutting ceremony.

"Reaching 6mn 'LuLu Happiness' members is a significant achievement, and we extend our heartfelt thanks to our loyal shoppers," said LuLu Group regional manager Shanavas. "At LuLu, we remain committed to delivering the best shopping experience, unbeatable value, and exciting rewards to our growing community."

Major international events this month

Qatar is set to welcome the return of its most highly anticipated events this month, Visit Qatar announced yesterday.

The Qatar International Food Festival will be held on February 12-22 at Hotel Park, featuring over 100 food and beverage kiosks, live entertainment, interactive cooking workshops, and daily fireworks.

The ongoing 21st edition of the Doha Jewellery and Watches Exhibition (DJWE) is meanwhile concluding tomorrow at the Doha Exhibition and Convention Centre (DECC).

Web Summit Qatar 2025 returns on February 23-26 at the DECC, uniting entrepreneurs, investors, and innovators from around the world for an unparalleled networking and knowledge-sharing experience.

Several sporting competitions will take place this month, in celebration of National Sport Day.

The Education City Triathlon takes place on February 11.

Aspiring athletes can also participate in the Night Run For All 2025 at Old Doha Port on February 22 or the UV Glow Run at Doha Sports Park on February 14.

The Qatar Olympic Committee Half Marathon 2025 is set to take place at Lusail Boulevard on February 11.

Seasoned athletes and newcomers alike can take on their first desert adventure in the Al Adaid Desert Challenge, featuring multiple cycling and running categories in Al Adaid Desert, on February 7.

Equestrian enthusiasts can witness world-class competitions such as the His Highness The Amir's Sword International Equestrian Festival at the Longines Arena at Al Shaqab on February 13-15, or visit the Katara International Arabian Horse Festival at Katara - the Cultural Village until February 8.

Tennis fans can enjoy the Qatar ExxonMobil Open 2025 at Khalifa International Tennis & Squash Complex on February 17-22.

The ONE 171: Qatar edition is set to return at Lusail Sports Arena on February 20.

For racing fans, the Visit Qatar El Doha GP will take place at The Pearl Island on February 21-22, where electric powerboats will showcase their speed and agility.

Additionally, the second edition of the Qatar 1812 KM - FIA World Endurance Championship 2025 will be held at Lusail International Circuit on February 26-28, featuring top-tier racing superstars.

Sports enthusiasts can also explore the Qatar Sports Show, which will highlight the best of Qatar's sports scene on February 10-12 at Katara Hall.

In football, the Match for Hope 2025 returns on February 14 at Stadium 974, where football legends and top creators will compete while raising funds for charity.

Aspire Dome is also hosting a Sportology Tournament on February 20-24. A number of theatrical performances are set to take place across the country this month. These include Talbeen El Ghorb, showing at U



Venue today and tomorrow, and Al Doctor Theatrical Play, taking place at Katara's Drama Theatre on February 5-7.

On February 14, Marwan Khoury & Abeer Nehme will perform at the Qatar National Convention Centre (QNCC).

Classical music enthusiasts can enjoy the Baraha Musical Concert on February 14-19 at Barahat Msheireb in Msheireb Downtown Doha.

The QNCC, which hosted a performance of Beethoven's Symphony No. 8 on February 1, will host an illusion show on Feb 14-15.

The 12th Qatar International Agricultural Exhibition, one of the region's most prominent agricultural events focused on innovative solutions, opens today at Katara - the Cultural Village for five days.

The Pearl Food Festival will be held at Porto Arabia until February 8.

Geekend - the country's largest pop culture event - is returning to Geekdom Building at Lusail Boulevard on February 6-8.

The Qatar Camel Festival is also returning with a variety of events, competitions, and activities until February 21 at Al Shahaniya Camel Racetrack.

The Halal Qatar Festival will launch its 13th edition in 2025 on February 19-24 at the southern area of Katara.

For detailed event information and to stay updated, visit www.visitqatar.com, download the Visit Qatar app, and follow @QatarCalendar on social media.

Amnesty's Callamard discusses Gaza ceasefire, path forward at GU-Q event

Dr Agnes Callamard, secretary-general of Amnesty International, joined Safwan Masri, dean Georgetown University in Qatar (GU-Q) to unpack Amnesty's latest report on Gaza in light of the recent ceasefire agreement.

The event at GU-Q brought together hundreds of students, faculty, and members of the public for an in-depth examination of the report's findings, its broader implications, and the path forward for Palestine.

The conversation delved into Dr Callamard's unique career journey and the courage required to maintain strength in the face of the controversy surrounding the report, provocatively titled "You Feel Like You

Are Subhuman': Israel's Genocide Against Palestinians in Gaza." She also discussed Amnesty's 2022 report "Israel's Apartheid Against Palestinians," and the role of the global community in advocating for sustainable peace.

According to Dr Callamard, the collective efforts of many international organisations doing similar work, and the careful report rollout across Amnesty's 72 national chapters around the world contributed to the report's widespread dissemination. "The preparation that goes behind that report internally is extensive...in an era where there is so much division, polarisation, misinformation and disinformation, we are able to work through that

by speaking, by dialoguing, by reaching out, creating training, and translating everything," she said.

The conversation included a reflection on current events, including recent changes in political support for freedom of speech. Dr Callamard highlighted the advent of a new era today both in the United States and around the world.

"We need to acknowledge that for about a decade we have seen a progressive infringement on freedom of expression, and in particular on political expression of dissent," she said. Building on her conversation with GU-Q's students of international affairs earlier in the day, Dr Callamard offered advice and a word of caution for young people interested in advocacy work, in today's polarised world, saying: "Be part of a collective."

She went on to say: "This is the most beautiful profession and undertaking, you are going to meet the most inspiring people, the bravest individuals, you are going to be blown away by what they have done, how they think, do become one of them, be part of that collective and community, but be smart."

The event concluded with a question and answer session, where attendees engaged with Dr Callamard on topics ranging from how to implement the report findings, to the mechanisms of international law.



Dr Agnes Callamard in conversation with GU-Q dean Masri.

Match for Hope charity football match on Feb 14

The second edition of Qatar's epic charity football match, Match for Hope, will be held on February 14 at Stadium 974.

The event will star Thierry Henry and Andres Iniesta alongside Mubarak Mustafa, Alessandro Del Piero, David Silva and Andrea Pirlo.



\$8.8mn raised for EAA to support over 70,000 out-of-school-children. Match for Hope 2025 team line-ups revealed: Team KSI x AboFlah - KSI - co-captain, AboFlah - co-captain, Arsene Wenger - manager, Omar Sy - assistant coach, Andrea Pirlo, Alessandro Del Piero, Thierry Henry, Danny Aarons, David Vujan-ic, Angry Ginge, Amine MaTue, Fanum, Sharky, Billy Wingrove, Behzinga, Miniminter, Adam Waheed, M12 Alfouzan, OussiFooty, Ossy Marwah. Team Chunkz x IShowSpeed: Chunkz - co-captain, IShowSpeed - co-captain, Tim Cahill - assistant coach, David Silva, Andres Iniesta, Mubarak Mustafa, AJ Shabeel, Thogden, Harry Pinerio, Taiyo Kimura, Eman SV2, Samy Chaffai, Manny Brown, FutCrunch, Tobi Brown, Ben Azelart, Bashar Arabi, Luva de Pedro, King Kenny.

In addition, this year will see the first Match for Hope fan zone - with entertaining activities, meet & greets and creator merchandise stands - located at Place Vendome Qatar shopping mall from February 11 to 14. Visitors will also have the chance to take part in a variety of football games and challenges such as precision penalty shots and a chance to experience "Qatar Adventure," an interactive virtual world on Roblox showcasing Qatar's cultural activities and key landmarks in the metaverse.

In addition to the inaugural fan zone, there will be a special area for live podcasts at the Katara Amphitheatre, with star names set to host their shows: GOAL x Front Three (F3), February 12, 4.30pm; SDS Podcast with Sharky and the SDS group, February 12, 6pm; The Thirty Challenge by M12 Alfouzan, February 13, 4.30pm; Areeka Podcast with Bibi Al-abdulmohsen and Talal Sam, February 13, 6pm. Fans can reserve their free tickets for the podcasts at www.match4hope.com Match for Hope 2025 is organised by Q Life in collaboration with EAA and the Supreme Committee for Delivery and Legacy. The event is presented by Visit Qatar. Fans should follow @match4hope on Instagram and TikTok, or check out the website at www.match4hope.com for all the latest updates on events and timings.

Match for Hope 2025 can be watched live on February 14 in Arabic on Al Kass, beIN Sports, and AboFlah's YouTube channel, and in English on beIN Sports English and Chunkz's YouTube channel. Kick-off is scheduled for 8pm.

