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SPORT | Page 1

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Amir offers condolences to Iran president

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani sent a cable of condolences to President of the Islamic Republic of Iran Dr Masoud Pezeshkian on the victims of the explosion at Bandar Abbas port in southern Iran, wishing a speedy recovery for the injured. His Highness the Deputy Amir Sheikh Abdullah bin Hamad al-Thani also sent a cable of condolences to President Pezeshkian on the victims of the explosion. **(QNA)**

UN lauds Qatar's role in DRC-M23 joint declaration

The Spokesperson for the United Nations Secretary-General Stephane Dujarric stated that the United Nations Organisation Stabilisation Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) has lauded Qatar's role in facilitating the signing of the joint declaration between representatives of the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and the Congo River Alliance March 23 Movement (M23) in Doha. He noted that the UN mission welcomed the signing of the declaration, describing it as an important step toward de-escalating the conflict. The mission emphasised that the agreement reflects the shared commitment of both parties to establish a truce. **(QNA)**

Abbas names aide as vice-president

Palestinian president Mahmud Abbas appointed a close aide as the first ever vice president of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) yesterday, positioning him as a potential successor to the veteran leader. Hussein al-Sheikh was appointed by Abbas, 89, after the vice-presidency position was created during a convention held in Ramallah this week. Sheikh, 64, is a veteran leader of Abbas's Fatah movement, which dominates the PA, and is considered close to the president. He spent more than 10 years in Israeli jails in the late 1970s and early 80s. **Page 8**

PM, Sheikh Thani convey Amir's condolences on passing of Pope Francis

HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani conveyed the condolences of His Highness the Amir, Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani, to His Eminence Cardinal Kevin Joseph Farrell, Camerlengo of the Holy Roman Catholic Church, on the passing of His Holiness Pope Francis of the Vatican. The condolences were as well conveyed by HE Sheikh Thani bin Hamad al-Thani. This came during the participation of HE Sheikh Mohammed and HE Sheikh Thani in the official funeral of Pope Francis, held in Rome yesterday. **(QNA) Page 6**

Global Security Forum 2025 begins in Doha tomorrow

Qatar will host the seventh edition of the Global Security Forum (GSF 2025) scheduled from April 28-30 at the Raffles and Fairmont – Katara Towers in Lusail City. Held under the patronage of HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani, the forum will carry the theme ‘The Impact of Non-State Actors on Global Security’. The event will convene world leaders, senior government officials, security professionals, academics, and civil society actors to examine the growing influence of non-state entities on global peace and stability. As the international security environment evolves, the forum will explore how actors, such as transnational terrorist groups, private military companies, criminal syndicates, and digital disruptors, are challenging state-based security frameworks and reshaping geopolitical dynamics.



GLOBAL SECURITY FORUM

منتدى الأمن العالمي

Confirmed speakers and attendees include ministers, national security advisers, intelligence officials, internationally recognised experts, senior academics, and renowned media personalities from around the world.

In parallel, GSF 2025 will host a diverse series of side events, with many focusing on community engagement, emerging technology, and regional diplomacy. These include discussions on post-conflict reconstruction in Syria, artificial intelligence (AI) in security, mediation frameworks under international humanitarian law, and a special session hosted by Qatar University on global governance.

As in previous years, the findings and key takeaways from

GSF 2025 will be compiled into a strategic insights report. This will serve as a resource for global stakeholders, offering forward-looking policy recommendations across the domains of counter-terrorism, cybersecurity, international diplomacy, and more.

The forum is organised by the Qatar International Academy for Security Studies (QIASS) and The Soufan Centre, in co-operation with several high-level institutions serving as strategic partners, including the UN Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED), New America, Arizona State University, Defence One, and The Soufan Group.

This year's edition continues to reinforce Qatar's position as an essential hub for strategic security dialogue and a catalyst for cross-border co-operation.

Audiences around the world will be able to join the GSF 2025 virtually through the forum's official platform at www.globalsecurityforum.com

Modern approach to Orientalism at Doha conference

More than 300 researchers from 50 countries participating in the International Conference on Orientalism

By Tawfik Lamari

Staff Reporter

The inaugural edition of the International Conference on Orientalism kicked off yesterday in Doha under the theme “Towards a Balanced Civilizational Dialogue”.

Bringing together a select group of leading orientalists, intellectuals, and researchers from around the globe, the conference marks a pivotal moment in the field of Oriental studies. It transcends traditional frameworks, envisioning a contemporary approach that fosters profound civilisational dialogue.

Organised by the Ministry of Education and Higher Education and QatarDebate Center, in partnership with the Permanent Committee for Organising Conferences at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the event is held in collaboration with prominent academic institutions, including Qatar University, Hamad Bin Khalifa University, and the Doha Institute for Graduate Studies. It also features partnerships with leading international institutions such as Leiden University (Netherlands), the Institute for Advanced Studies (Sarajevo), and Dagestan State University (Russia).

In her opening address, HE the Minister of Education and Higher Education Lolwah bint Rashid AlKhater, also the Chair of the Conference, articulated the intellectual vision guiding the event, stating: “Today, we gather to create a safe space for profound and candid intellectual discussions without sensitivities. Through our dialogues, we aspire to achieve the enchanting balance that Tolstoy masterfully depicted in his epic *War and Peace*, by striking a thoughtful balance between popular sen-

HE the Minister of Education and Higher Education Lolwah bint Rashid AlKhater addressing the inaugural session yesterday.

timent and specialised literary critique.”

She further elaborated on the intriguing connection between the conference and the literary masterpiece by Russian author Leo Tolstoy.

The conference also featured an address by Guest of Honour, Professor Ibrahim Kalin, a distinguished Turkish academic and political figure, followed by an exclusive, high-level dialogue session moderated by renowned journalist Sami Zeidan.

As part of the conference activities, a prominent panel discussion entitled “Towards a Balanced Civilizational Dialogue” was held, featuring: Former Minister of Culture of Lebanon, Professor Ghassan Salame; Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Co-operation of The Gambia, Dr Mamadou Tangara; and Director of the Middle East Centre at the University of Oxford, Professor Eugene Rogan. The session was moderated by journalist Jamal Elshayyal and addressed critical questions surrounding the session's theme, exploring ways to preserve cultural values while avoiding conflict. **To Page 4**

Iran blast kills 14, over 700 injured

A huge blast probably caused by the explosion of chemical materials killed at least 14 people and injured more than 700 yesterday at Iran's biggest port, Bandar Abbas, Iranian state media reported.

The explosion hit the Shahid Rajaei section of the port. Hossein Zafari, a spokesperson for Iran's crisis management organisation, appeared to blame the explosion on poor storage of chemicals in containers at Shahid Rajaei.

However, an Iranian government spokesperson said that although chemicals had likely caused the blast, it was not yet possible to determine the exact reason. Iran's President Masoud Pezeshkian ordered an investigation of the incident and sent his minister of interior, who said efforts were still ongoing to extinguish the fire and prevent it from spreading to other areas.

Located near the strategic Strait of Hormoz, Shahid Rajaei port is Iran's biggest container hub, handling a majority of the country's container goods. **Page 7**

Smoke from the explosion is seen at the Shahid Rajaei port in Bandar Abbas, yesterday.

Hamas open to 5-yr Gaza truce, one-time hostages release

AFP

Cairo

Hamas is open to an agreement to end the war in Gaza that would see all hostages released and secure a five-year truce, an official said yesterday as the Palestinian resistance movement's negotiators held talks with mediators.

A Hamas delegation was in Cairo discussing with Egyptian mediators ways out of the 18-month war, while, on the ground, rescuers said an Israeli strike on a family home in Gaza City killed at least 10 people.

Nearly eight weeks into an Israeli aid blockade, the UN says food and medical supplies are running out.

The Hamas official said the group “is ready for an exchange of prisoners in a single batch and a truce for five years”.

Hamas had sought talks on the second phase but Israel wanted

Children play amid the rubble of destroyed buildings in Gaza City, yesterday.

the first phase extended.

Israel demands the return of all hostages seized in the 2023 attack, and Hamas's disarmament, which the group has rejected as a “red line”.

Israel pounded Gaza again yesterday, with rescuers reporting the deaths of 19 people.

In Gaza City, in the territory's north, the civil defence rescue agency said a strike on the Khour

family home killed 10 people and left an estimated 20 more trapped in the debris.

Elsewhere across Gaza, nine more people were killed, rescuers said.

Qatar, the US and Egypt brokered the truce which began on January 19 and enabled a surge in aid, alongside exchanges of hostages and Palestinian prisoners held by Israel.



**THE VIEW
HOSPITAL**

In Affiliation With
**Cedars
Sinai**

The View Hospital Marks Patient Experience Week with a Bold Step Forward



A specialized seminar held to inspire, educate, and elevate the future of patient experience

“Patient experience is no longer a side initiative—it’s a strategic priority that begins at the very top,” said Dr. Fatih Mehmet Gul, Chief Executive Officer of The View Hospital. “As a leader, it’s essential for me to remain close to both patients and care teams. That’s why we’ve prioritized direct communication channels, invested in smart tools like the patient portal and mobile app, and continuously implement real-time service enhancements based on patient feedback. Every interaction counts, and every idea—from leadership to the front line—contributes to shaping care that is seamless, responsive, and genuinely centered around the patient.”

“This seminar is a continuation of our unwavering commitment to that vision. At The View, we take pride in being at the forefront of this dialogue, especially through our ongoing collaboration with Cedars-Sinai, as we work together to elevate the standards of person-centered care across the region.”

In a milestone event for healthcare collaboration in the region, The View Hospital, in affiliation with Cedars-Sinai, hosted a transformative seminar this week focused on enhancing patient-centered care through global best practices. Held on April 17, the seminar brought together healthcare professionals, executives, and experience leaders from across Qatar and beyond for a full day of knowledge sharing, reflection, and strategy.



The seminar, titled “Elevating Patient Experience”, was designed to provide more than inspiration—it delivered real-world tools and strategies that attendees could immediately apply in their departments.



The agenda featured interactive masterclasses and ‘Train the Trainer’ sessions led by Alan Dubovsky, Vice President and Chief Patient Experience Officer at Cedars-Sinai, and Max Nicholson, Associate Director of Patient Experience.

Opening the event, Dr. Fatih Mehmet Gul, CEO of The View Hospital, emphasized the need to redefine excellence beyond clinical outcomes.

The program emphasized communication, emotional intelligence, service recovery, and building a culture where patient experience is everyone’s responsibility. Participants joined small-group discussions, roleplay exercises, and collaborative brainstorming to develop skills that will strengthen both teamwork and care delivery.

A highly engaging Q&A interactive session gave attendees the opportunity to raise real-world questions and learn directly from the Cedars-Sinai team, while a fun and interactive “Patient Experience Innovation Challenge” encouraged participants to think creatively about solving everyday experience gaps. The challenge brought a lively, competitive spirit to the day and showcased just how powerful collective thinking can be in shaping better care.



Nasser Al Naimi, Chief of Patient Experience at Hamad Medical Corporation and Director of the Hamad Healthcare Quality Institute, delivered a powerful keynote on the future of patient experience in Qatar.

“I’ve seen firsthand how fear surrounds patients, even in something as routine as a hospital visit,” said Nasser Al Naimi “That fear—of not coming back home—is real, and it’s why we’re committed to person-centered care. When patients are involved in decisions, when they’re truly heard, it changes everything.”

He added, “This seminar is an important step in that journey—bringing minds together to elevate the voice of the patient and build care models that truly respect their needs. At HMC, we’re proud that by the end of this year, nine of our hospitals will be accredited in person-centered care. It’s not just a goal—it’s a responsibility.”



The afternoon continued with a private, invite-only workshop, offering a deeper dive into advanced patient experience practices. The session began with a focused discussion on the Patient and Family Advisory Committee (PFAC), exploring the vital role that patient voices play in shaping healthcare policies and service delivery. Later, members of The View Hospital and Cedars-Sinai’s patient experience teams took part in an exclusive ‘Train the Trainers’ (TOT) masterclass, designed to empower frontline leaders with the tools, confidence, and frameworks needed to lead internal transformation and embed a sustainable culture of patient-first care.

“This was not a one-time event,” said Farah Aboul Housn, Director of Patient Experience at The View Hospital. “This is



part of a long-term movement to lead with heart, to listen more deeply, and to deliver care that stays with patients long after they leave our doors.”

At the end of the Patient Experience Seminar, a simple yet profound question was posed:

“What does patient-centered care really mean?”
The answers were not theoretical or rehearsed—they came straight from the heart, reflecting real experiences and deeply held beliefs.

Dr. Jassim Fakhro, Medical Director of Qatari Physicians, The View Hospital, Qatar, shared his perspective, saying: “When I provide exceptional care to a patient, it means they return to me—again and again—because they trust the experience and feel assured that their health is in safe hands.”

Dr. Aesha Al-Harmi, Dentist, Dubai Health, UAE:
“Patient-centered care starts with us. With you, with me, with our families and with the entire community.”

“Every detail matters,” said **Lama Jibail**, Deputy General Manager, AL Sahel General Hospital Lebanon: “It’s the small things that build trust—and that trust is what ultimately drives high patient satisfaction.”

Adan Dubovsky, Chief Experience Officer, Cedars-Sinai, USA, emphasized the importance of partnership in care, stating: “Patient-centered care means no decision is made without the patient and their caregivers being part of it. This shared responsibility is what makes the experience truly meaningful—and truly human.”

Different voices. Diverse backgrounds. Yet all united by a single truth: that real care isn’t just built on protocols and systems—it begins with listening, is shaped by empathy, and endures through compassion. It’s a human journey, long before it becomes a clinical one. As part of its ongoing affiliation with Cedars-Sinai, The View Hospital continues to lead initiatives that redefine quality, compassion, and innovation in healthcare—not just in Qatar, but across the wider region.

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HMC launches study to find ways to end shisha smoking

QNA
Doha

In a significant move toward tackling the increasing rate of shisha smoking, Hamad Medical Corporation (HMC)'s Tobacco Control Center - WHO Collaborating Center has announced the launch of the first clinical study of its kind in Qatar and the region.

