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Integrated monitoring plan to ensure food safety during Ramadan

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DOHA: The Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) has prepared an integrated monitoring plan to ensure food safety in the State of Qatar during the holy month of Ramadan. This is part of its ongoing efforts to maintain food health and safety, promote public health, and protect consumers during the holy month as the demand for food-stuffs is increasing.

The plan is built on several key components, including the regulation of both imported and local food, the provision of food safety laboratory services, and the promotion of health awareness among consumers. It takes into account the unique characteristics of the fasting month, during which consumption patterns change and the demand for

certain food items increases.

The Ministry has also initiated an awareness campaign to promote a culture of food safety among all parties in the food chain, including consumers and food establishments. This campaign features awareness messages shared through social media to increase understanding of food safety rules and prevent foodborne diseases.

In February, MoPH reported that a total of 8,914,053 tonnes of foodstuffs were imported. Out of this, 6,969,738 tonnes were released after confirming their compliance with the necessary requirements. However, 52,550 tons were rejected, and 8,739 tons were destroyed due to violations of the relevant technical regulations and standards.

The number of food inspectors at land, sea, and air

● *Samples of food products are collected from local food outlets and establishments for examination at the Food Safety Laboratory of the Ministry of Public Health.*



ports has been increased to enhance the effectiveness of the inspection schedule. This adjustment addresses the rise in food consignments received in the State of Qatar during this period. Health units at the ports operate around the clock in shifts to ensure a smooth and efficient monitoring process,

facilitating the flow of goods to meet market needs.

As for local control, The Food Safety Department at the Ministry of Public Health has enhanced its control and inspection efforts regarding food safety during the month of Ramadan. They are focusing on food products, circulation

points, and handlers to ensure the safety of what is handled, marketed, and consumed. Food safety monitoring has also been intensified at establishments most frequented by consumers, such as consumer associations, hypermarkets, and popular kitchens. In February, a total of 1,915 inspection visits were conducted, resulting in the withdrawal of 1,352 food samples for testing.

This month, over 80 popular kitchens were visited, focusing on those that provide Iftar tables and Ramadan tents. The Ministry of Public Health organised an awareness workshop attended by 150 officials from these kitchens. The goal was to enhance their understanding of health requirements related to food handling at all stages, including preparation, storage,

transportation, and receipt. The workshop also covered essential topics such as general and personal hygiene, as well as health practices within food establishments, to ensure the safety of food products.

To ensure food safety and compliance with standards and regulations, samples of food products are collected from local food outlets and establishments for examination at the Food Safety Laboratory of the Ministry of Public Health. During the blessed month, the laboratory operates in three shifts, from 9am to 12pm, in order to increase its capacity in response to intensified control procedures, as currently this month, the laboratory has received a total of 3,297 food samples and conducted 31776 laboratory tests on them.

Qatar calls for bringing all Israeli nuclear facilities under IAEA safeguards

VIENNA: Qatar has called for intensified international efforts to bring all Israeli nuclear facilities under the safeguards of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and for Israel to join the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) as a non-nuclear state.

This came in a statement delivered by Qatar's Ambassador and Permanent Representative to the United Nations Office and International Organizations in Vienna, H E Jassim Yacoub Al Hammadi, before the session of

the IAEA Board of Governors in Vienna, which addressed the situation in the occupied Palestinian territories and Israel's nuclear capabilities.

Al Hammadi underscored the need for the international community and its institutions to uphold their commitments under resolutions of the UN Security Council, the UN General Assembly, the IAEA, and the 1995 Review Conference of the NPT, which called on Israel to subject all its nuclear facilities to IAEA safeguards. He noted that some of these resolutions explicitly urged Israel to join the NPT as a non-nuclear state.

He pointed out that all Middle Eastern countries, except Israel, are parties to the NPT and have effective safeguard agreements with the Agency. He further noted that Israel continues its aggressive policies, including increasing extremist calls for the forced displacement of the Palestinian people, intensifying military operations against cities and

refugee camps in the West Bank, blocking humanitarian aid to Gaza, and maintaining restrictions on the operations of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA).