They will be joined by some of the world's biggest content creators including KSI, IShowSpeed, Chunkz, AboFlah, Sharky, Miniminter, and others, a statement said yesterday.

Doors will open at 5pm, and in addition to the match, fans will enjoy a live pre-match performance by Rasha Rizk and a half-time show by award-winning artist Macklemore. Fans will also have access to a wide variety of food options and football activations outside the stadium. Tickets are on sale now at www.match4hope.com All funds will go to Education Above All (EAA) initiatives in Lebanon, Nigeria, Palestine, Syria, and Pakistan. The inaugural Match for Hope in 2024 saw more than



MGD launches 13th showroom in Qatar

Malabar Gold & Diamonds (MGD), the sixth largest jewellery retailer globally with over 375 showrooms across 13 countries, has launched its 13th showroom in Qatar at Muiather, Al Rayyan.

The showroom was inaugurated by Indian ambassador Vipul, in the presence of Malabar Group vice-chairman Abdul Salam K P, MGD's international operations managing director Shamlal Ahamed, Qatar regional head Santhosh T, Qatar zonal head Naufal T, Sheikh Jasim Nasar Abdulla Ahmed al-Thani, Shaikh Abdulla Nasar Abdulla Ahmed al-Thani, other senior management team members from MGD, customers and well-wishers.

Expanding on its impressive retail presence in Qatar, the showroom features a wide array of jewellery designs curated from across the world. From stunning bridal jewellery to elegant daily wear, the collection includes gold, diamond, and precious gemstone pieces catering to every occasion and taste, a statement said.

"We are extremely thrilled

to launch our new showroom in Qatar," Ahamed said. "We opened our first showroom in Qatar in 2011 and since then, our retail operations in the country has played a pivotal role in driving our business in the GCC region."

"With 13 world-class showrooms and more in the pipeline, we are excited to take forward our legacy of providing jewellery lovers in Qatar with exquisite designs and exceptional service."

"We would like to thank our customers in the region for their immense support over the years and for establishing Malabar Gold & Diamonds as the most preferred jewellery retailer in Qatar."

"We are confident that the new showroom in Muiather will reflect the success that our other showrooms has enjoyed over the year," added Ahamed.

As part of the showroom's exclusive inaugural offers, customers can get free gold coins with every QR3,000 worth purchase of gold, diamond and precious gem jewellery.

Customers also have the opportunity to exchange their old

22K gold jewellery without any loss.

The exclusive offers are valid only at the newly launched MGD showroom in Muiather until February 15.

MGD currently operates 13 showrooms across Qatar at Doha, Gharaffa, Al Khor Mall, Grand Mall, Barwa Village, D Ring Road, Al Nasr Street, Tawar Mall, Muiather, Lagoona Mall, Mirqab Mall, Ezdan Mall, and Dar Al Salam Mall.

"MGD is renowned globally for offering an unparalleled jewellery buying experience with convenience and customer-friendly policies along with the 'Malabar Promise' of incomparable quality and service assurance."

"The 'Malabar Promise' also includes transparent pricing, assured lifetime maintenance from any of the showrooms across 13 countries, guaranteed buyback, tested and certified diamonds, 100% value on diamond and gold jewellery exchange, 100% hallmarked jewellery, responsible sourcing, fair price policy, and fair labour practices," the statement added.

QRCS ophthalmology convoy treats refugee patients in Bangladesh



Qatar Red Crescent Society (QRCS) has concluded a medical convoy to treat eye diseases in Bangladesh, implemented in co-operation with Bangladesh Red Crescent Society (BDRCS) for the benefit of patients at refugee camps in Cox's Bazar.

The hospital's medical professionals performed 600 medical

examinations and 180 cataract operations for the refugee patients.

Among the beneficiaries were Fatima (66) and Abdul-Karim (80), who struggled for two years with the frustration of deteriorating vision, which prevented them from doing their basic activities, such as cooking, gardening, and reading.

The cataract surgeries were successful, and the two patients are now restoring their vision and, by extension, their independence and self-esteem.

"I can see things clearly now, and I feel greatly independent," said the old man. "I can read the Holy Qur'an and take care of my garden. It feels like a gift."

Mannai unveils Eicher EuTech 5 trucks, buses

Mannai hosted the grand launch of the Eicher Pro League Range of trucks and buses with the cutting-edge EuTech5 technology in Doha.

The occasion coincided with Mannai's 75th anniversary, marking a significant milestone in the company's illustrious history.

The event, was graced by Indian ambassador Vipul, alongside top industry leaders and the senior management of VE Commercial Vehicles (VECV), a joint venture between Volvo Group and Eicher Motors and the leadership of Mannai Corporation.

The ceremony commenced with a welcome speech by Rajesh Krishnan, president of Mannai

Auto Group who acknowledged the exceptional contributions of Mannai and its long-standing partnership with VECV. He further emphasised the importance of providing customers with world-class innovation that empowers the region.

"Our commitment to innovation is not only about meeting the present needs of our customers but also about enabling them to achieve their aspirations for the future," he added.

Vinod Aggarwal, managing director and CEO of VECV, highlighted VECV's commitment to innovation and sustainability in the commercial vehicle industry. He also reflected on the strong



economic relationship between India, the fifth largest economy in the world, and Qatar, a nation of immense potential and vision. "This partnership underscores the critical role of shared values and

mutual growth in creating a better future," Aggarwal remarked.

Aman Arora, senior vice-president and head of international business followed with an elaboration on VECV's international

business strategy, emphasising the importance of the Middle East market.

Khalid Yousef, senior vice-president of Mannai Heavy Equipment & Commercial Vehicles, said: "At

Mannai, we take immense pride in our superior aftersales services. Ensuring that our clients enjoy unparalleled support long after their purchase is central to our mission of delivering value and building trust."

The highlight of the evening was the unveiling of the new EuTech5 trucks and buses. Designed to deliver superior performance, reliability, and fuel efficiency, the EuTech5 technology represents the next generation of commercial vehicles tailored to meet the dynamic needs of businesses in Qatar and beyond. In recognition of the enduring support of their customers, Mannai Eicher presented awards to top-performing clients.



Rawabi Sports League - Season 2 launched



Building on the tremendous success of its inaugural edition, Rawabi Management has announced the launch of Rawabi Sports League (RSL) - Season 2, a dynamic initiative designed to foster staff empowerment through the spirit of sportsmanship and camaraderie. The event began at Qatar Foundation cricket ground, marking

another milestone in Rawabi's commitment to employee well-being and engagement, a statement said yesterday.

Under the leadership of the Rawabi Sports League Team Management, comprising Muhammed Abdulla (managing director), Ajmal Abdulla (executive director), Muhamed Sadik (group director), Haris Thayyil

(group director), Kannu Baker (group general manager), and Muhammed Jaseel, this season promises to elevate the league to new heights of sporting excellence.

The competition features four teams - Rawabi Sparks, Rawabi Royals, Rawabi Kings, and Rawabi Stars. Players will showcase their talent across multiple

sporting disciplines, including football, cricket, volleyball, badminton, tug of war, and athletics.

Matches will be held across various venues, including The Hamilton International School Doha, leading up to the grand finale on February 11, set to take place at Al Gharafa Sports Club in celebration of Qatar National Sport Day. Rawabi Management has part-

nered with leading brands to support and elevate the league. Meridian Constructions Qatar is the title sponsor, while JBS and Pena Branca power the event.

Additionally, each team enjoys the backing of esteemed brands, including Pepsi, Kerala Kitchen, 5 Star, Fine, 4 Dear, 777, No.1 Malabar, Winn, Green Wealth, and Friendly Food Qatar.

The Rawabi Sports League also extends its gratitude to its media partners - Gulf Times, Rawabi Media, Inkfinity, and Dorado Advertising - whose extensive reach will bring the excitement of the league to a wider audience. Hot Chicken, Cafe Lovella, and Hot Tea are the official refreshment partners, the statement added.

Syria vows 'punishment' for car bomb that killed 20

AFP
Damascus

A car bomb killed 20 people yesterday, authorities said, vowing to punish those behind the attack in an area where Kurdish-led forces and Turkish-backed factions have clashed for weeks.

The second such attack within days in Manbij comes amid talks between Syria's new authorities, which are close to Ankara, and the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) over the group's future.

"A treacherous terrorist bombing targeted civilians in Manbij city, killing 20 people," the Syrian presidency said in a statement, following a preliminary death toll of 15 from rescuers.

There was no immediate claim of responsibility for the attack, which the SDF has also condemned, and the presidency statement did not say who may be behind it.

"This crime will not pass without imposing the most severe of punishments on those responsible," said the statement, vowing "to pursue and hold accountable" those involved.