The study, conducted in collaboration with the Qatar Research, Development and Innovation Council, aims to evaluate the most effective methods to help individuals quit shisha smoking. The research initiative comes as part of national efforts to prevent tobacco use and support healthier lifestyles in the country.

The Tobacco Control Center's 2019 survey showed that 25.2% of adults in Qatar use tobacco products, with shisha ranking as the second most prevalent kind

at 8.3%. These statistics underpinned the decision to carry out this study and the findings demonstrated the critical need for targeted clinical interventions aimed at quitting shisha smoking.

The initiative specifically targets the citizens and residents in Qatar aged 18 and above who are regular shisha users. The study team is actively recruiting participants through field visits to government offices, hospitals, universities, and primary health-care centres.

Director of the Tobacco Control Center, Dr Ahmad Mohamed al-Mulla, stressed the importance of addressing persistent misunderstandings within the community.

"Despite Qatar's strict tobacco control laws, such as Law No 10 of 2016 and ongoing awareness campaigns, many people continue to believe that shisha is less harmful than cigarettes. Scientific evidence proves otherwise,

shisha smoking exposes users to high levels of nicotine and toxic substances, often exceeding those of a single cigarette in just one session. Moreover, withdrawal symptoms experienced by shisha users during cessation mirror those of cigarette smokers, and the addictive nature of shisha tends to increase over time, making quitting very difficult."

Dr al-Mulla added that the findings of the study will help shape data-driven national policies for tobacco cessation and contribute to improving public health.

"We believe this research will be crucial in providing scientifically validated treatment options and enhancing the quality of life for individuals looking to quit shisha smoking."

Meanwhile, HMC urged all shisha users in Qatar to take part in this significant study, which represents a vital step toward a tobacco-free future.

Modern approach to Orientalism

From Page 1

The discussion offered a valuable opportunity to open essential conversations about balanced civilisational communication and its role in building stronger relationships across sectors.

In his statement, Prof Mahmoud Hamza, Chair of the Scientific Committee, emphasised: "This is the first conference of its kind in the Arab world, focusing primarily on 'New Orientalism', a trend that has emerged over the past five decades. It moves beyond the classical Orientalist focus on religion, culture, and history, to include the study of political, economic, and social issues in the East, particularly the Arab world."

Offering a rich programme that combines academic depth with humanistic engagement, the conference includes specialised scholarly sessions, alongside cultural events celebrating the diversity and richness of participant backgrounds. Youth dialogue sessions, amplifying the voice of the future, aim to active-




ly involve the next generation in civilisational dialogue and cross-cultural engagement.

More than 300 researchers from 50 countries are participating in the conference, including prominent figures such as Dr Jose Puerta (Spain); Dr Paolo Branca (Italy); Dr George Gregory (Romania); Dr Dmitry Mikul'sky (Russia); and Dr Said Mailzi (China) in addition to eminent scholars from Qatari universities and institutions.

With its goal of reshaping the intellectual landscape surrounding Orientalism, the conference seeks to reinterpret and analyse

the concept through a contemporary lens; focusing on fostering dialogue between civilisations and dismantling persistent stereotypes. By promoting open scholarly encounters, it aims to move beyond ideological tensions and biases towards a more rigorous scientific inquiry, building constructive communication among human societies.

Hosting this conference is a testament to Qatar's leading role in promoting cultural and civilisational dialogue across the globe, affirming its position as an international hub for thought, culture, and education.



Tender - Waseef

Waseef Asset Management (Waseef) would like to invite competent Service Providers for the below Open Tenders:

Tender Number	Subject	Bid Bond (QAR)	Non-refundable Tender Fee (QAR)	Bid Submission Closing Date
GTC/WSF/BAB/RHR/23/2025	TENDER FOR THE SUPPLY & INSTALLATION OF INTERMEDIATE RAIL & WALL MOUNTED HANDRAIL IN BARWA AL BARAHA LABOR CAMP	45,000	500	May 25, 2025
GTC/WSF/WP/25/2025	TENDER FOR THE PROVISION OF WATERPROOFING WORKS IN WET AREAS FOR VARIOUS PROJECTS MANAGED BY WASEEF	40,000	500	May 25, 2025
GTC/WSF/AKC/GSW/26/2025	TENDER FOR CALL-OFF AGREEMENT FOR RE-INSTATEMENT OF GROUND SETTLEMENT WORK AT AL KHOR COMMUNITY	20,000	500	May 25, 2025
GTC/WSF/AKC/SLP/27/2025	TENDER FOR REMOVAL, SUPPLY, INSTALLATION, TESTING & COMMISSIONING OF STREET LIGHT POLES WITH LIGHT FITTINGS AT AL KHOR COMMUNITY	20,000	500	May 25, 2025
GTC/WSF/BAS/SCP/28/2025	TENDER FOR UPGRADATION OF 11KV SWITCHGEAR CHILLER STARTER PANEL AT BARWA AL SADD PROJECT	15,000	500	May 25, 2025


The Tender Document will be available from April 27, 2025 onwards upon submission of the below documentation to tender@waseef.qa.

To collect please provide the following:


- Authorization Letter on Company letterhead, copy of Commercial Registration and valid Identification of the representative.
- Bank deposit slip carrying tender number and subject details. Tender fee shall be deposited to Account Name - Waseef Asset Management Co., Account Number 0002-105222-200 with Masraf Al Rayan Bank.

To collect please provide the following:

- Bidders should submit a bid bond issued by a bank operating in the State of Qatar and valid for 120 days from the closing date.
- Technical and Commercial offers must be submitted in separate sealed envelopes and delivered to the below-mentioned address: GTC Secretary, 10th floor, Waseef Head Office, Al Owaina Tower, Old Salata, Museum Park Street, Doha, Qatar.



LET US MANAGE YOUR WORLD




QNL launches 'Library in Miniature' in Al Khor

Qatar National Library (QNL) has introduced the first book-borrowing station of its kind in Qatar, letting library members in Al Khor browse and borrow books with ease and convenience. The initiative is essentially a library in miniature and marks a significant step in the library's ongoing efforts to promote literacy and accessibility and bring QNL services closer to the community. The book-borrowing station operates like a vending machine but is entirely free for members. Borrowers can select up to six books at a time, just as they would at the Library itself. The first station has been installed on the ground floor of Al Khor Mall near the main entrance and is the first of more planned installations across Qatar. "The launch of our first book borrowing station is a milestone in our mission to make knowledge more accessible to the community," said QNL's Director of Research and Learning Services Katia Medawar, adding: "By taking our services beyond the library's walls, we are expanding opportunities for readers to engage with our collections, encouraging a culture of literacy and lifelong learning across Qatar." To borrow a book, library members simply swipe their card, or enter their membership number, and enter their password, after which they can browse the station's catalogue and select their desired book. The selection of books available will be regularly updated to ensure a diverse and dynamic reading experience for users. The service is available during regular mall hours, providing added convenience. The initiative is part of Qatar National Library's broader vision to create a more inclusive and culturally enriched society and aligns with its mission to foster lifelong learning while offering a more efficient and accessible borrowing experience. **(QNA)**

QCH: Dhul-Qi'dah to begin on April 29

Qatar Calendar House experts have announced that according to their calculations Tuesday, April 29, will mark the astronomical beginning of the Hijri month of Dhul-Qi'dah 1446 AH, while Monday, April 28, will be the completion of the month of Shawwal. Executive Director of Sheikh Abdullah Al-Ansari Complex, Engineer Faisal al-Ansari, said that the crescent of Dhul-Qi'dah 1446 AH will be born on Sunday, April 27 (the day of observation), at 10:32pm Doha local time (7:32pm UTC). He added that since the crescent will not be born before sunset on Sunday, it would be impossible to sight the Dhul-Qi'dah crescent that evening over Qatar or most Arab and Islamic countries. It is a well-established astronomical fact that the moon's movement around Earth determines the beginnings and endings of lunar (Hijri) months, while the Earth's movement around the sun determines the beginnings and endings of solar (Gregorian) months. **(QNA)**





QatarEnergy LNG
Tender Invitation


No.	TENDER NUMBER / DESCRIPTION	TENDER ISSUE PERIOD	TENDER FEE (QAR)	TENDER BOND (QAR)	TENDER CLOSING DATE
1	LTC/C/MNT/7073/25 INSULATION SERVICES FOR INSPECTION ON CALL OFF BASIS	24/04/2025 to 10/05/2025	0	500,000	19/05/2025

Scope of Work:
Company's onshore facility requires Insulation Services for Inspection and associated scaffolding works on call-off basis. Contractor shall perform the work by providing qualified, and dedicated resources including supply of materials, tools, equipment's, etc; The duration of Contract shall be five (05) years with a sole option for Company to extend it for further up to two (02) years.

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

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

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




Al Jazeera Media Network announces the following tender:

Sr. No.	Tender Ref. No.	Description	Tender Bond (QAR)	Tender Fee Non-Refundable (QAR)	Bid Closing Date and Time
1	GTC008-25	Cleaning Services 3-Years and 3 Months	120,000/-	1,000/-	02-June-2025 (13:00 Hrs)

Tenderer qualification requirement:

- The Tenderer must have a minimum of 10 years of proven experience in the cleaning services field, all proposed staff must be under the sponsorship of the Service Provider as per Qatar's labor and immigration regulations. Each cleaner must have at least 2 years of verifiable experience in Qatar in the cleaning services field. The Service Provider must demonstrate relevant experience in a similar project, including at least one contract involving a minimum of 87 cleaners and supervisors under a single agreement. The Service Provider must be capable of deploying all required staff and commencing service delivery on the effective contract start date: January 1st, 2026.
- Tender documents can be collected from Al Jazeera Media Network, Procurement & Contracts Directorate Building 1st Floor, behind Al Jazeera Media Institute Building, TV Intersection Area, Doha by submitting an authorization letter showing the tender number and ID number of collecting person under the company letterhead, after paying the tender fee (as applicable) at QIB Branch inside Al Jazeera's Support Services building.
- Tender documents are to be collected from 27-April-2025 to 05-May-2025, between 8:00 AM to 1:00 PM (excluding Friday & Saturday).
- The Bid must be submitted with a Tender Bond issued by a Qatari Bank or by a bank operating in Qatar and should be valid for a period of 180 days from bid closing date.
- The offer must be valid for a period of 180 days from the bid closing date.
- The Technical and Commercial offers shall be submitted as per the instructions in the tender documents which shall bear the tender number and bid closing date.
- The last date for accepting the Tender offers shall be 01:00 PM of the bid closing date.
- For more information, please call 44897131.

www.aljazeera.netwww.aljazeera.com



INVITATION TO TENDER

Tender Reference	Description	Tender Fee (QAR)	Tender Bond (QAR)	Bid Closing Date
HBKU-RFQ-1079	DocuSign Subscription services for QF-HBKU on Call Off basis for 3 years	500	20,000	27th May-2025, 2:00pm
HBKU-RFQ-1080	Provision for Supply of Logistics support Services to Qatar Foundation-HBKU on Call-Off Basis for 3 years	500	20,000	27th May-2025, 2:00pm
HBKU-RFQ-984-2	Tech Refresh/ Laboratory Environment Management System	500	7,000	27th May-2025, 2:00pm
HBKU-RFQ-1114	Differential scanning calorimetry (DSC) (KS).	500	7,000	27th May-2025, 2:00pm

HBKU-University Procurement Service (UPS) is inviting companies to participate in the above list public tender. To receive the tender documents, please follow the following steps:

- Supplier Registration:** It is mandatory to be registered as a supplier with QF in order to participate in the above tender(s). Only QF registered suppliers will be allowed to pay the tender fees online. Therefore, please visit QF website: <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 **27-Apr-25** Until **15-May-25**

- 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 the instructions provided in the "Supplier Portal" work instruction.
 - The Commercial bid must be valid for **180 Days** from the 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 the link below <https://www.qf.org.qa/supplier-registration>

Venezuelan president meets al-Khulaifi

Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro met with HE the Minister of State at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Dr Mohammed bin Abdulaziz bin Saleh al-Khulaifi. The meeting dealt with discussing bilateral relations and the means to strengthen them in all fields, the latest international developments and ways to co-ordinate co-operation in their regard, and issues of joint interest in Latin America. **(QNA)**



Amir sends cables of congratulations to Tanzanian president

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani and His Highness the Deputy Amir Sheikh Abdullah bin Hamad al-Thani sent cables of congratulations to Tanzanian President Samia Suluhu Hassan on her country's Union Day. HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani also sent a similar cable of congratulations to Prime Minister Kassim Majaliwa. **(QNA)**

Ministry launches inspection drive on winter camps as season ends

The Ministry of Environment and Climate Change (MoECC), represented by the Wildlife Protection Department, carried out comprehensive inspection campaigns throughout April, covering all winter camping areas across the country as part of its ongoing efforts to preserve and sustain the environment. The campaigns, launched as the winter camping season draws to a close, covered the northern, central, and southern regions. They aimed to ensure cleanliness

of camping sites, protect local ecosystems, and verify absence of environmental violations. Director of the Wildlife Protection Department, Chairman of the Winter Camping Affairs Organisation Committee at MoECC Hamad Salem al-Nuaimi, emphasised that the campaigns seek to strike a balance between enjoying camping activities and safeguarding the environment. He urged all campers to adhere to environmental guidelines. He added that the ministry's

efforts are focused on promoting environmental awareness and ensuring that campers are prepared to vacate their sites in a way that preserves natural resources. Al-Nuaimi stressed that co-operation with relevant authorities is key to the success of the camping season. These inspection campaigns are part of a broader set of regulatory measures and awareness activities conducted by the ministry to protect Qatar's environment and its rich biodiversity. **(QNA)**