Al Hammadi also stated that the State of Qatar submitted a written memorandum last week to the International Court of Justice (ICJ) regarding a request for an advisory opinion based on the UN General Assembly resolution of December 19, 2024.

The request seeks clarification on Israel's obligations concerning the activities of the United Nations, other international organizations, and third-party states.

He emphasised that Qatar's memorandum affirmed Israel's duty to allow the UN and other international organizations, particularly UNRWA and humanitarian agencies, to operate in Israel and the occupied Palestinian territories. — QNA



Qatar chairs annual ministerial meeting of Group of Friends on Gender Parity

Minister of Social Development and Family H E Buthaina bint Ali Al Jabr Al Nuaimi, Secretary-General of the United Nations, H E Antonio Guterres during the annual ministerial meeting of the Group of Friends on Gender Parity, organised by the Permanent Delegation of Qatar to the United Nations in partnership with the Permanent Delegation of the Republic of Rwanda. The meeting took place on the sidelines of the 69th session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women. Minister of State for Education of the Republic of Rwanda, H E Claudette Irere, co-chaired the session.

Response to maiden Visit Qatar E1 Doha GP beyond expectation: E1 Series CEO

VICTOR BOLORUNDURO
THE PENINSULA

DOHA: The significant turnout at the inaugural Visit Qatar E1 Doha GP serves as a clear testament to the sport's remarkable expansion in the country and the enthusiasm of the populace for water sports, stated Rodi Basso (*pictured*), CEO and co-founder of E1 Series.

Speaking to *The Peninsula* on the sidelines of the two-day event held recently at The Pearl Qatar, Basso noted more than 20,000 people had signed up to attend the event with two days to its kickoff.

Tennis icon Rafael Nadal's Team Rafa achieved their inaugural victory in the UIM E1 World Championship presented by PIF, as the all-electric race boat series made its debut at the Visit Qatar E1 Doha GP.

"We had about 10,000 people in attendance at the Jeddah leg of the competition, but to have over 20,000 in a city like Doha, which is relatively smaller in size than Jeddah, it is something obviously huge. And the event was a resounding success in all ramifications," he said.

Basso added that the strategic partnerships with entities like Qatar's UDC and Visit Qatar contributed massively to the significant milestone. "This region



After hosting five races across two continents in Season 1, the 2024 calendar expands to seven locations in four continents, with plans to reach 15 races by Season 5.

understands the value of innovation and tradition," he said, praising Qatar's infrastructure and cultural balance.

In its sophomore season, E1 is already accelerating beyond expectations. After hosting five races across two continents in Season 1, the 2024 calendar expands to seven locations in four continents, with plans to reach 15 races by Season 5.

"We're in Doha because of its deep

connection to the sea," Basso said, highlighting the region's historical ties to maritime culture. "Even before oil, this was a place built on water. That heritage resonates with our mission, and we are very happy to be having the event here."

Basso's journey to E1 reads like a thriller. An aerospace engineer who cut his teeth at NASA and later transitioned to Formula One with Ferrari, Basso spent 25 years pushing the boundaries of high-tech sports innovation. His expertise in electric propulsion and data intelligence led him to collaborate with McLaren Technologies and Lucid Motors, where he co-developed the battery for Formula E's second-generation cars. It was during this time that he connected with Alejandro Agag, co-founder of Formula E and now E1.

"Everything started when Alejandro invested in a startup aiming to build a commercial electric foiling boat," Basso recalls. "Given my background, he asked for help. Within 24 hours, I drafted a strategy for an 'electric Formula One on water.'"

The duo partnered with Saudi Arabia's Public Investment Fund (PIF), securing funding in just eight months—a lightning-fast turnaround attributed to E1's unique proposition: blending motorsport adrenaline with environmental purpose. ➔P5

MoCI initiative helps stabilise meat prices during Ramadan

SANAULLAH ATAULLAH
THE PENINSULA

DOHA: The national initiative to encourage local production and subsidised red meat for the holy month of Ramadan is greatly contributing to stabilising the prices of meat in the local market.