The fighting in the Manbij area has raged despite efforts from SDF backer the United States to broker a ceasefire.

Turkiye, which opposes the SDF, is due to host Syria's interim



A member of the White Helmets works in the aftermath of a car bomb explosion, in Manbij, Syria, yesterday, in this screen grab taken from a video.

President Ahmed al-Sharaa today for his second international visit since Bashar al-Assad's toppling on December 8.

Turkish-backed factions launched attacks on Kurdish-held areas in northern Syria, seizing the strategic Tal Rifaat and Manbij pockets at around the same time as the rebel-led offensive that overthrew Assad.

SDF leader Mazloum Abdi condemned the attack yesterday in a post on X, saying that "those responsible must be held accountable".

White Helmets rescuers earlier said women and children were among those killed in the Manbij car bombing that targeted agricultural workers on the city's outskirts.

The rescuers published footage from the area online, showing first responders carrying people on stretchers as well as the wreckage of a vehicle by the side of the road.

On Saturday, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights war monitor said a car bomb in Manbij killed at least nine people including pro-Turkiye fighters.

President Sharaa's visit to Turkiye follows a trip to Saudi Arabia, where he met Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman as war-ravaged Syria seeks reconstruction funds from wealthy countries.

In Turkiye, Sharaa is set to meet President Recep Tayyip Erdogan to discuss "joint steps to be taken for economic recovery,

sustainable stability and security", Fahrettin Altun, head of communications at the presidency, said on X.

Turkiye has threatened a military operation against the SDF unless they accepted Ankara's conditions for a "bloodless" transition after Assad's fall.

Last month, Syrian Foreign Minister Asaad al-Shaibani said after talks in Ankara that his country will never allow its territory to be used as a staging ground for threats against Turkiye.

Turkiye has mounted multiple operations against the SDF since 2016, and Erdogan had repeatedly threatened to seize Kurdish-held areas in the north like Manbij.

Gazans in Egypt reject displacement, grapple with decision when to go home

Reuters
Cairo

Weeks into the ceasefire in Gaza, thousands of Palestinians who left for neighbouring Egypt are grappling with the question of when they might go home, though they reject the prospect of a mass displacement proposed by US President Donald Trump.

"A lot of people are torn, and I am one of them," said Shorouk, who earns a living selling Palestinian food in Cairo, going by the name Gaza Girl. "Do you choose to go back and sit in the destruction and a place that still needs to be reconstructed or stay and go back when it is reconstructed?"

Whether or not she is able to go home soon, she does not want people like her to be accepted as residents outside Palestinian land.

"We, the people of Gaza, can only live in Gaza," she said. "If they give us residencies, the cause will be lost."

A proposal by Trump that much of the population of Gaza be cleared out and residents sent en masse to Egypt and Jordan has been universally denounced across the Arab world as a form of ethnic cleansing.

"You're talking about a million and half people, and we just clean out that whole thing," Trump said. Asked if it would be temporary or long term solution, he said: "Could be either."

Egypt says it will never participate in the mass displacement of Palestinians, which President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi described as an "act of injustice".

But there are already about 100,000 Palestinians in Egypt, who say they do not know how or when they will be able to return.

During the war in Gaza, the border was mostly sealed and the vast majority of the 2.3mn residents were made homeless and forced into temporary shelters within the territory. There were however months when some people were permitted to leave, including Palestinians with foreign passports, their close relatives or severely ill patients evacuated for humanitarian reasons.

Most have no long-term permission to stay in Egypt and view their stays as temporary, surviving on small trade or savings. The ceasefire agreement that paused the fighting in January has yet to resolve their fate.

Some say they will return as soon as they have a chance.



An Egyptian medic cares for a young Palestinian patient evacuated from Gaza through the Rafah crossing, as they arrive at Al-Arish General Hospital in Egypt's northeastern Sinai province, as part of a ceasefire deal.

Iran warns against 'ethnic cleansing' of Palestinians

Iran yesterday condemned US President Donald Trump's proposal to relocate Palestinians from the Gaza Strip, warning it would amount to "ethnic cleansing," AFP reported from Tehran.

Foreign ministry spokesman Esmail Baqaei said the international community should help Palestinians "secure their right to self-determination... rather than pushing for other ideas that would be tantamount to ethnic cleansing".

The remarks from Baqaei come after Trump repeatedly floated an idea to "clean out" the Gaza Strip and move its population to Egypt and Jordan.

"Cleaning out Gaza... is part of colonial erasure of (the) Gaza Strip

and the whole Palestine," Baqaei said, adding that "no third party" can decide on the future of the Palestinian territory.

Iran, which does not recognise Israel, has made support for the Palestinian cause one of the pillars of its foreign policy since the victory of the Revolution in 1979. Iran and Israel, saw their first direct exchange of fire during the war in Gaza. Iran provides financial and military backing for Hamas, but insists it and the other groups Tehran supports act independently.

Iranian Vice-President Mohammad Javad Zarif recently said that Hamas' storming of Israel in October 2023 had "undermined" nuclear negotiations between Iran and the US.

SA president rejects Trump's accusations

AFP
Johannesburg

President Cyril Ramaphosa yesterday rejected Donald Trump's assertions that South Africa was "confiscating" land and said he was ready to explain his government's land reform policy to his US counterpart.

Trump's intervention into one of South Africa's most divisive debates on social media Sunday was widely dismissed as incorrect and even "misinformation", with the leftist opposition Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) party calling it "offensive".

Trump appeared to be referring to a land expropriation act signed by Ramaphosa last month which stipulates the government may, in certain circumstances, offer "nil compensation" for property it decides to seize in the public interest.

The Republican also accused Pretoria of "treating certain classes of people very badly"

and threatened to cut funding to the country. Land ownership is a contentious issue in South Africa with most farmland still owned by White people three decades after the end of apartheid and the government under pressure to implement reforms.

Efforts to redress that inequality have drawn criticism from conservatives, including South Africa-born Elon Musk, who is a powerful Trump adviser.

"The South African government has not confiscated any land," Ramaphosa said in a statement reacting to Trump's post.

The Expropriation Act is not a "confiscation instrument" but a "constitutionally mandated legal process that ensures public access to land in an equitable and just manner," Ramaphosa's statement said.

The government says the new act does not allow authorities to expropriate property arbitrarily and efforts must always first be made to reach an agreement with the owner.

DR Congo, Rwanda leaders to join summit on crisis in war-torn east

AFP
Kinshasa

President Felix Tshisekedi and Rwandan President Paul Kagame will attend a summit on Saturday as a Rwanda-backed armed group advances in the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo.

M23 fighters and Rwandan soldiers have made substantial gains in the eastern DRC, taking the major city of Goma last week, and have vowed to march across the vast country to the capital Kinshasa.

With tensions spiralling, Tshisekedi has promised a "vigorous" military response and urged the international community to impose sanctions on Rwanda. Tshisekedi and Kagame will join a two-day joint summit of eastern and southern African countries due to begin on Friday in Tanzania, Kenya's said yesterday. Kenya holds the rotating presidency of the East



Displaced people wait along the road for transport back to their villages, days after the M23 rebel group seized the town of Goma, in North Kivu, Democratic Republic of the Congo, yesterday.

African Community. Both leaders have been no-shows at previous talks attempting to broker peace between the two sides.

The lightning offensive is the latest escalation in a region devastated by decades of fighting involving dozens of armed groups, with many seeking to control its rich veins of key minerals used in technology.

The fall of Goma, the capital of North Kivu province, saw

deadly clashes and added to an already dire humanitarian situation. The M23 has since advanced towards the neighbouring province of South Kivu, threatening its main city, Bukavu.

Vincent Kasali, a bean seller in Bukavu, said that trade in the city had been disrupted, especially with navigation on Lake Kivu bordering Rwanda restricted.

UNREST Attack on South Sudan cattle camps kills 35

Unidentified attackers raided cattle camps in a southeastern area of South Sudan last week, killing at least 35 people and wounding 46, a community leader said, Reuters reported from Nairobi. Cattle raiding linked to competition for scarce

resources is one of the main triggers of conflict between ethnic groups in the country awash with weapons after decades of war. "On January 31, the Dinka Bor cattle camps were attacked," the leader, Mayom Ateny, told Reuters on Sunday, giving details of the deaths and injuries in the four camps targeted. He added that 11,000 head of cattle were taken. Olum Pole Pole Ataruk, the commissioner of Magwi county, the site of the attacks, and Eia John Ahaji, the information minister of Eastern Equatoria state home to the county, did not immediately respond to a request for comment. Cattle

are an important indicator of wealth and status in South Sudan, and are usually given as a bride price to a woman's family as gifts ranging in number from fewer than 10 head to several hundred. Nicholas Haysom, the head of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) has expressed concern.