Ooredoo celebrates connectivity at ITU 160th anniversary event

Ooredoo Group brought the future of connectivity into focus, hosting a landmark conference in celebration of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU)'s 160th anniversary under the theme 'From Telegraphs to Terabytes: Exploring the Legacy and Future of Global Connectivity'. Held at Georgetown University in Qatar (GU-Q), the event gathered global telecom leaders, policymakers, digital experts and students for bold conversations on bridging the digital divide, harnessing AI, and building inclusive digital ecosystems. The conference kicked off with an introduction by Sheikhha Haya Alwaleed al-Thani, senior regulatory analyst at Ooredoo Group, followed by welcoming remarks from Dr Gerd Nonneman, professor of International Relations at Georgetown University in Qatar. Hilal bin Mohammed al-Khulaifi, Group Chief Legal, Regulatory, and governance officer at Ooredoo, said: "This event is a moment to reflect on 160 years of progress in connectivity and focus on the priorities that will define the future: closing the digital divide, ensuring equitable access,



Hilal bin Mohammed al-Khulaifi, Group Chief Legal, Regulatory, and governance officer at Ooredoo, delivering a speech. **PICTURE:** Thajudheen

and harnessing AI responsibly. "Connectivity today is about dignity, opportunity, and resilience - and we are more committed than ever to building inclusive infrastructure that empowers and protects communities worldwide." In a pre-recorded video keynote address, ITU secretary-general Doreen Bogdan-Martin highlighted ITU's mission to ensure meaningful connectivity for all and accelerate inclusive digital transformation on a global scale. The panel discussion titled 'Envisioning the Future of Global Connectivity' featured Robert Laws

(Georgetown University in Qatar), Mark Brownscombe (Ooredoo Group), and Suresh Rajendran (Ooredoo Fintech). The discussion focused on the transformative potential of 5G, satellite internet, and quantum networking, and how multi-sector collaboration can bridge the digital divide and shape a secure, inclusive digital future. A presentation on 'Artificial Intelligence: Shaping the Next Generation of Connectivity' was delivered by Richard Majoor of Detecon International, who shared how AI is revolutionising network management and connectivity, while raising critical ethical and operational questions. The final panel, 'Connectivity in Times of Conflict: A Lifeline for Crisis Management', was moderated by Sheikhha Haya Alwaleed al-Thani and featured Osama Qawasma (Ooredoo Palestine), Helen Mason (Child Helpline International), and Caroline Masboungi (Unicef), who explored the role of telecoms in protecting lives and enabling humanitarian action during crises - and how to keep networks secure, reliable, and inclusive under pressure.

Training course graduates honoured by ministry



Dr Ibrahim Abdullatif al-Mislimani, Assistant Undersecretary for Protection and Nature Reserves Affairs, and Saud al-Marri, Director of the Human Resources Department, have distributed training certificates on the participants of the course titled "Marine Environmental Inspection, Empowerment, and Sustainable Awareness Program", organised by the ministry during April 20-24. The course aimed to qualify and develop the skills of the Marine Protection Department inspectors through enhancing their technical and field capabilities, contributing to improve their performance in the field of marine environment protection. This course is part of a series of training programmes implemented by the ministry, as part of its efforts to build a qualified national workforce in the areas of environmental inspection and sustainable empowerment.

ICC to host 'Indian Carnival' on May 15-16

The Indian Cultural Centre (ICC), in association with the Indian embassy, will present the 'Indian Carnival', a vibrant celebration of India's rich and diverse cultural heritage, from May 15-16, 4pm-10pm, at the Ideal Indian School. The carnival, which will be highlighted by a live musical concert by Anoop Shankar and his team, is expected to attract a daily footfall of 20,000 visitors. It aims to foster Indo-Qatar friendship and strengthen ties among the Indian expatriate community through the celebration of Indian culture in all its diversity. Attendees can look forward to colourful cultural performances, including live orchestra, Chenda Melam, and group dances by talented performers from ICC



Associated Organisations, Indian schools, and institutions. Other highlights include a fusion dance performance blending Thiruvathira from Kerala and the traditional Garba (Dandiya) from Gujarat; cultural pavilions representing various Indian states, offering an immersive experience of their heritage and culture; a dedicated pavilion showcasing

social service schemes from the Central and State Governments of India; and a vibrant bazaar with stalls featuring Indian handicrafts, traditional garments, jewellery, and a Food Court serving Indian delicacies. The ICC will also mark the occasion with the unveiling of its new logo and the launch of the ICC mobile app and ICC privilege card.

QATAR TO HOST 2025 GLOBAL SECURITY FORUM: EXPLORING 'THE IMPACT OF NON-STATE ACTORS ON GLOBAL SECURITY'

From April 28 to 30, Qatar will once again serve as a global platform for high-level security dialogue as it hosts the 2025 edition of the Global Security Forum. Held under the patronage of His Excellency Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al-Thani, Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the State of Qatar, the Forum returns for its seventh edition under the theme: "The Impact of Non-State Actors on Global Security." This invitation-only event will take place at the iconic Raffles and Fairmont - Katara Towers, in Lusail City.

GSF 2025 will host a diverse series of side events, with many focusing on community engagement, emerging technology, and regional diplomacy. These include discussions on post-conflict reconstruction in Syria, Artificial Intelligence (AI) in security, mediation frameworks under international humanitarian law, and a special session hosted by Qatar University on global governance.

This seventh edition of the 2025 Global Security Forum will convene world leaders, senior government officials, security professionals, academics, and civil society actors to examine the growing influence of non-state entities on global peace and stability. As the international security environment evolves, the Forum will explore how actors such as transnational terrorist groups, private military companies, criminal syndicates, and digital disruptors are challenging state-based security

frameworks and reshaping geopolitical dynamics. Confirmed speakers and attendees include ministers, national security advisors, intelligence officials, internationally recognized experts, senior academics, and renowned media personalities from around the world. In parallel, GSF 2025 will host a diverse series of side events, with many focusing on community engagement, emerging technology, and regional diplomacy. These include discussions on post-conflict reconstruction in Syria, Artificial Intelligence (AI) in security, mediation frameworks under international humanitarian law, and a special session hosted by Qatar University on global governance. As in previous years, the findings and key takeaways from GSF 2025 will be compiled into a strategic insights report. This will serve as a resource for global stakeholders, offering forward-looking policy recommendations across the domains of counterterrorism, cybersecurity, international diplomacy, and more. The Global Security Forum 2025 is organized by the Qatar International Academy for Security Studies (QIASS) and The Soufan Center, in cooperation with several high-level institutions serving as strategic partners, including the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED), New America, Arizona State University, Defense One, and The Soufan Group. This year's edition continues to reinforce Qatar's position as an essential hub for strategic security dialogue and a catalyst for cross-border cooperation. Audiences around the world will be able to join the Global Security Forum 2025 virtually through the Forum's official platform at www.globalsecurityforum.com.



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PM attends Pope’s funeral ceremony



HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani with HE Sheikh Thani bin Hamad al-Thani at the funeral ceremony of Pope Francis in Rome yesterday. - QNA

Reyada launches Oral and Maxillofacial Department to elevate dental wing

The Reyada Medical Centre has unveiled its new Oral and Maxillofacial Department, marking a significant advancement in the expansion of its dental services.

The initiative is part of the centre's mission to transform its dental wing into a state-of-the-art facility.

The newly launched Oral & Maxillofacial Department will be led by Dr Samer Aziz Aljanzir, who brings over 20 years of experience in oral and maxillofacial surgery and Implantology.

This department will offer a comprehensive range of services, including general dental procedures, smile makeovers, dental implants, treatment of maxillary complex and mandibular problems, soft tissue injury care, im-



paction management, and vestibuloplasty, among others.

“The addition of the Oral & Maxillofacial Department is a reflection of our ongoing dedication to excellence and innovation in patient care,” said Reyada Medical Centre managing director Jamsheer Hamza.

“We are proud to welcome Dr Samer to lead this new department,” said Reyada Medical Centre executive director Dr Abdul Kalam. “His expertise and dedication align perfectly with our vision of offering advanced, patient-centred services across all specialties.”



Zulal Resort wins Best Spa Retreat award

Zulal Wellness Resort by Chiva-Som has been recognised as the Best Spa Retreat in the Middle East at The Luxury Spa Edit Awards 2025, marking its second consecutive win in the prestigious global wellness award.

The award celebrates the resort's unique blend of modern therapies and Traditional Arabic and Islamic Medicine (TAIM), delivered by a dedicated team of experts in a peaceful coastal setting in northern Qatar, a statement said.

“We are incredibly proud to receive this recognition again,” said Zulal Wellness Resort general

manager Ammar Samad. “It means a lot because it reflects the care, dedication, and passion our team brings to every guest experience.”

“A special thanks goes to our spa manager, Minnara Nawin, and the entire team for their outstanding efforts,” he said. “At Zulal, we focus on genuine wellness that combines tradition with innovation, and this recognition encourages us to keep growing and doing what we love.”

Zulal was also honoured in 2024 as the Best Regional Spa Retreat in the Middle East, the statement added.

QRCS plans projects in nine countries worth over QR30mn

The Qatar Red Crescent Society (QRCS) has announced plans to implement a series of humanitarian programmes over the coming few weeks at a total cost of more than QR30mn.

According to QRCS secretary-general Faisal Mohamed al-Emadi, the initiative is expected to benefit more than 541,000 people in Gaza, Syria, Yemen, Sudan, Somalia, Mauritania, Bangladesh, Afghanistan, and Niger.

In a statement, al-Emadi described the Ramadan Campaign “Fruitful Giving” 2025/1446 AH as an “outright success” thanks to the “generous donations from the people of Qatar”, which helped meet the needs of hundreds of thousands of vulnerable and disadvantaged people around the world during the holy month.

“At all times, the people of Qatar show a spirit of inherent benevolence and noble inclination,” he said. “Their sense of compassion and humanitarian responsibility is particularly manifested during emergencies, assisting the victims of conflicts, disasters, and poverty everywhere through their zakat and sadaqah payments made for the sake of Allah.”

Under the Ramadan Iftar project, food aid from Qatar was delivered to 761,741 people, a 29.2% jump from the campaign's target of 538,688.

“With the food parcels, meals, and coupons distributed, the Ramadan Iftar project effectively satisfied the food needs of more than 147,000 families in 16 countries: Palestine (Gaza and the West Bank), Sudan, Somalia,



Yemen, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Mauritania, Bangladesh, Afghanistan, Chad, Djibouti, Uganda, Tanzania, Kenya, and Niger,” al-Emadi said.

Locally, 2,275 families or 11,375 persons received seasonal aid during the holy month, including food coupons for 1,606 families or 8,030 persons, and Zakat Al-Fitr for 669 families or 3,345 persons.

The QRCS also distributed 48,070 Iftar meals as in-kind donations from various organisations and companies.

It held a Garangao celebration carnival for 200 hospitalised children and distributed 800 packed Iftar meals to patients, parents, and medical professionals at hospitals.

“All these achievements were possible only with the exceptional response from the public, government organisations, and businesses,” the official said.



QRCS secretary-general Faisal Mohamed al-Emadi.

“They never fail to lend a hand, and they constantly donate to our humanitarian and development projects, both during Ramadan and throughout the year.”

Al-Emadi noted that the engagement is considered a testimony to the people's trust in the QRCS, both locally and internationally, building on a long history of excellence, proficiency, and dedication to the humanitarian mission.

“I would like to send a message of gratitude to everyone who contributed even the least to the food provisions given to refugees and displaced people, helping them observe the ritual of fasting and alleviating some of their suffering,” al-Emadi stated. “But the journey of giving has no end, and there remains a long way to go and considerable needs to fulfil.”

Donations to QRCS humanitarian and charitable projects can be made via the website (qrqs.org.qa), mobile app (QRCS), donation collection agents at shopping malls, donor service (66666364), home donation collection (33998898), or call centre (44027777).



The aid distribution, recently launched in the Ata Akura area of Bono East, included weather-resistant tents, water purification devices, solar lamps, and other essential emergency supplies aimed at improving living conditions for Burkinabe refugees.

Qatar Charity, UNHCR provide aid to Burkinabe refugees in Ghana

Qatar Charity (QC) has launched a new relief intervention for refugees from Burkina Faso in the Kintampo Municipality of the Bono East region in Ghana as part of its role in addressing major humanitarian challenges faced by communities worldwide.

The initiative was carried out in collaboration with the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the Ghana Refugee Board.

The aid distribution, recently launched in the Ata Akura area of Bono East, included weather-resistant tents, water purification devices, solar lamps, and other essential emergency supplies aimed at improving living conditions for Burkinabe refugees.

During the aid distribution ceremony, engineer Hassan Odeh, director of Qatar Charity in Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire, emphasised the QC's commitment to supporting Ghana's national development agenda through strategic partnerships.

He highlighted the significance of the organisation's collaboration with the UNHCR, which not only enhances refugee welfare but also brings benefits to host communities.

Odeh noted that the relief provided, especially the durable tents, serves as an immediate solution to ensure safe shelter during the rainy season, reinforcing the humanitarian commitment of Qatar Charity to vulnerable populations.

Nida Jehu-Mazo, head of the UNHCR Office in

Ghana, expressed gratitude to all parties that offered Burkinabe refugees a haven after fleeing their country in search of security.

“In partnership with Qatar Charity, the Ghana Refugee Board, and other stakeholders, we have been able to provide essential relief supplies ahead of the rainy season,” she said. “At the same time, we are working together to develop more sustainable solutions.”

Jehu-Mazo emphasised that the partnership aims, in the medium term, to promote self-reliance among Burkinabe refugees and the host communities.

She also reaffirmed the UNHCR's commitment to securing long-term shelter for refugees and highlighted ongoing strategic initiatives to ensure access to essential social services and livelihood opportunities.

Among these is the Sustainable Refugee Agribusiness Response initiative, which seeks to empower both Burkinabe refugees and host communities in Bono East by facilitating access to farmland, investing in agricultural skills, and creating practical pathways to economic stability and income generation – ultimately reducing dependence on humanitarian aid.

Several Burkinabe refugees in Ghana expressed appreciation for the critical aid provided by Qatar Charity and the UNHCR.