"The initiative which was launched by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MoCI) offered local sheep in large quantity for this year compared to the previous years to support the local product," said Dr. Mohammed bin Mubarak Al Ameri, Director of the Department of Quality Licenses and Market Control at MoCI.

In a post on the Ministry's X platform, he said that the initiative aims to ensure the availability of red meat to citizens at reasonable prices during the holy month and to contribute to achieving a balance between supply and demand, which contributes to price stability in the markets.

"The initiative will continue to the end of Ramadan. The beneficiary citizens can buy the subsidised sheep from Widam outlets operating across the country – Al Shamal, Al Khor, Umm Salal, Al Wakra and Al Sheehaniya," said Al Ameri.

He said that the Ministry is following up on sales operations

through the specialised inspection team, and is intensifying inspection campaigns on slaughterhouses to ensure compliance with the initiative's prices and controls during the holy month.

Director of Public Relations Department at Widam Food, Mussa Ahmed Al Othman said that Widam has been participating in the initiative of the MoCI for the last 15 years.

Speaking to Qatar TV recently, he said that under the initiative, the beneficiary citizens are being provided local sheep of 30kg and imported sheep of 50 kg at subsidised prices QR1,000 plus QR50 slaughtering and other services per head.

Al Othman said that the initiative, which is implemented during Ramadan and Eid Al Adha aims at providing meat, which is the main food commodity during these occasions.

He said that the initiative, which began on February 27 for this Ramadan, will continue till the end of the spiritual month. The subsidised products are available at Widam outlets, which operate from 7am to 4pm daily. "Beneficiary citizens can visit Widam outlets to collect their shares of subsidised sheep. Delivery service is available through the Widam app and its hotline," said Al Othman.

➔P2

Qatar chairs ministerial meeting of Group of Friends on Gender Parity

NEW YORK: The State of Qatar chaired the annual ministerial meeting of the Group of Friends on Gender Parity, organized by the Permanent Delegation of the State of Qatar to the United Nations in partnership with the Permanent Delegation of the Republic of Rwanda. The meeting took place on the margin of the 69th session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women.

Minister of Social Development and Family H E Buthaina bint Ali Al Jabr Al Nuaimi led the Qatari delegation to the meeting.

Secretary-General of the United Nations H E Antonio Guterres attended the meeting, alongside Minister of State for Education of the Republic of Rwanda, H E Claudette Irere, co-chaired the session. In her remarks, the Minister of Social Development and Family highlighted the significant progress made in advancing gender parity across the United Nations system.

She underscored that women in the State of Qatar hold leadership positions across various sectors and that the country leads the region in key empowerment indicators. These include the highest rate of women's participation in the workforce and the highest percentage of women enrolled in university programs.

Additionally, she emphasised that the policies and legislation adopted by the State of Qatar support work-life balance, further strengthening women's participation in both the public and private sectors — **QNA**.

GCC Ministerial Council lauds Qatar's efforts, supports Arab plan for Gaza

MAKKAH: The final statement of the GCC Ministerial Council praised the efforts made by the State of Qatar, the Arab Republic of Egypt, and the United States of America to reach a ceasefire agreement in the Gaza Strip.

It emphasised the necessity of adhering to the agreement, halting the Israeli aggression on Gaza, and completely withdrawing from the Strip and all Palestinian territories.

The Ministerial Council, which concluded its meetings in Makkah Al Mukarramah on Thursday, praised the State of Qatar for organizing the 2024 Doha Forum, in its 22nd iteration themed "The Imperative of Innovation", on December 7, 2024, providing a global platform for leading discussions on prominent global issues and challenges.

The Ministerial Council reviewed the developments in joint Gulf action and the

evolution of political issues regionally and internationally. It reiterated its commitment to the strength and cohesion of the GCC, the unity of its members, and the achievement of greater coordination, integration, and interconnectedness across all fields.

On the Situation in Gaza, the final statement affirmed the GCCs solidarity with the brotherly Palestinian people in Gaza and its surroundings, calling for an end to the blockade imposed on the Strip, alleviating the plight of the Palestinian people, ensuring safe delivery of all humanitarian aid and essentials to Gaza's residents.