Trump on possible UK tariffs: 'I think that one can be worked out'

Reuters
London

US President Donald Trump has said that although Britain was "out of line" when it came to trade he thought it may be able to avoid tariffs, adding of the imbalance: "I think that one can be worked out."

Trump announced sweeping tariffs on Mexico, Canada and China over the weekend and said they would "definitely happen" with the European Union, sparking fears of a trade war that would derail economic growth and hike consumer costs. He paused tariffs on Mexico on Monday, a day before they were to take effect.



PM Keir Starmer

Asked about Britain and whether it would face tariffs next, Trump told reporters on Sunday: "We'll see how things work out. It might happen with them, but it will definitely

happen with the European Union, I can tell you that." "The UK is way out of line. We'll see ... but the European Union is really out of line. The UK is out of line, but I think that one can be worked out. But the European Union is an atrocity, what they've done."

He said British Prime Minister Keir Starmer had "been very nice. We've had a couple of meetings, we've had numerous phone calls. We're getting along very well. We'll see whether or not we can balance out our budget." Starmer is walking a diplomatic tightrope as he attempts to stave off any tariffs on Britain while also pursuing a "reset" in relations with the EU after years of wrangling over Brexit in a bid to boost a

sluggish British economy.

Visiting Brussels on Monday, Starmer became the first British prime minister to attend an EU leaders' meeting since Britain left the bloc in 2020, as he held talks for a new UK-EU security pact. Asked at a press conference whether he would be willing to water down his EU reset to keep Trump happy, Starmer stressed that Britain would not pick one side over the other. "Both of these relations are very important to us. We are not choosing between them - but that's historically been the position of the UK for many, many decades," Starmer said.

A British government spokesperson said earlier on Monday the US was an indispensable ally and

close trading partner. "We have a fair and balanced trading relationship which benefits both sides of the Atlantic," the spokesperson said.

"We look forward to working closely with President Trump to continue to build on UK-US trading relations for our economy, businesses and the British people."

Starmer and his ministers have praised Trump since he was elected, stressing how much Britain imports from the United States and hoping to avoid tariffs at a time when Britain's economy is already struggling to grow. Thanks to methodological differences between their national statistics agencies, Britain and the United States both report trade surpluses

with each other in goods. According to British data, Britain had a trade in goods surplus of £1.9bn (\$2.3bn) with the US in the year to the end of the third quarter in 2024.

In the same period total trade between the two countries was worth £294bn, making the United States Britain's biggest trading partner as a single country, although the European Union is bigger as a bloc.

But less than one third of its trade is in goods, which could face US tariffs, with the rest made up of services. Starmer told reporters at the weekend that in his early discussions with Trump the two men had focused on building on strong trading relations.

Purrfect! Scotland has no plans to ban cats: leader

AFP
London

Scotland is not planning to ban cats, the leader of the devolved government insisted Monday, after welfare experts gave ministers pause for thought in a new report. The Scottish Animal Welfare Commission (SAWC) urged ministers to explore introducing containment zones - within which there would be restrictions on cats - to protect wildlife in "vulnerable areas".

Such a plan could lead to rules requiring cats to be kept indoors

and potentially barring them in "new housing developments in rural areas" near "conservation-sensitive areas", the commission noted in a new report. But before any fur could fly, Scottish leader John Swinney said Monday that his ministers were not poised to impose a ban, or restrictions, on cats. "There's a report being produced by an external organisation which has come in to the government for consideration," he said.

"Let me just clear this up today - the government's not going to be banning cats or restricting cats. We've no intention of doing so and we will not be doing it."

In the report, the experts noted

that evidence suggests all cats "can have a significant impact on wildlife populations, through predation and competition for resources with vulnerable wildcat populations". "Some countries already require cats to be contained all the time or seasonally to protect wildlife populations," it said. "This may be an option to reduce the welfare impacts of domestic cats on wildlife."

The report recommended the Scottish government, which has responsibility for a host of domestic policy areas in Scotland, to instruct its agency NatureScot to produce a report on containment areas.

King Charles III greets Badenoch



Britain's King Charles III greets Britain's main opposition Conservative Party leader Kemi Badenoch during a private audience at Buckingham Palace in London yesterday.

India vows to avoid protectionist signals on trade, says top official

India cuts average import tariff to 11% from 13%; Import tariffs cut on nearly 30 items in annual budget; Trade analyst says India's effective tariffs remain high

Reuters
New Delhi

India does not want to give any signal that it is protectionist, the top bureaucrat in the finance ministry said, after slashing import duties on high-end motorcycles, amid US President Donald Trump's moves on tariffs. The remarks came a day after Trump ignited a trade war with sweeping tariffs on Canada, Mexico and China. None were aimed at India, although Trump had called it a tariff abuser during his election campaign last year.

"We don't want to give any signal that we would like to be protectionist," Finance Secretary Tuhin Kanta Pandey told Reuters in an interview after the budget, unveiled on Saturday. "Our stance is that we don't want to increase protection."

Trade and immigration issues will take centre stage when Prime Minister Narendra Modi meets this month with Trump, whose administration India has sought to placate after his accusations that its tariffs hurt prospects for American firms. India's budget cut import tariff slabs, reducing average basic customs duties on scores of items such as raw materials for domestic industries like textiles and automobiles, Pandey added.

Average import tariffs on essential goods, mainly items of food and raw material, range from zero to 5%, while those on capital goods range from 7.5% to 10%, with about 10 items in higher tax categories, he said. Trade analysts were not convinced the cuts were sufficient, however.

"India's average tariffs are still much higher compared to the

United States, Japan and China," said Ajay Srivastava, founder of Global Trade Research Initiative, a think tank based in Delhi. While India was slashing peak rates of basic customs duties used for international comparisons, it was adding various surcharges on imports, implying that the total tax burden remained high, he said.

Trump's administration has upped the ante by recently raising the issue of undocumented Indians living in the United States, a topic on which India's foreign ministry has said it is in dialogue with US authorities.

India slashed custom duties on motorcycles, such as those from Harley-Davidson, with engine capacity of 1,600cc or more, to 30% from 50% on fully-built imports in the budget, which Pandey said also cut average tariffs to 11% from 13%.

"We should give the right signal for the world, as well as to our own industry," Pandey added, saying the tariff measures aimed at helping domestic companies initially but would be phased out as those industries developed.

'Kim Jong-il' birthday tours set to open

AFP
Seoul

A tour operator said Monday it had opened bookings for trips to a North Korean border city to celebrate former leader Kim Jong-il's birthday, offering foreign tourists the first chance to visit since the pandemic.

Tour operators said in January that the North would reopen Rason, a city on the border with China, to foreign tourists, five years after Pyongyang sealed its frontiers in response to Covid-19.

Neither North Korea nor China have commented on the plans. Koryo Tours said the February tour in Rason would be "the first trip back to North Korea since the borders closed in January 2020". "This tour will take you to the must-see sites in Rason, North Korea's Special Economic Zone. Plus, you will travel to North Korea to celebrate one of the biggest holidays, Kim Jong-il's Birthday," the Beijing-based travel agency wrote on its website.

The birthdays of members of the ruling Kim dynasty are typically feted in the North with large scale public celebrations. The birthday of former ruler Kim Jong-il - father of current leader Kim Jong-un - is marked as Day of the Shining Star on February 16, and typically features large-scale public celebrations, including military

parades. Itineraries on offer also included visiting North Korean factories, schools and a bank at which tourists can open their very own North Korean bank account.

However, although the tour is open for bookings, it is "not yet confirmed," Koryo said, adding it was "awaiting information from the Chinese authorities on the opening of the Chinese side of the border".

The tours were slated to start in China, with guests to be driven to the border with the nuclear-armed North. Another travel agency, Young Pioneer Tours, also announced Rason tour packages in January.

Rason became North Korea's first special economic zone in 1991 and has been a testing ground for new economic policies. It is home to the socialist country's first legal marketplace and has a separate visa regime from the rest of North Korea.

Tourism to the North was limited before the pandemic, with tour companies saying around 5,000 Western tourists visited each year. Americans were banned from travelling to the North after the imprisonment and subsequent death of student Otto Warmbier in 2017.

North Korea shut its borders in early 2020 to prevent the spread of the coronavirus, and later bolstered defences along its northern boundary with China to deter its own nationals from re-entering the country illegally. Pyongyang

has since reopened the border to some trade and official delegations, and North Korea last year permitted Russian tourists to enter the country for the first time since the pandemic.