ANNOUNCEMENT

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QID No. 28058600751

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ASMA INAM MOHAMMAD HAFEEZULLAH

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ASMA INAM

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Meqdam Shooting Championship ends

The curtain fell yesterday on the inaugural Meqdam Shooting Championship, organised by the National Service Academy in partnership with the Qatar Shooting and Archery Association (QSAA) and the Military Sports Federation.

Held over a 12-day stretch at Lusail Shooting Range, the event featured the 25m pistol competition, the 50m rifle competition, and the shotgun sporting event.

The shotgun finals witnessed fierce and thrilling competition, culminating in the triumph of marksman Hamad Mohammed al-Mannai, representing National Service Class 16, who clinched first place and the gold medal, along with a financial award of QR500,000. Nasser Abdulaziz al-Nasser, representing Class 12, secured second place and the silver medal, receiving a prize of QR250,000, while Saoud Ali al-Janahi, representing Class 10, claimed third place and the bronze medal, earning QR100,000.

Meanwhile, Badr Kifah al-Yousuf, from the Ministry of Finance and a graduate of 2022 (Class 19), clinched the prestigious "Sniper" title after amassing the highest overall score across all three disciplines.

In the 25m pistol event, Nasser Salem al-Sunaid, affiliated with the Ministry of Defence and a graduate of 2017 (Class 7), captured the gold medal and a financial award of QR500,000. Mohammed Abdullah al-Nuaimi, affiliated with the Ministry of Interior and a graduate of 2019 (Class 11), secured the silver medal



and a prize of QR250,000, while Abdullah Ibrahim Taimour, from Qatar Chemical Company Limited (Q-Chem) and a graduate of 2016 (Class 4), seized the bronze medal and a financial award of QR100,000.

In the 50m rifle event, Hamad Saad al-Jassim, representing Qatar Airways, secured the gold medal and a financial award of QR500,000. Abdulaziz Thamer al-Turki, representing the Ministry of Defence, clinched the silver

medal and a prize of QR250,000, while Badr Kifah al-Yousuf, representing the Ministry of Finance, earned the bronze medal and a financial award of QR100,000.

The tournament drew robust participation, capped off by a strong finish that underscored the pivotal role of the championship in bolstering Qatar's shooting sports and cultivating national sporting distinction.

President of QSAA, Dr Mishaal Ibrahim al-Nasr, expressed his satisfaction with the Meqdam event, which culminated in the best finish in terms of technical and organisational aspects, hailing the formidable performances delivered by the marksmen in the finals. Dr al-Nasr highlighted that the support extended by HE the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Defence Affairs, Sheikh Saud bin Abdulrahman bin Hassan bin Ali al-Thani, significantly spurred the participants as the event accomplished its objectives.

He pointed out that the first tournament featured a record

Deputy PM honours winners of championship



HE the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Defence Affairs Sheikh Saud bin Abdulrahman bin Hassan bin Ali al-Thani honoured the winners at the conclusion of the first edition of the Meqdam Shooting Championship, held at the Lusail Shooting Range. The final rounds spanned three days and featured intense competition. On the final day, the shotgun event took place, and the first winner was Hamad Mohammed al-Mannai from the Ministry of Defence, Class of 2020 (Batch 16), and the second place was Nasser Abdulaziz al-Nasr from Aspire Academy, Class of 2020 (Batch 12), while the third place went to Saud Ali al-Janahi from Visit Qatar, Class of 2018 (Batch 10). Additionally, Badr Kifah al-Yousef from the Ministry of Finance, Class of 2022 (Batch 19), was awarded the title of "The Sniper" for achieving the highest overall score across all three shooting disciplines. The event concluded in the presence of several senior officers of the Qatar Armed Forces. (QNA)



turnout from graduates of the National Service, underscoring that the competitions were marked by intense rivalry and a high spirit of sportsmanship, which lent significant momentum and technical vigour to this prominent sporting event.

Secretary-General of QSAA and Director of the Meqdam Shooting Championship, Jassim Shaheen al-Sulaiti, emphasised that this debut tournament achieved impressive success at all levels, as well as fulfilled the key objectives for which it was held.

The presence of His Excellency the Deputy Prime Minister and

Minister of State for Defence Affairs at the final, along with the coronation of the top 30 winners, stood as a tribute to all participants and a mark of honour for the championship's organising committee, al-Sulaiti underlined.

Marksman Badr Kifah al-Yousuf, the overall winner of the Meqdam Shooting Championship and the Sniper Cup, voiced his profound satisfaction with the results he achieved in the inaugural championship, emphasising that the technical and organisational standards of the first edition were truly exceptional.

Al-Yousuf anticipated that the

upcoming edition would witness greater participation, given the extraordinary success of the first edition.

He underlined that his participation in the inaugural edition, along with the triumph he achieved, would remain a source of significant momentum as he continues his career in pursuit of the best results in upcoming tournaments.

Al-Yousuf thanked the organising committee for providing an outstanding atmosphere for participants, which contributed to elevating the competitive level. (QNA)

Qatar organises UN roundtable to discuss AutismTech 2025 outcomes

QNA
New York

Qatar's Permanent Mission to the UN, in collaboration with Hamad Bin Khalifa University (HBKU), the UN Children's Fund (Unicef), the World Health Organisation (WHO), Autism Speaks, and the American Autism Association (AAA), organised a high-level roundtable at the UN headquarters in New York.

This event aimed to follow up on the outcomes of the AutismTech 2025 Conference, hosted by HBKU in Doha from April 14-16, 2025, to mark World Autism Awareness Day.

Addressing the opening ceremony of the roundtable, HE Qatar's Permanent Representative to the UN Sheikhha Alya Ahmed bin Saif al-Thani underscored the state's enduring commitment to ensuring the rights of individuals with autism to be fully included in the community.

HE Sheikhha Alya pointed out that the overarching approach Qatar pursues is evidently based on an integrated system of legislative frameworks, national policies, and specialised programmes that aim to empower this segment and support its active engagement across various domains of life.

This approach is laser-focused on Qatar's strategic investment in comprehensive education, the provision of expedited healthcare, and the enhancement of advanced



scientific research, as part of a long-term vision spearheaded by Her Highness Chairperson of the Education Above All Foundation Sheikhha Moza bint Nasser, which gives foremost priority to espousing autism causes and enhancing the opportunities of inclusion in the community, HE Sheikhha Alya underlined.

Research, Development, and Innovation Adviser to the Chairperson of Qatar Foundation Prof Hilal A Lashuel stated that Qatar sees that its advancement is contingent upon unlocking the full potential of its people, including individuals with autism.

He underlined that investment in science, technology, and innovation should be directed towards creating supportive and comprehensive environments that enable all to engage and contribute to development without exception.

Associate Professor and Director of Interdisciplinary Programmes at HBKU's College of Science and Engineering, Dr Dena al-Thani, highlighted the core vision behind the AutismTech 2025 Conference, which entailed build-

ing a global platform to help develop research, technology, and innovation in the service of individuals with autism and empowering them to live a normal life in their respective communities.

Associate Professor at HBKU's College of Science and Engineering Dr Marwa Qaraqe noted the challenges associated with diagnosing autism spectrum disorder, along with the avenues for leveraging technology to overcome these challenges.

Director of the WHO Office Dr Werner Obermeyer stated that technology is a pivotal component in empowering individuals with autism and supporting their opportunities of engagement and inclusion in the community.

Chief Executive Officer of AAA Christopher Banks stressed the importance of having comprehensive policies to support individuals with autism.

He called on other nations to pursue Qatar's approach that demonstrated inspiring strategic leadership in including autism causes in its national priorities. (QNA)

GulfTimes Editor-in-Chief attends Gulf Press Union committee meeting

The Arabic and International Affairs Committee of the Gulf Press Union has held its first meeting via video conference, chaired by Dr Mohammed al-Araimi, Chairman of Oman Journalists Association, Board Member of the Union, and Chairman of the Arabic and International Affairs Committee.

The meeting was attended by Jassem Mohamed Kamal, Vice-Chairman of the Committee and Secretary-General of the Kuwait Journalists Association; Abdulrahman Naqi al-Bastaki, Secretary of the Committee, former secretary-general of Emirates Journalists Association, and Editor-in-Chief of the *Emirates News Network*; and members Adel bin Saad al-DhikrAllah, member of the Saudi Journalists Authority and Deputy Editor-in-Chief of *Al-Hiwar* newspaper in Saudi Arabia; Abdulrahman Khalid al-Midfa, Vice-Chairman of the Bahrain Journalists Association; and Faisal Abdulhameed al-Mudahka, Editor-in-Chief of the *Gulf Times* newspaper in Qatar.

At the beginning of the meet-



Participants in the meeting.

ing, Dr al-Araimi welcomed the members, expressing his appreciation for the Board of Directors' confidence in the committee members and wishing them success in the tasks assigned to them in the coming period. The committee members also extended their thanks and appreciation to the Kingdom of Bah-

rain for hosting and supporting the establishment of the Gulf Press Union as its permanent headquarters. Accordingly, the participants discussed the items on the agenda of the meeting and the potential of implementing these in the upcoming period.

The meeting took place via video conference.

Qatar-Lebanon police sports co-operation discussed

President of the Qatari and the Arab Police Sports Federations, Major General Khalid bin Hamad al-Attiyah, met in Beirut on Friday with Director-General of the Lebanese Internal Security Forces, Major General Raed Abdullah. Discussion during the meeting dealt with ways to enhance bilateral police sports co-operation. (QNA)

Suspected chemical blast at Iran's Bandar Abbas port kills 14, injures hundreds

Reuters
Dubai

A huge blast probably caused by the explosion of chemical materials killed at least 14 people and injured more than 700 yesterday at Iran's biggest port, Bandar Abbas, Iranian state

media reported. The explosion, which hit the Shahid Rajaei section of the port, occurred as Iran began a third round of nuclear talks with the United States in Oman, but there was no indication of a link between the two events.

Hossein Zafari, a spokesperson for Iran's crisis management organisation, appeared to blame

the explosion on poor storage of chemicals in containers at Shahid Rajaei.

"The cause of the explosion was the chemicals inside the containers," he told Iran's ILNA news agency.

"Previously, the Director General of Crisis Management had given warnings to this port during

their visits and had pointed out the possibility of danger," Zafari said.

However, an Iranian government spokesperson said that although chemicals had likely caused the blast, it was not yet possible to determine the exact reason.

Iran's President Masoud

Pezeshkian ordered an investigation of the incident and sent to the site his interior minister, who said efforts were still continuing to extinguish the fire and prevent it from spreading to other areas.

Iran's official news channels aired footage of a vast black and orange cloud of smoke billowing up above the port in the after-

math of the blast, and an office building with its doors blown off and papers and debris strewn around.

Located near the strategic Strait of Hormoz, Shahid Rajaei port is Iran's biggest container hub, handling a majority of the country's container goods, according to state media.



Palestinian president Abbas appoints aide as potential successor

AFP
Ramallah

Palestinian president Mahmoud Abbas appointed a close aide as the first ever vice president of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) yesterday, positioning him as a potential successor to the veteran leader.

Hussein al-Sheikh was appointed by Abbas, 89, after the vice-presidency position was created during a convention held in Ramallah this week.

The creation of the post follows years of international pressure to reform the PLO and comes as Arab and Western powers envision an expanded role for Abbas' Palestinian Authority (PA) in the post-war governance of the Gaza Strip.

"Palestinian president Mahmoud Abbas appointed Hussein al-Sheikh as a deputy (vice president) of the PLO leadership," said a member of the organisation's executive committee, Wasel Abu Yousef.

Founded in 1964, the PLO is

empowered to negotiate and sign international treaties on behalf of the Palestinian people, while the PA is responsible for governance in parts of the Palestinian territories.

The PLO is an umbrella organisation comprising several Palestinian factions, but not the fighter groups Hamas and Islamic Jihad, which are currently at war with Israeli forces in Gaza.

Sheikh, 64, is a veteran leader of Abbas' Fatah movement, which dominates the PA, and is considered close to the president.

He spent more than 10 years in Israeli jails in the late 1970s and early 80s, during which he learned Hebrew. In 2022, he was made the PLO Executive Committee's secretary-general and head of its negotiations department, a sensitive portfolio, demonstrating his close ties to Abbas.

Abbas also recently appointed him as the head of a committee overseeing Palestinian diplomatic missions abroad.

Palestinian analyst Hani al-Masri called for the creation of a vice presidential post within the PA itself. This is not a reform



This handout picture released by the Palestinian Authority's Press Office shows President Mahmoud Abbas leading prayers next to Palestine Liberation Organisation Secretary-General Hussein al-Sheikh (third left) during a meeting of the organisation's Executive Committee in Ramallah, yesterday.

measure but rather a response to external pressure," said Masri of the Palestinian Center for Policy Research and Strategic Studies.

"What is required is a vice president for the PA to whom the powers could be transferred," he said.

However, analyst Aref Jaffal said the new role was created to pave the way for someone to take the reins from Abbas, "as there are many things the Palestinian situation requires". "The Palestinian political system is already

miserable, so I believe that all these arrangements are a prelude to creating a successor to Abbas," Jaffal, the director of the Al-Mar-sad Election Monitoring Center, told AFP.

In March, at a summit in Cairo

about Gaza's post-war future, Abbas had announced he would create a vice presidency within the PLO. Abbas has been head of the PA since 2005 following the death of Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat.

The following year he was elected to a four-year term, with no presidential vote since.

According to Palestinian officials, in the event of Abbas's death or resignation, the vice president would be expected to become the acting head of the PLO and of the State of Palestine, which is recognised by nearly 150 countries. Abbas had brought a proposal for creating the vice president post during a PLO convention this week, but it was opposed by several factions who staged a walkout.

They argued that the initiative threatened the PLO's sovereignty and was a sign of foreign interference. The PA is teetering on the brink of financial collapse and, following the Hamas storming of Israel that sparked the war in Gaza, several international donors have increasingly insisted that financial support be tied to concrete political and institutional reforms.