The Ministerial Council affirmed its support for the Palestinian-Egyptian-Arab plan, adopted by the extraordinary Arab summit "Palestine Summit" held on March 4, 2025, in Cairo.

It stressed that the future

of the Gaza Strip should be within the context of a unified Palestinian state and the implementation of the two-state solution.

The Ministerial Council noted the efforts made by the GCC countries and Arab states on the political front to stop Israeli assaults on the Gaza Strip, the humanitarian and relief assistance provided by GCC countries to Gaza, and the popular campaigns to aid the Palestinian people and deliver humanitarian aid to the besieged residents.

The Ministerial Council stressed the importance of respecting the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of the sisterly Syrian Arab Republic, and rejecting foreign interference in its internal affairs, and that Syria's security and stability are a fundamental pillar of the stability of the region's security.

— **QNA**

Qatar and Rwanda discuss cooperation in New York

NEW YORK : Minister of Social Development and Family H E Buthaina bint Ali Al Jabr Al Nuaimi, met separately with Minister of State for Education of the Republic of Rwanda, H E Claudette Irere, and Executive Director of UN Women, H E Dr. Sima Bahous, on the margin of the annual ministerial meeting of the Group of Friends on Gender Parity, organised by the Permanent Delegation of the State of Qatar to the United Nations in partnership with the Permanent Delegation of the Republic of Rwanda.

Discussions during the meetings focused on the State of Qatar's bilateral cooperation with the Republic of Rwanda and UN Women, and ways to enhance it. The meetings also discussed a host of topics of mutual interest. — **QNA**

Qatar condemns crimes of outlaw groups in Syria

DOHA: The State of Qatar has condemned in the strongest terms the crimes committed by outlaw groups and their targeting of security forces in the sisterly Syrian Arab Republic.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs reiterated, in a statement on Friday, the solidarity of the State of Qatar with the Syrian government and its support for all measures it takes to consolidate civil peace and maintain security and stability in the country.

The Ministry renewed the State of Qatar's full support for Syria's sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity and to achieve the aspirations of its people for freedom, development and prosperity. — **QNA**

Qatar slams attack on UN helicopter in South Sudan

DOHA: The State of Qatar condemned in the strongest terms the attack on a United Nations helicopter in the Republic of South Sudan, which resulted in fatalities.

In a statement issued yesterday, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs considered this heinous attack a blatant violation of international law, offering the State of Qatar's condolences to the families of the victims. The Ministry emphasized the need to conduct an urgent investigation into the events surrounding the attack and to ensure that those involved are brought to justice. — **QNA**

Qatar condemns attack on security facilities in Pakistan

DOHA: The State of Qatar expressed its strong condemnation and denunciation of the attack that targeted a security facility in northwestern Pakistan, which resulted in deaths and injuries.

In a statement issued on Thursday, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs reiterated the State of Qatar's position rejecting violence, terrorism and criminal acts, regardless of the motives and reasons. The Ministry expressed the State of Qatar's condolences to the families of the victims, and to the government and people of Pakistan, and its wishes for a speedy recovery for the wounded. — **QNA**

Local farmer's markets see growing demand

DOHA: Assistant Director of the Agricultural Affairs Department at the Ministry of Municipality, Adel Al Yafei, said that the growing demand for local products during Ramadan at local produce sale yards reflects consumers' high level of satisfaction and growing trust in these marketplaces, as key sources for fresh vegetables and local products.

Speaking to Qatar News Agency (QNA), Al Yafei said that these yards or farmer's markets have underwent significant development and gained traction since their establishment in 2012, especially as service and product quality were improved.

He said that local produce sale yards reduce the number of intermediaries, provide competitive prices, preserve produce's nutritional value, increase farmers' profitability by up to 40 percent, as well as enabling a sustainable and flexible diet, supporting local production, and promoting local produce.