Chinese tourists - who made up the bulk of foreign visitors to North Korea before the pandemic - have not returned to the country, with experts speculating that it may be linked to Beijing's growing displeasure over Pyongyang bolstering ties with Moscow. The North has sent arms and ammunition, plus thousands of soldiers to help Russia fight Ukraine, Seoul, Washington and Kyiv have said.

Pyongyang's actions are "destabilising not only the Northeast Asian region but also Europe," Asan Institute for Policy Studies research fellow Lee Dong-gyu told AFP.

"From China's perspective, North Korea's actions could negatively impact its relations with the US or European countries, as well as its economic recovery. Due to this, China seems to be subtly pressuring North Korea."

On the surface, China is maintaining the appearance of friendly ties with long-time ally North Korea, and has not publicly criticised Pyongyang's moves to boost ties with Russia. "However, through measures like restricting tourism or imposing economic pressure, China appears to be signalling its dissatisfaction," Lee added.

Taiwanese star Barbie Hsu dies at 48

AFP
Taipei

Taiwanese star Barbie Hsu, who was hugely popular across Asia for her leading role in the 2001 television drama *Meteor Garden*, has died from a respiratory illness, local media reported Monday.

She was 48. Hsu passed away after developing pneumonia during a family trip to Japan over the Lunar New Year holiday, the younger of her two sisters was quoted as saying.

"My dearest and kindest sister Barbie Hsu sadly left us due to influenza complications that led to pneumonia," the younger Hsu said in a statement shared by her agent and reported by the semi-official Central News Agency. "I'm grateful to have been her sister in this lifetime, to take care of each other, accompany each other, I will forever be thankful to her and miss her."

Hsu's death was the top

trending topic on China's X-like Weibo platform on Monday. Fans in Taiwan, the Philippines and elsewhere also paid tribute to her on social media.

Chinese actor Huang Xiaoming, who starred with Hsu in another Taiwanese drama, said he was "in shock and deep grief" over her death.

"I've heard that truly brilliant souls are never dimmed by time - they remain vibrant, like bubbles shining in the sun," Huang said on Weibo.

Filipino fan Edmalyn Canton wrote on Facebook: "Thank you for bringing joy to my childhood. You will always be my favourite version of *Meteor Garden* and will forever be remembered."

Stacy Hsu, a Taiwanese celebrity, posted on Facebook that Hsu's "beauty and intelligence will forever remain in our hearts."

Animal rights group PETA said it was "heartbroken" over Hsu's death, noting she was "one of the first and biggest

stars" to support the organisation. Hsu and her younger sister Dee rose to fame in the 1990s as a pop duo before switching to hosting TV shows and acting. It was the elder Hsu's role as Dong Shan Cai in Taiwan's popular 2001 television series *Meteor Garden* that made her a star across Asia.

The show about an ordinary girl attending an elite university was originally based on a Japanese manga series. It was later remade in China and now screens on Netflix.

Hsu's acting career dimmed in recent years but appearances in reality television shows and dramas in her off-screen life kept her in the celebrity gossip pages.

Hsu married Chinese businessman Wang Xiaofei in 2010 and they had two children, Taiwanese media reported.

The couple divorced in 2021, and the following year Hsu tied the knot with an ex-boyfriend, South Korean DJ and singer Koo Jun-yup.

Bangkok blues



People wearing face masks ride motorcycles amid air pollution, in Bangkok, Thailand, yesterday.



CHAIRMAN

Abdullah bin Khalifa al-Attiyah

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Faisal Abdulhameed al-Mudahka

Deputy Managing Editor

K T Chacko

- 📍 P.O.Box 2888, Doha, Qatar
- ✉ editor@gulf-times.com
- ☎ 44350478 (News),
- ☎ 44466404 (Sport),
- ☎ 44466636 (Home delivery)
- ☎ 44350474
- 📘 facebook.com/gulftimes
- 🐦 twitter.com/gulftimes_Qatar
- 📷 instagram.com/gulftimes
- 📺 youtube.com/GulftimesVideos

GULF TIMES

India budget opts for economic sugar rush over reform

India's annual budget announcement was a bigger deal than usual this year: As the first full budget of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's third term, it will set the tone for how the world's fifth-largest economy confronts slowing growth and sagging markets.

But the year's top economic policy event opted mainly for short-term economic relief through middle-class tax cuts, while passing up a chance to go big on reforms needed to reignite rapid growth – once the envy of the world at more than 8%.

The budget also scaled back the government's emphasis on capital spending and infrastructure, another key driver for India's growth ambitions since the pandemic.

Without a strategy to regain high growth rates and assure jobs for India's young population, the budget disappointed analysts and markets, alarmed in recent months by weak earnings growth and an exodus of foreign investors.

"India is aspiring for 8% growth but we don't have a path to 8% – a growth strategy is not there," said Madhavi Arora, chief economist at Emkay Global Financial Services.

The government has forecast India's GDP growth will slip to a four-year low of 6.4% in the current financial year to March 31 and stay close to that level next year as well, compared with 8.2% in 2023-24.

While the latest tax cuts may help urban consumers, who took some steam out of the economy as weak wage growth and high living costs curtailed their spending habits, economists see deeper problems that need to be addressed.

"Eight percent will require far deeper interventions in agricultural markets, human capital and ease of doing business," said Dhiraj Nim, an economist at ANZ Research.

Modi, who returned to power in July of last year with a weaker-than-expected mandate, has turned to appeasing politically important constituencies in the months since the election, analysts said.

Since the pandemic, the govt has raised capital expenditure sharply in the hope of fashioning an investment-led recovery

Analysts noted that this is not the first time, however, that Modi and his Bharatiya Janata Party failed to push economic reforms, which also got brushed aside in his previous two terms when the party had won more decisively and had greater political capital.

"In 2019, the BJP got more than 300 seats and had a window (for reforms)," said Amit Ranjan, research fellow at Institute of South Asian Studies (ISAS), National University of Singapore.

"But the government gave in to the needs of electoral politics as the government knows reforms do not immediately benefit the large section of voters."

In 2015, Modi let lapse an executive order making it easier for businesses to buy land, after failing to win support from opposition parties in the parliament. And in 2020, both houses of parliament approved new labour codes, but they have yet to be implemented across all states.

Plans for large-scale privatisations of state-owned enterprises, aiming to reinvigorate them by reducing government involvement, have also faltered, with the government now opting to put fresh funds into ailing state firms.

The case for reforms, however, has not come just from analysts and economists, but from government leaders as well.

On Friday, India's chief economic adviser, V Anantha Nageswaran, made a pitch for rapidly easing rules covering land, labour and factories, among other areas, arguing that government should "get out of the way" as one way to push up growth.

"Business as usual carries a high risk of economic growth stagnation, if not economic stagnation," Nageswaran said in a report presented a day ahead of the budget. The tax cuts' Rs1tn (\$11.56bn) price tag also reduced the government's leeway to further ramp up spending on infrastructure. The budget includes Rs11.2tn for capital expenditure in 2025-26, close to the level of spending planned for the current year, although actual outlays fell short of that due to delays linked to national and state elections.

"We think that capital expenditure and infrastructure development will provide a longer-term, longer-lasting boost to growth than things like tax measures," said Christian de Guzman, senior vice-president and lead sovereign analyst for India at Moody's Ratings.

Since the Covid-19 pandemic, the government has raised capital expenditure sharply in the hope of fashioning an investment-led recovery but the strategy is yet to pay off, with job creation and wage growth remaining weak. – Reuters

To Advertise

gtadv@gulf-times.com

Display

44466621
44418811

Classified

44466609 44418811
gtcad@gulf-times.com

Subscription

circulation@gulf-times.com

© 2025 Gulf Times. All rights reserved

Strife for 'Palestine in US' as well



US Vice President JD Vance (centre) speaks with East Palestine Fire Chief Keith Drabick (second left) during a visit to East Palestine, Ohio, yesterday. Residents of East Palestine, Ohio, were forced to evacuate in February 2023, when a Norfolk Southern train carrying chemicals derailed, covering the area in thick black smoke. (AFP)

Making sense of Germany's under-performing economy

By Michael Spence
Milan

Germany's economy is slowing more sharply than in the rest of Europe, and may well be in recession. Can it recover anytime soon?

The factors behind Germany's under-performance are not difficult to discern. As in much of the developed world, productivity growth has been sluggish for some time. Moreover, since the Covid-19 pandemic, inflation – including a rise in energy prices – has taken a toll on growth. The Ukraine war compounded these headwinds, not least by forcing Europe to replace Russian fossil fuels with more expensive substitutes. Higher energy prices hit Germany's heavily industrial economy particularly hard.