43% of Gaza's kidney patients 'died due to lack of treatment'

QNA
Gaza

Director of Al-Shifa Medical Complex in Gaza, Dr Mohammed Abu Salmiya, warned of the severe deterioration of the healthcare sector in Gaza due to the significant shortage of medicines and medical supplies, resulting from the Israeli occupation authorities' continued blockade on humanitarian and medical aid.

He confirmed that the situation has led to an unprecedented collapse in public health and severely impacted the medical services provided to the wounded, the sick, and the general population.

In a statement to Qatar News Agency (QNA) yesterday, Abu Salmiya described the health situation in Gaza as "extremely critical", noting that the ongoing siege and the prevention of aid entry are exacerbating the crisis and severely hindering the performance of hospitals and the Palestinian Ministry of Health's services.

He explained that more than 43% of kidney failure patients in Gaza have died due to lack of necessary treatment. He added that children in Gaza are suffering from weakened immune systems due to prolonged malnutrition, including the lack of fruits, vegetables, and healthy foods. Many cases arriving at hospitals are linked to malnutrition, he noted.

Abu Salmiya pointed out that Israeli forces are systematically targeting and destroying medical facilities, leading to the shutdown of most medical laboratories in Gaza. Hospitals are also facing a critical shortage of medical supplies, particularly in emergency and surgical departments, including a lack of essential anaesthesia medications for surgeries.

He revealed that the Ministry of Health recently announced that Al-Durra Children's Hospital in eastern Gaza City was forced out of service after suffering severe damage from a direct Israeli strike. This comes after the bombardment of Al-Ahli Arab Hospital, which caused widespread



Nujud Suleiman, a one-year-old Palestinian infant suffering from malnutrition, is measured as she receives treatment at the Kamal Adwan Hospital in Beit Lahia in the northern Gaza Strip.

destruction in one of its main buildings. As a result, the medical staff were forced to shut down the hospital and redistribute patients and wounded individuals across three other hospitals in Gaza City, despite their already limited resources and capacity.

Abu Salmiya added in his statement to QNA that the shutdown of Al-Durra Hospital, combined with the fact that only about 20 hospitals are partially operating, means that approximately 37 hospitals are now out of service.

This comes amid escalating Israeli aggression and a rising number of wounded and injured who require numerous complex surgical interventions.

He warned that the few remaining operational hospitals are working under dire conditions, amid unprecedented humanitarian and health crises, with overwhelming pressure on medical staff and a severe lack of available resources.

The Director of Al-Shifa Medical Complex also pointed out that the number of hospital beds in Gaza declined by 52%, highlighting that over 50,000 pregnant and breastfeeding women are deprived of necessary medical care due to the worsening healthcare situation.

He stressed that Gaza is facing a catastrophic situation due

to cessation of medical supplies and depletion of medicines, under the continued, tightened Israeli blockade and the systematic targeting of hospitals and the healthcare system – part of a broader policy aimed at dismantling the remaining healthcare capabilities of the Strip.

Abu Salmiya affirmed that the Israeli criminal practices against Gaza's healthcare sector are part of the occupation's broader strategy to subjugate Palestinian civilians and intensify their suffering by deliberately targeting the wounded and the sick.

The humanitarian and health crisis in Gaza continues to worsen, as Israeli forces persist in targeting medical, humanitarian, and charitable institutions – both international and local – that strive to provide essential services, many of which have been forced to halt operations due to aggression, closure of border crossings, and the prevention of humanitarian and medical aid from entering.

The healthcare sector in Gaza is suffering from a dire crisis, with a continued ban on entry of medicines and supplies, ongoing targeting of medical personnel through killings and arrests, and systematic destruction of major hospitals, amid escalating Israeli aggression against the besieged Gaza Strip.

12 Niger soldiers killed in attack, two suspects detained: army

Reuters
Niamey

Twelve Nigerien soldiers have been killed in an attack in the west of the Sahel country and two suspects have been arrested, the army said in a statement seen by Reuters yesterday.

The attack took place on Friday near the tri-border region of Niger, Burkina Faso and Mali, epicentre of a militant insurgency in West Africa linked to Al Qaeda and Islamic State.

Armed men on Friday launched a "surprise offensive"

on a military unit out on a mission about 10km north of the village of Sakoirra, the statement said, referring to the assailants as terrorists. It did not elaborate on the likely identity of the assailants but last month Niger blamed the EIGS group, an Islamic State affiliate, for an attack on a mosque near the tri-border area in which at least 44 civilians were killed.

The Sahel insurgency spun out of a Tuareg rebellion in northern Mali in 2012 and later spread into neighbouring Burkina Faso and Niger before reaching the north of coastal West African countries such as Benin.

Hundreds of thousands have been killed and millions displaced as militants have gained ground, attacking villages, military and police posts and army convoys.

The failure of governments to restore security contributed to two coups in Mali, two in Burkina Faso and one in Niger between 2020 and 2023. All three remain under military rule despite regional and international pressure to hold elections. Military authorities cut ties with traditional Western allies such as France and the US after the coups and turned to Russia to help in fighting militant activity.

Uganda declares end of sixth Ebola outbreak

AFP
Nairobi

Uganda declared the end of an Ebola virus outbreak yesterday, which has killed at least two people in the east African nation since late January.

The announcement came 42 days after the discharge of the last confirmed patient from hospital.

The outbreak marked the sixth time Uganda was affected by the deadly virus that has six different strains, three of which have caused major epidemics.

"During this outbreak, 14 cases, 12 confirmed and two not confirmed through laboratory tests (probable), were reported. Four deaths, two confirmed and two probable, occurred. Ten people recovered from the infection," The World Health Organisation said in a statement.

The confirmed cases of the Sudan Ebola strain resulted in the death of a four-year-old child and a nurse.

Several dozens of people were also monitored after coming in contact with the disease, according to the African Union's health agency (Africa CDC).



File photo shows a Ugandan doctor vaccinate the contact of a patient who tested positive during the launch of the vaccination for the Sudan strain of the Ebola virus with a trial vaccine at the Mulago Guest House (Isolation centre) in Kampala, Uganda.

"The current Ebola Sudan Virus Disease outbreak has officially come to an end," Uganda's health ministry said on X.

"This follows 42 days without a new case since the last confirmed patient was discharged on March 14 2025," World Health Organisation chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus applauded the health ministry for its "leadership and commitment" in overcoming the outbreak.

"Congratulations to the government and health workers of #Uganda on ending the #Ebola outbreak," he said on X yesterday. There is currently no ap-

proved vaccine for the Ebola-Sudan strain.

But a vaccination trial for the strain was launched in the country in February. It was praised by the World Health Organisation as the "fastest roll-out" of an Ebola vaccine trial in the midst of an epidemic.

But the international context for funding such health efforts is proving challenging.

In early March, the United Nations launched a call to raise \$11.2mn to address this epidemic after the United States announced the cessation of most of its humanitarian aid.

War-hit Congo park turns to chocolate gorillas in conservation push



Workers prepare gorilla-shaped chocolates in a machine at the Virunga chocolate factory, in the outskirts of Beni, North Kivu province in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Reuters
Beni

Threatened by armed conflict, volcanic activity and rampant deforestation, Africa's oldest national park is turning to a new product to raise its profile and boost conservation efforts: chocolate gorillas.

Virunga National Park in war-ravaged eastern Congo is marking its 100th anniversary this month by producing 25,000 handcrafted treats at a nearby chocolate factory to be sold in Europe, including Belgium, Congo's former colonial power. Spanning more than 3,000 square miles, Virunga is home to many of the world's last mountain gorillas, yet much of the



Gorilla-moulded chocolates are displayed at the Virunga chocolate factory.

park is under rebel control and fighting has accelerated forest loss.

M23 rebels have seized eastern Congo's two largest cities since January in an unprecedented advance that has

risked igniting an all-out regional war.

Cocoa for the chocolate gorillas comes from farms created at the periphery of the park, part of a push to promote agricultural and industrial activities in the area so residents do not turn to logging and poaching. The chocolate factory is located five kilometres outside the park.

Profits from sales of the chocolates are meant to be reinvested in nearby communities. Clarisse Kyakimwa has been working her small cocoa farm for three years. "This cocoa has several benefits. It helps me send my children to school, feed them, pay my hospital bills," she said. Buyers take her crop to the Virunga factory, but she has not seen the finished product: a glistening chocolate rendering of a full-grown

gorilla with its arms on the shoulders of one of its young. "They say this chocolate is taken abroad... I've never seen this chocolate, since we're not used to eating it," Kyakimwa said. Instability has been a problem at Virunga since well before M23's latest advance.

"With the insecurity we're seeing in the region, it's sometimes difficult to access the raw material, which is cocoa," said Roger Marora, master chocolatier and a native of North Kivu province.

The United Nations and Western governments say Rwanda has provided arms and troops to M23. Rwanda denies backing M23 and says its military has acted in self-defence against Congo's army and a militia founded by perpetrators of the 1994 genocide.

Reeves talks trade with Bessent after stressing EU relations

By William Schomberg
Reuters

British finance minister Rachel Reeves met US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent to discuss a trade deal, shortly after saying that improving business ties with the European Union was “arguably even more important”. Reeves held discussions with Bessent at a gathering of world finance chiefs at the International Monetary Fund that has been dominated by concerns about US President Donald Trump’s import tariffs.

“The UK-US relationship has delivered prosperity for businesses and working people on both sides

of the Atlantic,” Reeves said in a brief statement on social media. “Today I met with Secretary Scott Bessent to discuss the UK-US economic prosperity deal and our goal of reaching an agreement that is in both our national interests,” she added. The US Treasury said in a readout that Bessent noted the need for progress on fair and reciprocal trade and that the two also “held positive discussions on taxation, financial innovation, and technology partnerships.”

Britain, like many other countries, wants to ease the impact of Trump’s tariffs – which would be particularly high for British car and metals exporters – by striking an economic agreement with his

UK minister also meets German, Chinese counterparts; UK seeking to speed up economic growth; Reeves says EU trade ties perhaps even more important than US

administration that could also foster more tech investment. Reeves sought to show Trump’s team dur-

ing her trip to Washington that she shares the president’s concerns about the world economy – in particular China’s export-heavy model – but she has also said that high tariffs are not the answer.

At the same time, Reeves and Prime Minister Keir Starmer are hoping to remove some post-Brexit trade barriers with the EU. The United States is Britain’s single biggest trading partner but the EU as a bloc buys more of the country’s exports. “I understand why there’s so much focus on our trading relationship with the US, but actually our trading relationship with Europe is arguably even more important, because they’re our nearest neighbours and trading partners,”

Reeves told the BBC. Earlier this week, she said Britain would not rush to secure a deal with Washington and ruled out making concessions on food standards which could jeopardise London’s ability to boost food exports to the EU. Reeves met German Finance Minister Joerg Kukies in Washington to prepare for a gathering of European leaders that will seek to improve ties between Britain and the bloc which were strained by the 2016 Brexit vote.

“We discussed the upcoming UK-EU Summit in May, marking an important moment in the reset between the United Kingdom and the European Union,” Reeves said. She and Starmer promised vot-

ers last year they would speed up Britain’s economy which the IMF this week said looked set to grow by 1.1% in 2025, still faster than in Germany and France but down from a previous forecast of 1.6% partly due to the hit to the world economy from Trump’s tariffs.

Reeves also held talks on Friday with China’s finance minister Lan Foan after this week announcing tougher customs controls and strengthening Britain’s anti-dumping system, which could impact Chinese exporters. “Our clear-eyed re-engagement with China ensures we grasp opportunities when it’s right for the UK,” she posted on X, adding the two sides would continue cooperation.

N Korea launches new destroyer



Armed forces attend the launch ceremony.

AFP
Seoul

North Korea has unveiled a new warship it claims is a destroyer armed with the “most powerful weapons”, at a launch ceremony attended by leader Kim Jong-un, state media said yesterday.

The announcement comes about a month after Kim oversaw the test of new suicide and reconnaissance drones featuring AI technology, adding to concerns over North Korea’s deepening military co-operation with Moscow.

The warship, named “Choe Hyon” after a deceased North Korean anti-Japanese fighter, is a 5,000-tonne destroyer-class vessel that took more than a year to build, according to Pyongyang’s official Korean Central News Agency. Given its size, experts believe the ship can carry both ship-to-surface and ship-to-air missiles, with specialist outlet NK News reporting it is “likely to be equipped with short-range tactical nuclear missiles”.

The North Korean navy can now serve as a “core service for national defence and a component of nuclear war deterrent”, Kim said, according to KCNA, adding that the ship will “enter into operation early next year”.

He also accused Washington of “conducting aggressive exercises that simulate nuclear strikes against” the North through its joint-military operations with the South. At the launch cere-

mony, held at the Nampho Dockyard on the country’s west coast Friday, the warship “received the honour of being first reviewed” by Kim, it added.

Images released by state media showed Kim, accompanied by his daughter Ju Ae, being enthusiastically welcomed by navy personnel in white uniforms in front of the new warship, with colourful confetti scattered across the ground. Ju Ae, who is considered by many experts as Kim’s likely successor, was also photographed whispering to her father dressed in a formal black suit in front of the vessel.

Kim inspected a project in March to build a nuclear-powered submarine, asserting that “radically” boosting the navy was a key part of Pyongyang’s defensive strategy. At the time, Kim called for the modernisation of the country’s surface and underwater naval forces, including the development of warships.

Washington - Seoul’s key security ally - has in recent years ramped up joint military exercises and increased the presence of strategic US assets, such as an aircraft carrier and a nuclear-powered submarine, around the Korean Peninsula to deter the North.

Pyongyang has repeatedly declared itself an “irreversible” nuclear weapons state and routinely denounces joint US-South Korea drills as rehearsals for invasion. US President Donald Trump, who met Kim three times during his first administration, said this month that he is in “communication” with Kim and intends to “do some-



The newly-built destroyer at the Nampo port in Nampo.



North Korean leader Kim Jong-un and his daughter Ju Ae attending the launch ceremony of a newly-built destroyer at the Nampo port in Nampo.

thing at some point”, according to Seoul’s Yonhap news agency.