Al Yafei said that Ramadan this year occurs in March, the peak of



A view of a local farmer market.

agricultural production in Qatar, adding that local produce sale yards' opening hours during Ramadan are as follows: Farmer's markets at Al Khor, Al Dhakira, Al Shamal, Al Wakrah, and Al Shahania are open from 19:00 to 23:00 on Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays, whereas Al Mazrouah farmer's market in Umm Salal central market is open daily from

06:00 to 23:00.

He noted a number of initiatives to regulate prices during Ramadan to ensure that products are attainable at a reasonable price for all, with coordination with relevant authorities being underway to ensure that farm owners adhere to the fixed price list while maintaining product quality, thus, striking a balance between the interests of producers

and consumers. Al Yafei also pointed to an initiative held in cooperation with Hifz Al Naema Center to distribute local vegetables to low-income families, in addition to providing marketing outlets for low-income, home-based businesses within these sale yards.

Al Yafei said that these farmer's markets are currently located in areas of high agricultural output,

indicating expansion plans to cover more areas, thus, benefiting both farmers and consumers.

Regarding the Ministry of Municipality's support for farmers currently, he said that it is providing them with free sales outlets through the farmer's markets, along with technical and advisory support to help them improve product quality and marketing, in addition to providing farmers with free packaging in farmer's markets, and selling oversight to ensure efficiency.

Al Yafei pointed out that these local produce sales yards play a key role in enhancing self-sufficiency by encouraging farmers to increase production and providing them with a direct marketing outlet that enhances their profitability. He added that investing in agricultural technologies and improving product quality help reduce dependence on imports and supports social cohesion and national identity by promoting the consumption of local products. — **QNA**

UDC uses smart solutions to drive sustainable goals

JOEL JOHNSON
THE PENINSULA

DOHA: United Development Company (UDC), one of the largest and leading real estate developers in the country, is using smart solutions to drive sustainable goals, said an official. This has led the organisation to win three estimable Guinness World Records in Doha.

Speaking to *The Peninsula* on the sidelines of the award ceremony recently, Eng. Abdulatif Al Yafei (pictured), Executive Director at UDC said "From its inception - The Pearl Qatar and Gewan Island have been aiming towards sustainability using smart solutions in the country."

The official award ceremony witnessed the participation of

The Pearl Qatar and Gewan Island have been aiming towards sustainability using smart solutions in the country.

Yasser Salah Al Jaidah, CEO of UDC, who was presented with the Guinness World Record certificates in acknowledgment of several achievements. These include the largest outdoor air-conditioned shopping mall, the largest outdoor interactive lighting canopy on Gewan Island, and the largest pneumatic waste management network on the Pearl Island.

Remarking on the achievement attained by The Pearl Qatar, Al Yafei said, "We have the largest pneumatic in Qatar with 66km and 500

garbage areas, and using smart solutions adds epic value to sustainability and the environment so we are happy to receive the award for the waste management system."

The executive director highlighted that the pneumatic waste management system enables them to efficiently collect a large volume of waste, which is then recycled. "Currently, we recycle about 35 percent of the waste, which is a significant figure," he said adding that 6 percent of the collected waste is specifically recycled, making this an important achievement in Qatar.

The Crystal Walk not only asserts the title of the largest outdoor air-conditioned mall, covering 7,360 square meters

(79,222.41 sq ft) but also captivates visitors with its remarkable design and amenities. One of its standout features is the stunning crystal display, which showcases over 10 tons of crystals and a 1,000-meter crystal path—the longest in the world—creating a visually striking atmosphere that elevates the shopping experience. Al Yafei said, "We are very honored and happy to receive Guinness World Records and the whole team who was behind this achievement, especially for Gewan Project because this time we have received two world records in particular to Crystal Walk."

In addition to its cooling system, the Crystal Walk features the world's largest outdoor interactive lighting canopy, spanning an impressive 3,689.55 square

meters (39,713.98 square feet). This architectural masterpiece seamlessly combines art and technology, offering functional shade during the day and transforming into a captivating light display at night, further enhancing the already enchanting atmosphere.

The record-breaking canopy incorporates cutting-edge LED lighting technology, providing numerous benefits over traditional lighting solutions.