Germany is also facing declining demand for its exports, owing to sluggish global growth, weakness in key markets (especially China), and rising foreign competition in autos and advanced industrial machinery. But exports are vital to Germany's economic model: the country has long run trade (and current account) surpluses, in order to offset insufficient domestic aggregate demand.

Then there are the economy's labour shortages. As is true of most developed countries, as well as China, Germany's population is ageing. At 1.35 births per woman, fertility is well below the replacement rate of 2.1. Add to that increasing longevity, and Germany's dependency ratio – the proportion of dependents

(old and young) to the working-age population – is on the rise, straining social security and healthcare systems. Already, the labour force has levelled off at around 44mn, and unless something substantial changes – say, workforce participation or net migration increases significantly – it will begin to shrink within the coming decade.

The last time Germany faced such serious economic challenges, in the late 1990s, the government, in collaboration with industry and labour, carried out far-reaching reforms. This effort included a crucial structural shift: German industrial sectors moved to occupy the high-valued-added segments of supply chains, with other segments moving to lower-cost countries, including the emerging post-communist economies in Central and Eastern Europe. By 2006, Germany was outperforming other large European economies, and it continued to do so until 2017.

Replicating this success today would require Germany to move to the forefront of the digital transformation. Fortunately, Germany does not lack talent, entrepreneurial activity, or innovative capacity. BioNTech, headquartered in Mainz, is a leading developer of vaccines and cancer treatments, with a growing global footprint. Berlin, Munich, and Hamburg boast entrepreneurial ecosystems and innovation hubs. Forty-six unicorns in Germany – mostly operating in digital-technology-enabled sectors – have received funding from domestic and international venture-capital and private-equity firms.

But technological advances happen faster in very large, integrated markets, because the returns on costly upfront investments in innovation are higher when the total addressable market is bigger. This means that progress in Germany will depend significantly on European policy.

Some might argue that the main problem here is that the world economy is becoming more fragmented, more complicated, and less open – perhaps permanently. And this does create serious challenges, especially for an export-oriented industrial economy like Germany.

But an even bigger obstacle to digitally driven structural change in the economy, especially in Germany, is the growing digital-technology gap between the European Union and the other two global economic powerhouses, the United States and China. It might be tempting to downplay the importance of this gap, because divergences can appear in any sector over time and across countries. But digital technologies do not form just one sector; they are essential to the technological and structural transformation of every economic sector, including industrial manufacturing.

In his September 2024 report on European competitiveness, Mario Draghi, a former head of the European Central Bank and prime minister of Italy, examined the main causes of the EU's tech deficit. Perhaps inconveniently for Germany, some of them – for example, a dearth of basic research in science and technology – can be addressed only at the EU level, as they require centralised funding

and administration. Similarly, services-sector and capital-market integration – vital to enable Europe's innovators to reap the full benefits of its large economy – will require coordinated action across countries.

EU-level regulatory approaches might also need to be reconsidered. As it stands, the mega-platforms that support the largest cloud-computing systems – which generate spin-offs, fund basic research (especially in quantum computing, artificial intelligence, and AI applications in science), and support AI development – are located mostly in the US and China.

To be sure, major players – Microsoft Azure, Amazon Web Services, and Google – have established large data centres in Europe, including Germany, to serve local markets, leverage Europe's deep pools of scientific talent, and comply with EU data-protection rules and AI regulations. But there are no comparable home-grown entities. This has contributed to a regulatory and policy bias toward risk mitigation and data security, with less attention being paid to leveraging tech's upside potential and creating an enabling environment for digital structural transformation.

A final imperative for Europe – and particularly for Germany – is progress on the digital transformation of industrial sectors, including automobiles, where China's advances in electric-vehicle batteries and solar energy represent a huge competitive threat. This will require incumbent firms to overcome organisational inertia and let go of old mindsets and models. More important, it will require software engineering on a massive scale. But Europe does not currently have enough qualified people for these jobs. While an AI-fuelled surge in software-engineering productivity might help to ease this bottleneck, large amounts of engineering talent will still be essential. Changes to immigration policy can help here.

But there is cause for cautious optimism. The Chinese startup DeepSeek has just stunned the AI world by demonstrating that a cutting-edge large language model can be trained more cheaply, and with less computing power, than previously thought. This discovery potentially reduces the EU's deficit in the computing infrastructure required to support advanced AI development, thus creating an opportunity for Germany, and Europe more broadly, to close the gap with the world's current tech leaders. But success will be possible only if EU leaders, national governments, and industry work together to mobilise the required human capital and deliver the necessary investment, not least in digital infrastructure. – Project Syndicate

• Michael Spence, a Nobel laureate in economics, is Emeritus Professor of Economics and a former dean of the Graduate School of Business at Stanford University and a co-author (with Mohamed A El-Erian, Gordon Brown, and Reid Liddow) of Permacrisis: A Plan to Fix a Fractured World.





US President Donald Trump speaks to the media as he signs an executive order to create a US sovereign wealth fund, in the Oval Office of the White House, yesterday. (AFP)

Trump orders creation of sovereign wealth fund

Reuters
Washington

US President Donald Trump signed an executive order yesterday ordering the creation of a sovereign wealth fund within the next year, saying it could potentially buy the short video app TikTok.

Trump offered little in the way of detail and it was unclear how such a wealth fund would work. Typically such funds rely on a country's budget surplus to make investments, but the US operates at a deficit. Its creation also would likely require approval from Congress.

"We're going to create a lot of wealth for the fund," Trump told reporters. "And I think it's about time that this country had a sovereign wealth fund."

Trump had previously floated such a government investment vehicle as a presidential candidate, saying it could fund "great national endeavours" like infrastructure projects such as highways and airports, manufacturing, and medical research.

Administration officials did not say how the fund would operate or be financed, but Trump has previously said it could be funded by "tariffs and other intelligent things."

Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent told reporters the fund would be set up within the next 12 months.

"We're going to monetise the asset side of the US balance sheet for the American people," Bessent said. "There'll be a combination of liquid assets, assets that we have

in this country as we work to bring them out for the American people."

The Biden administration also was considering establishing such a fund prior to Trump's election in November, according to *The New York Times* and *Financial Times*.

Investors on Wall Street said the news came as a surprise.

"Creating a sovereign wealth fund suggests that a country has savings that will go up and can be allocated to this," said Colin Graham, head of multi-asset strategies at Robeco in London. "The economic rules of thumb don't add up."

There are over 90 such funds across the world managing over \$8tn in assets, according to the International Forum of Sovereign Wealth Funds.

In another surprise twist, Trump suggested the wealth fund could buy TikTok, whose fate has been up in the air since a law requiring its Chinese owner ByteDance to either sell it on national security grounds or face a ban took effect on January 19.

Trump, after taking office on January 20, signed an executive order seeking to delay by 75 days the enforcement of the law.

Trump has said that he was in talks with multiple people over TikTok's purchase and would likely have a decision on the app's future in February. The popular app has about 170mn American users.

"We're going to be doing something, perhaps with TikTok, and perhaps not," Trump said. "If we make the right deal, we'll do it. Otherwise, we won't...we might put that in the sovereign wealth fund."

Protests as Trump eyes merging USAID with State Department

Reuters
Washington

US President Donald Trump is considering merging the US Agency for International Development with the State Department to boost its efficiency and ensure its spending is in line with his administration's agenda, a senior White House official said yesterday.

"President Trump has entrusted Elon (Musk) to oversee the efficiency of this agency," said the official, speaking on condition of anonymity. He added that there were discussions about sending a notification to US Congress to inform lawmakers of the administration's plans.

Billionaire Musk is heading Trump's drive to cut wasteful spending within the federal government. But Musk's increasingly harsh accusations against USAID — many lodged without evidence — have raised questions about whether his political views are driving efforts to gut the agency.

The rush of events has also underlined Musk's powerful role in setting Trump's agenda. Last week, Musk's team at the Department of Government Efficiency gained access to the most sensitive payment systems at Treasury and, as Reuters reported, locked some federal personnel career employees out of their agency's own computers.

Hundreds of USAID programmes covering billions of dollars worth of lifesaving aid across the globe came to a grinding halt after Trump on January 20 ordered a freeze of most US foreign aid, saying he wanted to ensure it is aligned with his "America First" policy.

If USAID were put under the State Department, it would likely have dramatic consequences for the distribution of aid from the world's largest single donor, the United States.

Trump told reporters on Sunday that USAID has "been run by a bunch of radical lunatics." He added, "We're getting them out, and then we'll make a decision."

Musk said in a broadcast yesterday that USAID was "beyond repair" and that Trump agreed it should be shut down.

In the broadcast, Musk said he had discussed USAID in detail with Trump. "I want to be clear," Musk said. "I actually checked with him a few times. I said, 'Are you sure?' 'Yes!'"