A summit between the two in Hanoi collapsed in 2019 over talks on sanctions relief and what Pyongyang would be willing to

give up in return. The launch of the vessel appears to “contain the intention to reiterate the position that nuclear abandonment is not possible for Kim”, Yang Moon-jin, president of the University of

North Korean Studies in Seoul, told AFP.

Kim also appears to be “presenting preconditions for possible future North Korea-US negotiations”, Yang added.

Singapore orders foreigners’ Facebook posts taken down under new poll rules

Rueters
Singapore

Singapore has ordered Facebook parent Meta to block Singaporeans’ access to posts made by three foreigners accused of trying to influence a national election early next month on racial and religious lines. Two of the people whose posts were blocked rejected the accusations.

The Infocomm Media Development Authority issued the orders after some posts by the foreigners were deemed as “intended to promote or prejudice the electoral success or standing of a political party or candidate”, the Elections Department and Ministry of Home Affairs said in a statement.

The southeast Asian city-state’s election on May 3, the first under the social media rules put in place by the government in 2023, is almost certain to be dominated by the People’s Action Party, which has won the most seats in every vote since independence in 1965.

The rules bar foreigners from publishing online election advertising, which it defines as online materials that could help or hurt any political parties or candidates.

Friday’s statement identified the foreigners as Iskandar Abdul Samad, national treasurer of the Islamist party Parti Islam Se-Malaysia; Mohamed Sukri Omar, the party’s youth chief in the Malaysian state of Selangor; and Facebook user “Zai Nal”, identified as Zulfikar bin Mohamad Shariff, an Australian who renounced his Singapore citizenship in 2020.

India detains over 1,000 Bangladeshi migrants

Indian police have detained 1,024 Bangladeshi migrants in a sweeping crackdown in the western state of Gujarat aimed at deporting people living there illegally, the state government said yesterday. “Police forces collectively detained 1,024 illegal Bangladeshi nationals during an overnight operation,” the Gujarat government said in a statement.

Gujarat’s Home Minister Harsh Sanghavi had given a two-day ultimatum for remaining Bangladeshis in the state illegally to surrender voluntarily, it added.

Police are also investigating a network based in West Bengal state for producing counterfeit identity documents. Following legal procedures, the detained individuals will be deported to Bangladesh, the statement said.

Initial investigations have revealed that the detainees were involved in narcotics, human trafficking, and other illegal activities, police said. Lax border controls have ensured the entry of millions of Bangladeshi nationals into India over the years.

Relations between India and Bangladesh have nosedived since a revolution in Dhaka last August ousted leader Sheikh Hasina, who was a long-term New Delhi ally. Hasina, who fled to India, has defied extradition requests from Bangladesh to face charges including mass murder. (AFP)

Families unable to reunite as India-Pakistan border slams shut

AFP
Attari

Indian business owner Rishi Kumar Jisrani has spent two days watching a messy scramble of people haul suitcases and drop loved ones at the border with Pakistan before it shuts, with dwindling hopes his family will be allowed across.

As relations between Islamabad and New Delhi quickly deteriorate, the neighbouring nations have scrapped visas and expelled each other’s citizens, giving people just days to get to the frontier before it closes. Jisrani, 39, fears it is already too late, with his Pakistani wife and their two children now stuck on the other side. “They have told her that they can allow my children to come back, since they are Indian passport holders, but not her,” he said, adding that he has received no advice from the Indian side. “How can we separate a mother from her children?”

Since India accused Pakistan of backing a deadly April 22 attack on tourists in Pahalgam – claims Islamabad denies – the two countries have exchanged gunfire and diplomatic barbs. And at the busy Attari-Wagah border crossing, the fraying ties are painfully tearing apart the many families that straddle the divide. There were no im-



Indian citizens speak to media personnel upon their return from Pakistan through the India-Pakistan Wagah border post, about 35km from Amritsar yesterday after Islamabad cancelled visas of Indian nationals in response to New Delhi’s withdrawal of visas for Pakistanis.

mediate figures on how many citizens of either nationality are in each other’s countries and are expected to cross. Yesterday, a steady trickle of cars and rickshaws brought those leaving to the border, with relatives waving farewell at a police barricade. Indian citizen Anees Mohammad, 41, managed to get his 76-year-old aunt, Shehar Bano, to the border just ahead of India’s April 29 deadline to leave. “She is old and sick and had come here to meet everyone in the family,” said Mohammad, from Indore in India’s Madhya Pradesh state.

Exhausted and emotional, he mopped his brow in the blaz-

ing midday heat as he bid his aunt goodbye. “No one knows when and if we will meet again.” At the frontier, the cleavage of families has painful historical precedent. The end of British rule in 1947 violently partitioned the sub-continent into Hindu-majority India and Muslim-majority Pakistan.

This week’s expulsion orders add to longstanding distress for families of mixed nationalities, who often struggle to obtain visas. Jisrani said his wife, Savita Kumari, 35, is a Hindu like him and has a long-term Indian visa. She has previously used that to travel from her home in India to visit her wider family in Pakistan.



An Indian Border Security Force personnel inspects passport and documents of Pakistani citizens returning to their country through the India-Pakistan Attari-Wagah border post, about 35km from Amritsar, after New Delhi withdrew visas for Pakistanis.

But that did not make a difference amid the latest tumult. Yesterday, the hostilities did not appear to be de-escalating. The Indian army said its troops traded gunfire with Pakistan for a second day running, while Islamabad vowed to defend its sovereignty.

Indian doctor Vikram Udasi, 37, said he and his Pakistani wife both rushed to reach the border crossing when the closure was announced, but arrived just too late. “My wife and our four-year-old boy, Aahan, went there to meet her mother and the rest of the family,” said Udasi.

He has been at the crossing since Friday, while his wife and their child

are barred by officers barely a kilometre away. “They are now stuck on the other side. They are not being allowed back. They are asking my wife to send the child,” he said. “Please allow them to return. Go ahead, cancel tourist and other short-term visas, but let those with families and long-term visas to return, please.”

He condemned the attack in Kashmir, but despaired of the fallout on ordinary citizens like himself. “Whatever the issues between the two governments, it is us who are bearing the brunt of it,” he said. “We are caught in the middle of it, suffering.”

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GULF TIMES

Realising Mena region’s potential depends on navigating risks, much-needed reforms

The global economy is facing heightened uncertainty, clouding economic forecasts. For instance, growth in the Middle East and North Africa (Mena) averaged a modest 1.9% in 2024. And Mena growth is forecast to moderately accelerate to 2.6% this year and 3.7% in 2026, according to World Bank in its recent estimates.

These forecasts, however, are shrouded in uncertainty, given the potential impacts of changing trade dynamics on global growth, inflation, and oil markets. Conflict has dialled back development across the region, and the effects will remain for a long while after, compounding a history of chronic low growth.

The region, barring the GCC, has low standards of living, with consumption per capita at only 19% of the frontier.

Low total factor productivity accounts for between a third and a half of this gap. A dynamic private sector is essential to close it.

Businesses can fuel growth, generate jobs, improve livelihoods and serve as an engine of innovation in the economy. But overall, the private sector in Mena is not dynamic.

Labour productivity growth is largely declining across the region. Few firms invest and innovate. There is little entry into and exit from markets.

Mena needs a more dynamic private sector and greater inclusion of women to drive growth, says the World Bank

sector in Mena is ill prepared to deal with shocks such as conflict and extreme weather events, although there are hints that businesses adapt in the face of adversity, the World Bank noted.

Shifting Gears explores the critical role of the private sector in driving growth, creating jobs and spurring innovation. Stronger growth in the region has been held back by the absence of a thriving private sector.

To boost the performance of the private sector, the World Bank suggests governments in the region may need to rethink their role. Promoting competition in markets, levelling the playing field for private and state-affiliated firms, and fostering a business-friendly environment could go far toward unleashing the growth potential of the region.

Embracing data openness and evidence-based policymaking could guide the path forward, including the constant evaluation of industrial policy, which is a topic of debate among policymakers and economists around the world.

Businesses themselves can build capacity by improving their management practices. At the same time, harnessing the untapped talent of women entrepreneurs and workers could foster growth.

“The region has long underused human capital. Women are largely left out of the labour market. Businesses can find more talent by attracting women leaders, who in turn will hire more women,” said Ousmane Dione, World Bank Vice-President for the Middle East and North Africa.

“Closing the gender employment gap could substantially boost income per capita by around 50% in a typical Mena economy.”

Both governments and businesses play complementary roles in developing a more dynamic private sector. Governments in the region can boost the performance of firms by promoting competition in markets, improving the business environment, and investing in data collection and access.

“A dynamic private sector is essential to unlocking sustainable growth and prosperity in the region,” added Roberta Gatti, World Bank Chief Economist for the Middle East and North Africa.

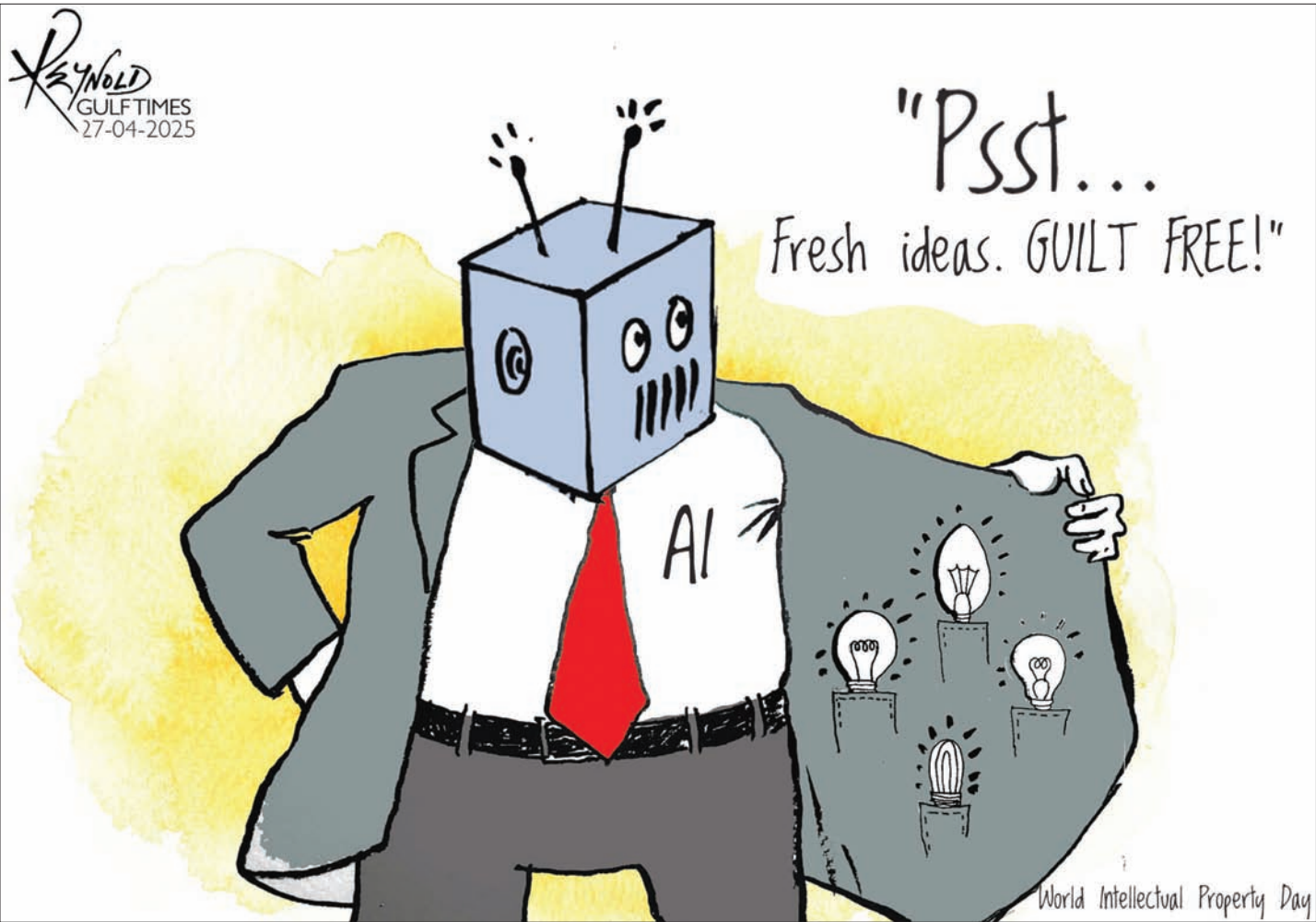
“To realise this potential, governments across the region must embrace their role as stewards of competitive markets.”

Businesses themselves can build capacity by improving their management practices. Harnessing the untapped talent of women entrepreneurs and workers could foster growth.

The report contends that a brighter future for the Mena private sector is within reach if governments rethink their role and firms effectively invest and harness talent.

Moreover, a divide persists between a small formal private sector and a large informal sector. Notwithstanding increased schooling, with lower secondary education completion rates averaging around 70%, the region (with the exception of the GCC) has long underused human capital.

Women are largely left out of the labour market, in Mena region outside of the GCC. As a result of these challenges, the private



Qatar, UK boost historic ties through strategic dialogue

The Qatar-UK relationship is deeply rooted and historic, spanning decades and built on pillars of understanding, collaboration, mutual respect, and a shared aspiration to advance the interests of both peoples. In recent years, this bond has strengthened further, expanding across health, education, science, culture, sport, and beyond.

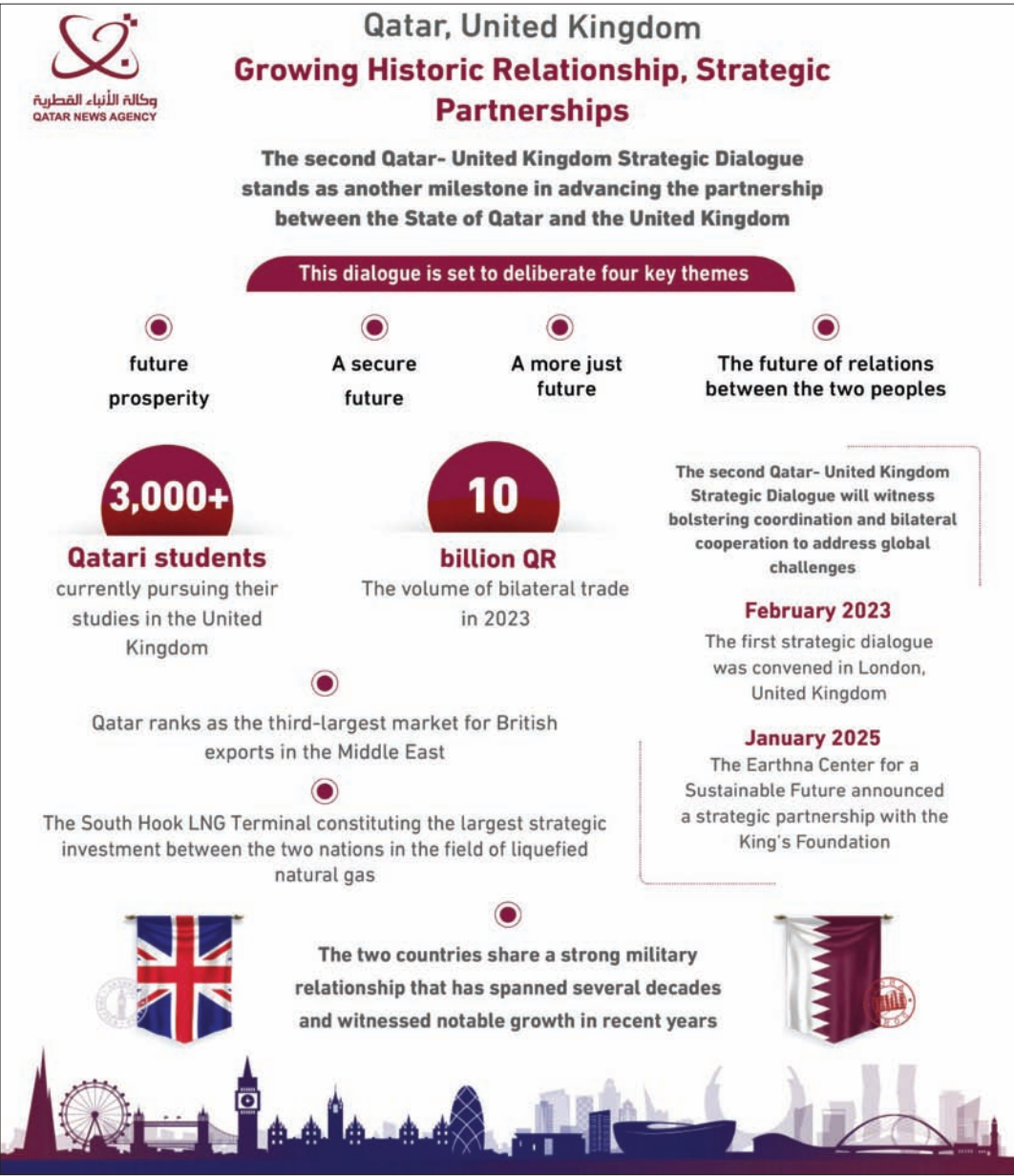
A testament to this enduring partnership is the Second Qatar-UK Strategic Dialogue held in Doha, co-chaired by His Excellency the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani and the UK Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, David Lammy. Convened under the theme “Partners for the Future”, the dialogue reaffirms the commitment of both nations to enhancing co-operation across various sectors.

The dialogue follows His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani’s visit to London in December 2024, at the invitation of His Majesty King Charles III, during which talks were held with UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer. Discussions centred on fostering trade and investment partnerships, addressing global challenges, advancing technological innovation, promoting a sustainable green transition, enhancing life sciences, supporting creative industries, strengthening cultural co-operation, and continuing collaboration in conflict resolution.

The Strategic Dialogue is set to focus on four key themes: future prosperity, a secure future, a more just future, and the future of relations between the two peoples. Under these pillars, eight working groups will address defence, security, counterterrorism, trade and investment, science and innovation, development, mediation, culture, education, heritage, and health. New working groups will also be launched, focusing on technology, innovation, science, and health, with particular emphasis on advanced technology, artificial intelligence, and the use of health data to enhance healthcare applications.

This dialogue will deepen the Qatar-UK partnership across economy, trade, investment, defence, and security, while boosting bilateral co-ordination to tackle global challenges. It will culminate in the first meeting of the development working group and the establishment of a mediation task force. Both countries have pledged \$100mn in humanitarian and development funding to explore joint programmes in priority areas including Gaza, Sudan, Syria, Yemen, Somalia, and Bangladesh, alongside capacity-building initiatives in peace and conflict resolution.

High-level reciprocal visits, ministerial exchanges, and specialised delegations have further bolstered ties. This momentum reflects Qatar’s



strategic vision under Qatar National Vision 2030, which aspires to build a diversified, knowledge-based economy and position Qatar as a global hub for innovation, whilst expanding partnerships across the economy, energy, education, health, sport, and security sectors.

His Highness the Amir’s December 2024 state visit to London underscored the significance of these relations. In the security domain, the National Counter-Terrorism Committee recently hosted the second meeting of the Qatar-United Kingdom Counter-Terrorism Working Group at the Ministry of Interior, reinforcing collaboration in security and counter-terrorism.

In January 2025, the Earthna Centre for a Sustainable Future, part of Qatar Foundation, announced a strategic partnership with The King’s Foundation, a charity established by His Majesty King Charles III. The announcement, made at Dumfries House in Scotland and attended by Her Excellency Sheikhha Hind bint Hamad al-Thani, Vice-Chairperson and CEO of Qatar Foundation, will see four pilot projects launched in India, Guyana, Sierra Leone, and Tanzania. These projects will harness traditional knowledge to highlight the value of cultural heritage in addressing

contemporary environmental challenges.

Economically, the two nations are bound by significant ties. Bilateral trade exceeded QR10bn in 2023, including QR6.1bn in Qatari exports to the United Kingdom. Qatari investments in Britain have reached approximately £40bn, spanning key assets such as Heathrow Airport, Harrods, British Airways, and other major British brands. These investments have contributed to economic growth, job creation, and innovation in both countries.

The United Kingdom remains a vital trading partner for Qatar, while Qatar ranks as the third-largest market for British exports within the Middle East and North Africa region. Over 79 British companies operate in Qatar across sectors such as oil and gas, infrastructure, and information technology, alongside more than 650 Qatari-British joint venture companies active in engineering consultancy, construction, information technology, trade, and services.

Energy co-operation is a cornerstone of the bilateral relationship. Qatar is a key partner for the United Kingdom in this sector, with the South Hook LNG Terminal representing the largest strategic investment between the two countries in

liquefied natural gas. Operational since 2009, the terminal—owned by QatarEnergy (70%) and ExxonMobil (30%)—secures about 30% of Britain’s annual natural gas needs. With the British government’s plans to diversify energy imports, this co-operation is poised to deepen further between 2030 and 2040.

Military collaboration has equally flourished. The Qatar-UK defence relationship has expanded significantly, highlighted by the establishment of the joint Typhoon and Hawk air squadrons—the first joint squadrons created by the United Kingdom since the Second World War. This co-operation stands as a pillar of their defence partnership.

Education remains a central aspect of bilateral co-operation. The United Kingdom is the leading destination for Qatari students, with over 3,000 currently enrolled. In Qatar, seven British universities host around 3,300 students. Additionally, there are approximately 50 British schools operating in Qatar, supplemented by over 100 schools applying the British curriculum.

In sum, the Qatar-UK relationship continues to strengthen across multiple sectors, driven by shared values, mutual interests, and a joint commitment to a prosperous, secure, and innovative future. (QNA)

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Pope is laid to rest amid sea of mourners

AFP
Rome

Hundreds of thousands of mourners joined world leaders, including US President Donald Trump, to bid farewell yesterday to Pope Francis, a champion of the poor who strived to forge a more compassionate Catholic church.

The Vatican said 400,000 people packed St Peter's Square and lined the streets of Rome for the funeral of the first Latin American leader of the world's 1.4bn Catholics.

After a solemn funeral, the Argentine pontiff's plain wooden coffin — a testament to a life of humility — was driven slowly to Rome's Santa Maria Maggiore church, where he was interred in a private ceremony.

Cardinals marked his coffin with red wax seals before it was lowered into a tomb set inside an alcove, according to images released by the Vatican.

Guatemalan Maria Vicente, 52, holding a rosary, cried as she watched the coffin being carried into Santa Maria Maggiore, the Pope's favourite Roman church.

"It made me very sad. It's touching that he left us like that," she said.

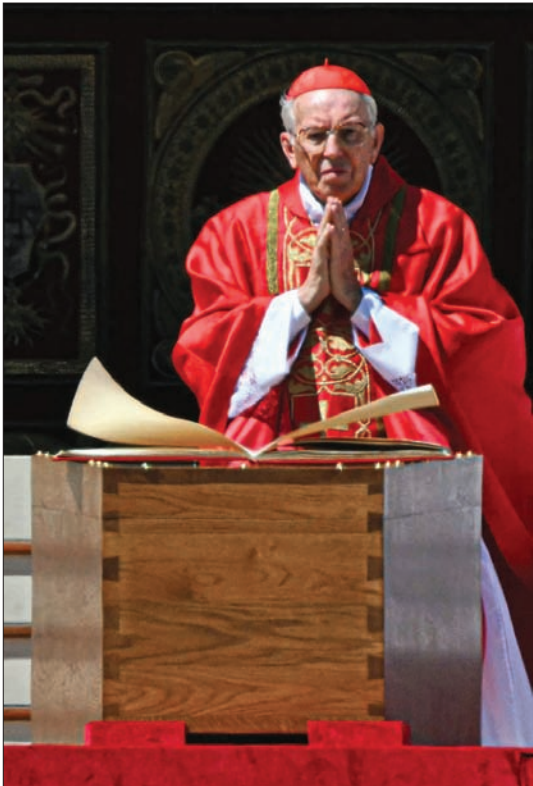
The marble tomb is inscribed with just one word: "Franciscus", his papal name in Latin.

Trump was among more than 50 heads of state paying tribute to Pope Francis, who died on Monday aged 88 after suffering a stroke.

Francis was "a Pope among the people, with an open heart", who strove for a more compassionate, open-minded Catholic Church, said Cardinal Giovanni Battista Re who led the service.

There was applause from the masses gathered under bright blue skies as he hailed the Pope's "conviction that the Church is a home for all, a home with its doors always open".

Among the mourners were many tourists enjoying Rome in the spring, and thousands of pilgrims who had planned to attend the Sunday canonisation of Car-



Italian cardinal Giovanni Battista Re officiates near the coffin of late Pope Francis during the funeral ceremony at St Peter's Square in the Vatican. (AFP)

lo Acutis, which was postponed after Francis died.

But there has been a genuine outpouring of emotion following the death of a Pope who sought to steer the Church towards a more inclusive direction during his 12-year-long papacy.

Maria Mrula, 28, a student from Germany, said she drove 16 hours to be at the funeral.

By "giving to the poor and being with the poor", Francis had inspired many, she said.

"The Church is alive," she said. "It was great being here."

Italian and Vatican authorities mounted a major security operation for the ceremony, with fighter jets on standby and snipers positioned on roofs surrounding the tiny city state.

Red-robed cardinals and purple-hatted bishops sat on one side of the altar in St Peter's Square during the funeral, with world dignitaries sitting oppo-

sition. In front of the altar lay the Pope's simple cypress coffin, in-laid with a pale cross.

The funeral set off nine days of official Vatican mourning for Francis, who took over following the resignation of Pope Benedict XVI in 2013.

After the mourning, cardinals aged under 80 will elect a new Pope from among their number.

Many of Francis's reforms angered traditionalists, while his criticism of injustices, from the treatment of migrants to the damage wrought by global warming, riled many world leaders.

Yet the former archbishop of Buenos Aires's compassion and charisma earned him global affection and respect.

"His gestures and exhortations in favour of refugees and displaced persons are countless," Battista Re said.

He recalled the first trip of Francis's papacy to Lampedusa,

an Italian island that has become the initial port of call for many migrants crossing the Mediterranean, as well as when the Argentine celebrated mass on the border between Mexico and the United States.

Trump's administration drew the pontiff's ire for its mass deportation of migrants, but the president has paid tribute to "a good man" who "loved the world".

In the homily, Battista Re highlighted Francis's incessant calls for peace, and said he had urged "reason and honest negotiation" in efforts to end conflicts raging around the world.

"Build bridges, not walls' was an exhortation he repeated many times," the cardinal said.

Trump's predecessor, Joe Biden also attended the funeral, alongside UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, Germany's Olaf Scholz, Italy's Giorgia Meloni, and Lebanon's Joseph Aoun.



Devotees attend Pope Francis' funeral ceremony at St Peter's Square in the Vatican. (AFP)

Trump casts doubts on Putin after talks with Zelensky

AFP
Rome

Donald Trump and Volodymyr Zelensky met briefly in the hush of St Peter's basilica before Pope Francis's funeral yesterday in their first encounter since a noisy White House clash and the US president later cast doubt on whether Russian leader Vladimir Putin wants a peace deal.

Zelensky said they discussed a possible unconditional ceasefire with Russia and was "hoping for results" from a "very symbolic meeting that has the potential to become historic".

After leaving Rome, Trump indicated a new approach to the Russian president.

"There was no reason for Putin to be shooting missiles into civilian areas, cities and towns, over the last few days," Trump said in a post on his Truth Social platform.

"It makes me think that maybe he doesn't want to stop the war, he's just tapping me along, and has to be dealt with differently, through 'Banking' or 'Secondary



Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky (right) meets with US President Donald Trump on the sidelines of Pope Francis's funeral at St Peter's Basilica at The Vatican yesterday. (AFP)

Sanctions?" Too many people are dying!!!"