US Secretary of State Marco Rubio told re-



People protest outside of the headquarters for USAID yesterday. (AFP)

porters in San Salvador that he was now the acting head of USAID, calling the agency "completely unresponsive" and accusing the staff there of being "unwilling to answer simple questions" about programmes.

Over the past week, mayhem has prevailed at USAID's offices in Washington, D.C., where dozens of staff have been put on leave. Over the weekend two senior security staff were also put on leave after refusing to provide classified documents to DOGE employees on site. Yesterday, USAID employees were told their headquarters in downtown Washington had been shut for the day.

"At the direction of the Agency leadership, the USAID headquarters at the Ronald Reagan building in Washington, DC will be closed to Agency personnel on Monday, February 3, 2025," said an internal e-mail to USAID staff, seen by Reuters. The White House official said employees were asked to stay home due to security concerns on property.

The row between DOGE staff and USAID triggered outrage among Democrats. A group of Democratic lawmakers said they will gather outside the USAID headquarters to protest the

closure, calling it "the Trump administration's and Elon Musk's illegal shutdown."

In fiscal year 2023, the US disbursed \$72bn of aid worldwide on everything from women's health in conflict zones to access to clean water, HIV/AIDS treatments, energy security and anti-corruption work. It provided 42% of all humanitarian aid tracked by the United Nations in 2024.

The State Department issued worldwide stop-work directives after Trump's freeze order, with the exception of emergency food assistance. Experts warned the move risks killing people. Three sources familiar with the matter told Reuters that USAID personal services contractors (PSC) — who carry out the bulk of the work in the agency's humanitarian bureau — have also been locked out of their government accounts.

"Without PSCs, there is no longer functionally a Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance in USAID. The waivers from Secretary of State Rubio for emergency food and other urgent assistance are a smokescreen and farce if there is no-one to make the awards happen," a USAID official said.

Prosecutor warns of legal risk for hindering Musk's efficiency effort

A federal prosecutor appointed by President Donald Trump asked Elon Musk for information about anyone trying to impede the work of the billionaire's government efficiency effort, warning of possible criminal sanctions, in a letter posted on platform X yesterday. Edward Martin, the interim US attorney in Washington, DC, said in the letter any action to threaten or confront employees of Musk's Department of Government Efficiency "may break numerous laws." "Let me assure you of this: we will pursue any and all legal action against anyone who impedes your work or threatens your people," reads the letter, which Martin posted on his personal X account.

Musk posted a thank you in response to Martin's message. The directive follows reports that career government officials sought to block DOGE employees from gaining access to sensitive information. The Trump administration removed two top security officials at the US Agency for International Development, a top Musk target, after they tried to stop DOGE representatives from gaining access to secure parts of the building. The security personnel were confronted by members of the US Marshals Service, Reuters reported. *The New York Times* reported that a career Treasury Department official unsuccessfully resisted efforts by the DOGE team to gain

access to the agency's payment system. Martin wrote in his letter, dated yesterday, that his staff worked with the DOGE team over the weekend, without specifying the nature of the interaction. Martin asked Musk to refer "questionable conduct" for potential investigation. The Trump administration has moved to exert greater control over the Justice Department and its investigations. Last week the department said it was probing the release by an upstate New York sheriff's office of an immigrant living in the US illegally, in what appeared to be its first use of a new policy to target state and local agencies that do not comply with Trump's

directives. Musk, the world's richest person and the chief executive of Tesla and SpaceX as well as owner of X, is leading an effort to dramatically cut the US government. He has already offered sweeping buyouts to the federal workforce. Martin, as interim US attorney, oversaw the dismissal of all pending criminal cases tied to the January 6, 2021, attack on the US Capitol following a directive from Trump. He has made several public statements supporting Trump and denigrating his political opponents, breaking with tradition for US attorneys, who typically avoid any statement that could be perceived as political.

US arms shipments to Kyiv briefly paused before resuming

Reuters
Washington

US shipments of weapons into Ukraine were briefly paused in recent days before resuming over the weekend as the Trump administration debated its policy towards Kyiv, according to four people briefed on the matter.

Shipments restarted after the White House pulled back on its initial assessment to stop all aid to Ukraine, two of the sources said.

There are factions inside the administration that are at odds over the extent to which the US should continue to aid Kyiv's war effort with weapons from US stocks, said one of the people, a US official.

The White House did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Halting the flow of US weapons would hinder Kyiv's ability to fight, and put it in a less advantaged negotiation position in peace talks.

It is unclear if the Trump administration will formally acknowledge the pause and subsequent resumption of shipments.

In his final months in office, Biden approved on average more than \$1bn in US weapons pulled from US stocks for Ukraine. Even more if new contracts for future production are included.

Ukraine weapons assistance from the US has been facilitated in part through the use of Presidential Drawdown Authority, which allows the President to quickly transfer weapons and equipment

Trump seeks payback with rare earths

US President Donald Trump said yesterday he wants Ukraine to supply the United States with rare earth minerals as a form of payment for financially supporting the country's war efforts against Russia.

Trump, speaking to reporters at the White House, said Ukraine was willing, adding that he wants "equalisation" from Ukraine for Washington's "close to \$300bn" in support.

"We're telling Ukraine they have very valuable rare earths," Trump said. "We're looking to do a deal with Ukraine where they're going to secure what we're giving them with their rare earths and other things."

It was not immediately clear if Trump was using the term "rare earths" to refer to all types of critical minerals or just to rare earths. Rare earths are a group of 17 metals used to make magnets that turn power into motion for electric vehicles, cellphones and other electronics. There are no known substitutes.

The US Geological Survey considers 50 minerals to be critical for the country's economy and national defence, including several types of rare earths, nickel and lithium.

Ukraine contains large deposits of uranium, lithium and titanium, although none are considered to be among the world's five biggest by volume and the US has its own untapped reserves of those and other critical minerals.

from US stocks to foreign countries without the need for congressional approval. Since Donald Trump took office, no packages have been announced, but shipments authorised by Joe Biden were thought to continue to flow — and would for months — due to the backlog.

The revelation of the brief pause is the first outward sign of the intensity of the debate within the Trump administration.

The Trump administration has not sent a clear message on whether it will continue to provide significant military assistance to

Ukraine in its fight against Russia's full-scale invasion.

Since the start of the conflict, the US has provided Ukraine with billions of dollars' worth of military aid, including artillery systems, ammunition, and anti-tank missiles.

US assistance has had a significant impact on the conflict, with Ukrainian forces using the equipment to inflict significant losses on Russian troops and equipment.

The drawdown of US stocks has also raised concerns about the long-term sustainability of the US's military aid efforts.



US Secretary of State Marco Rubio (left) tours the workshops of aircraft maintenance firm Aeroman in San Luis Talpa, El Salvador. (AFP)

Panama to address concerns on canal after Trump threats, says Rubio

US Secretary of State Marco Rubio yesterday voiced optimism that Panama would address concerns over Chinese influence in the Panama Canal, bringing down the tone after President Donald Trump's threats to seize the vital waterway.

A day after he demanded through a statement that Panama take immediate steps, Rubio took a more diplomatic approach, acknowledging the issue was "delicate" for Panama and praising its efforts.

"It was a worthwhile visit and very respectful. It is one that I think is going to achieve potentially good things that assuage concerns we have," Rubio told reporters after arriving from Panama in El Salvador. "Time will tell — we'll see — but I feel good about it," he said.

Rubio praised Panamanian President Jose Raul Mulino's decision to exit the Belt and Road Initiative, China's signature infrastructure-building programme.

Mulino, speaking to reporters Sunday, said that Panama would not renew its membership and would look whether it can leave earlier than planned.

Rubio called it a "good" step, noting that Panama — which recognised Beijing over Taiwan during Trump's first term — becomes the first country in Latin America to ditch the Belt and Road.

Rubio said to expect more announcements in the coming days. He suggested an agreement on US concerns over Panama charging US military vessels that go through the canal even though Washington is obliged to defend the waterway, the vital link between the Atlantic and Pacific coasts.

Trump in his inaugural address said the United States would be "taking back" the canal — built more than a century ago by Washington with Afro-Caribbean labour and handed back at the end of 1999 to Panama. Just Sunday, Trump warned of "very powerful" actions against Panama. Rubio praised Panama as a "great partner" on Trump's top priority of stopping migration.

Taliban kill Pak police polio escort

The Pakistani Taliban claimed the killing of a police officer as he travelled yesterday to guard polio vaccinators on the first day of a nationwide immunisation effort after a year of rising cases.

The officer was travelling to guard polio vaccinators in the area of Jamrud town in northwestern Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province when he was killed, local police official Zarmat Khan told AFP. "Two motorcycle riders opened fire on him," he said. "The constable died instantly at the scene." Pakistan and neighbouring Afghanistan are the only countries where polio is endemic and militants have for decades targeted vaccination teams and their security escorts.

The Pakistani Taliban in a statement claimed responsibility for the "targeted attack" and said militants also "seized" the slain officer's weapon.

Pakistan reported at least 73 polio infections in 2024, compared to just six cases in 2023. The vaccination campaign which started yesterday is the first of the year and is due to last a week.

"Despite the incident, the polio vaccination drive in the area remains ongoing," Khan said. Abdul Hameed Afridi, another senior police official in the area, also confirmed details of the attack and said officers have "launched an investigation".

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif acknowledged the violence in a statement from his office, saying "the anti-polio campaign will continue with full vigour".

Chopard showcases elegant jewellery at 21st DJWE

Chopard is showcasing a collection of exquisite high jewellery, elegant fine jewellery, and unique timepieces, including exclusive watches crafted specifically for Qatar at the Doha Jewellery & Watches Exhibition (DJWE) 2025, running until tomorrow (Wednesday) at the Doha Exhibition and Convention Centre (DECC).

Returning for an exciting 21st edition, visitors can explore a remarkable collection of exclusive Qatar edition watches, meticulously handcrafted in Geneva for the fair.

While the L'Heure du Diamant collection undoubtedly shines as the highlight of the booth, visitors can also marvel at a breathtaking array of Haute Joaillerie creations from the latest Red Carpet Collection by Caroline Scheufele, unveiled at the latest Cannes Film Festival.



Along the Haute Joaillerie, all the Maison's iconic jewellery collections are to be rediscovered from the renowned Happy Diamonds and Happy Hearts to the latest Ice Cube collection. Watches include



the iconic Happy Sport, Alpine Eagle and unique Imperiale watches for ladies, whilst gentlemen will find excitement in the sporty Mille Miglia, exquisite timepieces from the Alpine Eagle and LUC collection.



Since its founding in 1860, Chopard has been crafting creations exuding contemporary charm, synonymous with ethics and emotions, while perpetuating a heritage rich in tradition and artisanal savoir-faire. Driven by a resolutely positive vision of the world, the Maison accompanies the precious moments of fulfilled men and women for whom watches and jewellery are talismans celebrating lasting Joie de Vivre.

In harmony with this vision,

Chopard acts through the prism of three fundamental elements: craftsmanship, ensured by the work of passionate master artisans; abundant and generous creativity; and ethics.

The Scheufele family, which has been guiding the Maison from generation to generation, is firmly convinced that contemporary luxury must necessarily be responsible.

In 2013, these convictions led co-presidents Caroline and Karl-Friedrich Scheufele to commit the

Maison to its 'Journey to Sustainable Luxury'. Today, Chopard uses 100% ethical gold for the production of its gold watches and jewellery, as well as manufacturing its own Lucent Steel – with a recycling rate of at least 80% – for its steel timepieces.

More than 50 professions are mastered at Chopard's three production sites, where particular attention is paid to in-house training, passing on savoir-faire and perpetuating artistic crafts.

Devji Aurum premieres Gwenllian Collection

Devji Aurum, one of the oldest fabricators of exquisite jewellery in the world, has announced its collaboration with renowned Welsh fashion designer, Jayne Pierson, and go-to-market advisory firm, nuForj, via the Gwenllian Collection.

This is the first time in Devji Aurum's over 70-year history that it has formed a design collaboration from outside the region and with the calibre of such a renowned designer.

The Gwenllian Collection is a limited edition and rare set of collars, cuffs, earrings and rings. The items are exquisitely crafted in Welsh gold, diamonds, precious lapis, and malachite and feature Welsh triskelion motifs and Celtic knots, each signed by Pierson, serialised, and intended to be worn as an amulet to protect the wearer.

Devji Aurum CEO Mahesh Devji said Pierson's evocatively Welsh designs meshed with his company's own legacy.

"We believe jewellery should not simply be adornments – they should be time capsules that tell stories from the soul. Indeed, Jayne's designs tell timeless stories of Welsh ages past that also speak to us in modern times, reflecting the spiritual heart of Welsh culture. They are truly fantastic," he said.

The Gwenllian Collection builds on Pierson's reputation for avant-garde design inspired by Celtic mythology,

Welsh heritage, and a blending of history and the future. It was named for Gwenllian ferch Gruffydd, a 12th-century Welsh warrior princess, the only known medieval era woman known to have led a Welsh army into battle.

"In working with Mahesh's team, I really loved the emotional intensity of the collaboration, both parties approaching it without any preconceived notions of where it might lead us.

"I am really excited by the collision of cultures represented by this collection – Welsh, Arabian and Indian. The end result are pieces that are incredibly meaningful and people just become overwhelmed with emotion simply trying them on," Pierson said.

nuForj managing principal Rudy N Vogel said: "Knowing the uncommon vision and craftsmanship of Mahesh and the distinctive creativity and novel design of Jayne, I knew from the start that the outcome of this utterly unique collaboration would result in something very special that is the Gwenllian collection."

The Gwenllian Collection is available through Devji Aurum. Visit www.devjiaurum.com



Vacheron Constantin celebrates its 270-year 'Quest for Excellence'



Vacheron Constantin, the luxury Swiss watchmaking Maison with 270 years of uninterrupted history and dedication to excellence, has announced its participation in the highly-anticipated Doha Jewellery & Watches Exhibition 2025. This year, the Maison is inviting guests to embark on an extraordinary journey into the art of high watchmaking as it celebrates its 270th anniversary under the theme 'The Quest'. Inspired by this remarkable milestone, the exhibition space seamlessly blends heritage and innovation, offering visitors an immersive experience into the Maison's exceptional craftsmanship.

A key highlight is the Historiques 222, a contemporary reimagining of the iconic model affectionately known as the 'Jumbo'. This celebrated timepiece features a 37mm stainless steel case, fluted bezel, and integrated bracelet, paired with a blue dial that embodies timeless elegance and modern sophistication. The caseback, which bears a signature representing Vacheron Constantin's 270th

anniversary, has been fitted with a transparent sapphire crystal to reveal the in-house Calibre 2455/2. Guests will also have the opportunity to explore a curated selection of Vacheron Constantin's latest creations alongside rare treasures from its Heritage collection, each reflecting the Maison's dedication to technical mastery and artistic sensibility. For an enhanced experience, the exhibition space features private rooms, offering a refined setting where clients and collectors can explore bespoke services, witness the artistry of fine watchmaking, and delve into the Maison's storied legacy. "Marking our 270th anniversary at the Doha Jewellery & Watches Exhibition is a truly momentous occasion. We are honoured to invite clients, collectors, and enthusiasts to embark on 'The Quest', a journey that celebrates our enduring commitment to heritage, innovation, and the artistry of fine watchmaking," said Christophe Ramel, regional director of Vacheron Constantin Middle East.



Sartoro Genève brings iconic high jewellery to DJWE

Swiss-based Maison, Sartoro Genève, renowned for its dedication to fine craftsmanship and timeless designs, has announced its return to the prestigious Doha Jewellery and Watches Exhibition (DJWE) 2025.

The Maison's participation underscores its continued commitment to excellence and artistry on a global stage. This year, Sartoro Genève has unveiled a carefully curated selection from its celebrated collections, with a special focus on its iconic core lines, Trilogie and Dualité. These collections, which have come to define Sartoro's vision, will take centre stage, offering a refined experience for connoisseurs of high and fine jewellery.

The Trilogie collection, known for its bold, architectural beauty and innovative diamond cuts, will showcase new interpretations, pushing the boundaries of design and continuing Sartoro's legacy of sophistication and innovation. In parallel, the Dualité collection – beloved for its harmonious fusion of contrasting elements – will feature a range of new pieces that embody Sartoro's relentless pursuit of artistic perfection, seamlessly blending tradition with contemporary elegance.

Arto Artinian, co-founder and CEO of Sartoro Genève, said: "We are incredibly proud to return to the Doha Jewellery and Watches Exhibition for its 21st edition. For us, DJWE is more than just an exhibition – it is an opportunity to celebrate craftsmanship while also meaningfully connecting with those who truly appreciate the artistry behind every creation."

Saro Artinian, co-founder and creative director of Sartoro Genève, said: "This year, we are excited to present new creations that push the boundaries of design while honouring the timeless elegance that our collections stand for – ensuring that Sartoro's creations not only stand out in the present but also remain relevant and cherished for generations to come."

With its distinctive blend of tradition, innovation, and artistry, Sartoro Genève is poised to deliver an



unforgettable experience at this year's exhibition, further cementing its position as a leader in the world of Haute Joaillerie.