The war cast a shadow over Francis's funeral. As it took place, Russia claimed its forces had "fully liberated" the border Kursk region.

Trump and Zelensky sat face-to-face, leaning forward in deep discussion in a corner of the basilica, as the pope's wooden coffin lay in front of the altar before the funeral began, according to images released by the Ukrainian presidency.

"We discussed a lot one on one. Hoping for results on everything we covered. Protecting lives of our people. Full and unconditional ceasefire. Reliable and lasting peace that will prevent another war from breaking out," Zelensky wrote on X.

An aide to Zelensky described the meeting as "constructive" and the White House called it "a very productive discussion".

The US president flew out of

Rome immediately after the funeral mass and there were no further talks.

But the two leaders also briefly huddled inside the basilica with British Prime Minister Keir Starmer and Emmanuel Macron.

Macron's office described the exchanges as "positive" and he later met Zelensky one-on-one.

Britain said Starmer and Zelensky "discussed positive progress made in recent days" and agreed to "continue working intensively with international partners to drive forward the next stages of planning".

After arriving in Rome, Trump said there had been progress in talks and pushed for the Russian and Ukrainian leaders to meet.

"They are very close to a deal, and the two sides should now meet, at very high levels, to 'finish it off'" he posted on his Truth Social platform.

"Most of the major points are agreed to," he said.

Pakistan 'open to neutral probe into Kashmir attack'

AFP
Islamabad

Pakistan's leader said his nation was open to a neutral investigation yesterday into a deadly attack in Indian-administered Kashmir that New Delhi blames on Islamabad, and that has sent fraught relations into a tailspin with soldiers exchanging gunfire across their contested frontier.

Islamabad denies involvement in the April 22 attack on tourists in Pahalgam, where a gang of gunmen killed 26 men in the worst attack on civilians in Kashmir for a quarter of a century.

But India is adamant in it is accusation that Pakistan is supporting "cross-border terrorism".

Indian police have issued wanted posters for three men — two Pakistanis and an Indian — who they say are members of the Pakistan-based Lashkar-e-Taiba group, a UN-designated terrorist organisation.

Rejecting Indian claims, Pakistan's Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif yesterday said the country was "open to participating in any neutral, transparent and credible investigation" into the attack.

Indian security forces have launched a giant manhunt for those responsible for the attack in Pahalgam, blowing up homes in Kashmir of Indian citizens suspected to be linked to the attack.

Both sides have imposed a slew of diplomatic measures, and exchanged gunfire in Kashmir two times in as many days.

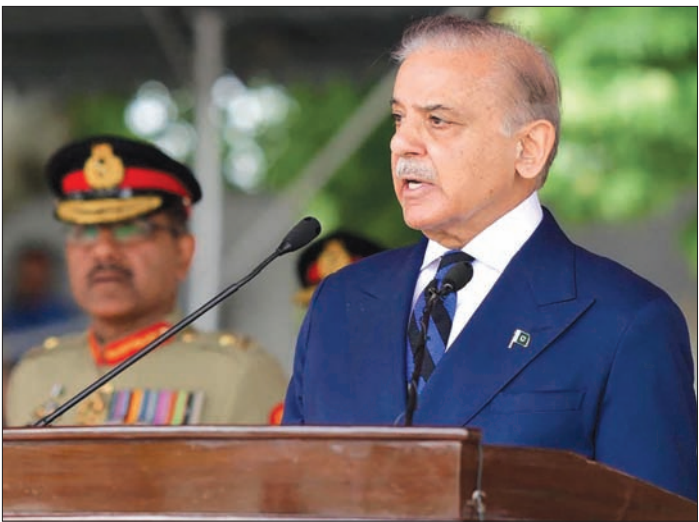
India's army said "unprovoked" small arms firing was carried out by "multiple" Pakistan Army posts overnight.

"Indian troops responded appropriately with small arms," it said in a statement, adding that no casualties were reported.

There was no confirmation from Pakistan, but both sides had confirmed gunfire between their respective forces the previous night.

"Our valiant armed forces remain fully capable and prepared to defend the country's sovereignty," Sharif said at a military ceremony in Abbottabad.

India's information ministry



Pakistan's Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif speaks while attending a passing out parade at the Pakistan Military Academy Kakul in Abbottabad yesterday. (AFP)

India, Pakistan to settle dispute 'one way or another': Trump

US President Donald Trump has downplayed concerns over mounting tensions between India and Pakistan, saying the dispute between the nuclear-armed neighbours will get "figured out, one way or another".

Trump was asked aboard Air Force One about crumbling relations between India and Pakistan as the fallout deepens from a deadly attack on civilians by gunmen in Indian-administered Kashmir.

"There have been tensions on that border for 1,500 years so, you know, it's the same as it has been," Trump told reporters.

"But they'll get it figured out, one way or another." - AFP

yesterday warned broadcasters to "refrain from showing live coverage of defence operations" in the "interest of national security", and referencing the 1999 Kargil conflict with Pakistan.

The United Nations has urged the neighbours, which have fought multiple wars, to show "maximum restraint".

Iran's foreign ministry said yesterday that Tehran has offered to play mediator, a day after a senior Saudi official said Riyadh was trying to "prevent an escalation".

US President Donald Trump has downplayed the tensions, saying that the dispute will get "figured out, one way or another".

Kashmir has been divided between India and Pakistan since their independence in 1947. Both claim the territory in full but gov-

ern separate portions of it. Rebel groups have waged an insurgency in Indian-controlled Kashmir since 1989, demanding independence or a merger with Pakistan. A day after the attack, New Delhi suspended a water-sharing treaty, announced the closure of the main land border crossing with Pakistan, downgraded diplomatic ties and withdrew visas for Pakistanis.

Catholics around the world held events to watch the proceedings live, including in Buenos Aires, where Francis was born as Jorge Bergoglio in the poor neighbourhood of Flores in 1936.

"The Pope showed us that there was another way to live the faith," said Lara Amado, 25, in the Argentine capital.

Francis's admirers credit him with transforming perceptions of the Church and helping revive the faith following decades of clerical sex abuse scandals.

Pope Francis strove for "a Church determined to take care of the problems of people and the great anxieties that tear the contemporary world apart", Battista Re said.

Napoleon's personal use sword to be sold at an auction in Paris

AFP
Paris

A sword that belonged to Napoleon and was specially ordered for the personal use of the French emperor is to be auctioned in Paris next month, the auction house said.

Napoleon ordered the sabre in 1802 and kept it throughout his reign.

The Giquello auction firm said on Friday it expected the sword to reach €700,000 to 1mn (\$800,000

to \$1.1mn) when it goes under the hammer in Paris on May 22.

Napoleon passed the sabre on to his close ally Emmanuel de Grouchy, who the French emperor named his last marshal of the empire. The sword has been in Grouchy's family since 1815, the year of Napoleon's last defeat at the Battle of Waterloo.

A second copy, identical to this one and also commissioned by Napoleon, is kept at the Hermitage Museum in Saint Petersburg, Russia. Napoleon memorabilia regularly comes up for sale at auc-

tion in France in a flourishing trade marked by intense interest from collectors.

Two pistols that he once intended to use to kill himself were sold in France last July for €1.7mn, while one of his trademark "bicorne" hats set a record price for his possessions when it was acquired for €1.9mn in November 2023.

A hand-written letter from Napoleon denying his role in the kidnapping of Pope Pius VII in 1809 is to go under the hammer this weekend outside Paris and is expected to reach €12,000-15,000.



Snapshots from the opening of the 'Latin America and the Caribbean Cultural Festival' at Katara.

Latin America and Caribbean Culture Fest opens at Katara



Under the patronage of Katara Cultural Village, the “Latin America and Caribbean Cultural Festival” officially kicked off yesterday evening.

The festival runs from April 26-30, with wide participation of the Latin American and Caribbean embassies accredited in Qatar.

The opening ceremony was attended by Katara deputy general manager and human resources director Saif Saad al-Dosari, alongside Katara Centre for Public Diplomacy Maryam al-Saad, who is also the Katara director of international affairs, in addition to a notable presence of officials, diplomats, and a large public audience.

The festival began with the opening of a photography and art exhibition in Building 47, Halls 1 and 2, at 5pm, followed by a film screening presented by the Uruguayan embassy in Building 15 at Katara at 6pm.

Visitors had the opportunity to explore various aspects of the Latin American and Caribbean culture and arts.

The festival's programme features a rich variety of events, including musical performances, concerts, and art exhibitions highlighting the cultural heritage



of the peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean.

The concerts and performances will be held at several venues within Katara, notably the Drama Theatre and the open courtyard of Building 47, offering visitors authentic artistic experiences that reflect the vibrant spirit of the region.

“The Latin America and Caribbean Festival is a unique cultural event that offers audiences in Qatar a rare opportunity to discover cultures that, while geographically distant, are closely connected through the shared human values,” said al-Saad. “The carefully curated events express the rich and diverse heritage of Latin American and Caribbean countries.”

She noted that Katara is keen on launching such initiatives that support its mission to build bridges of understanding among peoples and promote cultural diversity.

The Latin America and Caribbean Cultural Festival is part of the series of international cultural events hosted annually by Katara, aiming to enhance cultural exchange and promote civilisational

PROZTEC Crowned “Best Employer Brand” at Middle East Leadership Awards 2025



In a landmark recognition of its outstanding workplace culture and transformative leadership, PROZTEC has been awarded the prestigious “Best Employer Brand” at the Middle East Leadership Awards 2025. The award ceremony took place at the opulent Taj Dubai, Business Bay, where the honor was presented by Lady Hikmat Al Kaitoob—Board Advisor of Emirates BPW, Advisor/Ambassador for the U.A.E., and Chief Community Officer of the AFC, globally celebrated philanthropist and visionary entrepreneur.

This distinguished accolade is more than a corporate recognition—it is a testament to PROZTEC’s steadfast dedication to innovation, employee-focused values, and excellence in talent management. Under the visionary leadership of CEO Mr. S. Rizwan Shah, PROZTEC has emerged as a symbol of modern organizational excellence, where people are central to success and innovation is a shared mission.

“We are deeply honored to be named the Best Employer Brand in the Middle East,” Mr. Shah stated. “This award reflects our core belief that people are the true architects of innovation.”

With a focus on future-readiness, PROZTEC promotes cross-sector digital integration and nurtures an environment where innovation thrives and digital literacy becomes a national strength. At the heart of Mr. Shah’s mission lies a deep commitment to cultivating a new generation of forward-thinking, purpose-driven leaders—equipped not only with advanced digital capabilities but with an entrepreneurial mindset and adaptive resilience to navigate a fast-evolving world.

Through this commitment, he is laying the groundwork for a resilient, inclusive digital economy, positioning Qatar as a regional hub for digital excellence, intelligent automation, and innovation-led growth. His vision has driven PROZTEC to align itself with global best practices, putting people and progress at the forefront of every initiative.



Established in 2012, PROZTEC has rapidly evolved into one of Qatar’s most agile and influential players in the digital transformation and ICT innovation landscape. Its broad portfolio includes IT Consultancy & Managed Services, Technical Implementation & Support, Corporate Training & Capacity Building, Intelligent Automation, Robotic Process Automation (RPA), Business Process Management (BPM), and Advanced Analytics.

This accolade adds to a growing list of achievements, including PROZTEC’s recent ranking among the Top 3 ICT Service Providers at the 2024 Qatar Digital Business Awards, hosted by the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology. Additionally, PROZTEC received the Best Business Excellence Certificate from the BIZZ Awards 2024, organized by the World Confederation of Businesses (WORLDCOB), recognizing global excellence in leadership, innovation, and corporate responsibility.

PROZTEC’s rise as an employer of choice is deeply rooted in its human-centric philosophy—characterized by transparent leadership, agile HR strategies, and a culture of continuous improvement. The company fosters psychological safety, inclusive collaboration, and a shared sense of purpose, empowering employees with autonomy, trust, and the tools needed to thrive.

This milestone reflects not only organizational success but also the exceptional leadership of Mr. Rizwan Shah. His blend of strategic foresight, resilience, and integrity has cultivated a workplace grounded in trust, diversity, and sustained excellence—attracting top-tier talent and delivering unmatched value to clients and partners alike.

As PROZTEC accelerates its regional and global expansion, the company remains firmly aligned with Qatar National Vision 2030—championing intelligent, sustainable, and future-ready solutions. This recognition is not just a corporate milestone—it symbolizes a movement powered by people, driven by purpose, and led with passion.



QYH organises tours for people with disabilities from Bahrain

Qatar Youth Hostels (QYH) organised tours for the first time for a youth delegation from the Bahrain Youth Hostels for people with disabilities, from April 20-25, as part of the “Discover Qatar in 144 Hours” programme.

Qatar Youth Hostels stated: “We are pleased to welcome the first youth delegation for people with disabilities from the Bahrain Youth Hostels from the Kingdom of Bahrain as part of the Discover Qatar in 144 Hours programme.”

“We welcomed them as group because of their importance, their long-standing influence, and their effective role in developing all aspects of life,” the QYH said.

“This exceptional and beautiful experience is the first for the delegation from the Kingdom of Bahrain,” the QYH continued. “They visited several tourist attractions and archaeological sites across the country.”

“From north to south and from east to west, including Al Zubarah Fort and City, Ain Mohammed Village, Old Doha Port, the Museum of Islamic Art and the National Museum of Qatar, Education City, Qatar National Library, Education City World Cup Stadium, Sheikh Faisal Bin Qassim Al-Thani Museum, Souq Waqif and Msheireb City, Ashghal (Water Treatment Plant), Katara Cultural Village, the 3-2-1 Qatar Olympic and Sports Museum, the Mohammed bin Abdul Wahhab Mosque, Al-Hadaia School for Boys with Special Needs – Messila, a safari tour in Sealine, and Bin Ghannam Island,” the QYH said.

“We are delighted with this first and unique experience with people with disabilities, and we aim to increase their participation in our activities,” it added. “We believe in their abilities and great potential to integrate with other sections of society, as they are an integral part of society.”