"Both the air-conditioned environment and the largest crystal feature with interactive lighting are integral to Gewan, with everyone involved in these achievements contributing to their success. We are thrilled to receive these recognitions, as they add significant value to the location, bringing us closer to



our goal of becoming the number one destination in Qatar and the region," Al Yafei said.

He further added, "We are applying for a couple for Guinness World Records and have some construction projects also we have Gewan Island.. ..hotel which is under construction, and hopefully by the year-end it will be completed. This is also one of the major milestones we hope to achieve by year-end."

Study highlights impact of PHPs dietary habits on patient counselling

FAZEENA SALEEM
THE PENINSULA

DOHA: A recent study has shed light on the dietary patterns of primary healthcare practitioners (PHPs) in Qatar and their influence on diet counseling practices with patients.

The research emphasises the vital role physicians play in shaping patients' health habits, noting that for effective lifestyle counselling, practitioners must themselves model healthy dietary behaviours.

The study, titled *Nourishing Insights: Exploring How Primary Healthcare Practitioners' Eating Habits Influence Diet Counselling Approaches* in Qatar, was published in the March edition of the *Qatar Journal of Public Health* and on the QScience online platform. It aimed to investigate how the eating habits of healthcare providers influence

their counselling of patients regarding nutrition and weight management.

The research surveyed 306 primary healthcare practitioners out of 511 working at Primary Health Care Corporation's healthcare centres using a self-administered questionnaire adapted from the World Health Organization's (WHO) Stepwise survey.

The survey revealed that many healthcare providers did not meet the WHO's recommended intake of fruits and vegetables. In fact, 75.1% of the practitioners reported not adhering to these guidelines, signalling a gap between knowledge and practice in the healthcare community.

The study also found that 58.2% of patients received advice from their PHPs about maintaining a healthy diet and managing their weight. However, there was a notable relationship between primary healthcare practitioners' dietary

habits and their counselling practices. For example, primary healthcare practitioners who consumed fast food and sweets less than once a week were 20% more likely to provide diet counselling to their patients.

One significant finding of the study was that gender was the only independent factor affecting whether primary healthcare practitioners met the WHO recommendations for fruit and vegetable intake, with female practitioners more likely to adhere to the guidelines than their male counterparts. However, despite these differences, adherence to dietary recommendations did not directly impact the likelihood of providing dietary advice to patients.

The study also highlighted barriers that primary healthcare practitioners face in providing effective counselling, including time constraints and language barriers, which they reported as

significantly limiting their ability to engage in comprehensive dietary discussions with patients.

Researchers suggest that in order to improve patient health outcomes, it is essential for primary healthcare practitioners to model healthy behaviors themselves.

A balanced diet rich in fruits, vegetables, lean proteins, and healthy fats can not only improve practitioners' personal health but also serve as a positive example for patients seeking advice on nutrition.

The study calls for further investigation into how healthcare providers' personal dietary habits impact their counselling practices, suggesting that qualitative research, including focus groups, could offer deeper insights into the challenges and motivations of physicians when it comes to diet-related patient education.

MoCI initiative helps stabilise meat prices during Ramadan

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The Ministry of Commerce and Industry also launched its annual Ramadan discounted consumer goods initiative, offering reduced prices on more than 1,000 essential commodities.

The initiative covers a wide range of essential products, including food staples such as flour, sugar, rice, pasta, chicken, cooking oil, and milk, as well as non-food items such as tissues, aluminium foil, and household detergent items that see increased demand during the holy month.

UDC enters Guinness World Records with three new global achievements on Gewan and The Pearl Islands

During an official ceremony, Mr. Yasser Salah Al-Jaidah, CEO of United Development Company, received the Guinness World Record certificates in recognition of these milestones, which include the largest outdoor air-conditioned shopping mall, Largest outdoor interactive lighting canopy, located on Gewan Island, and Largest pneumatic waste management network on the Pearl Island.

DOHA: United Development Company (UDC), the master developer of The Pearl and Gewan Islands, has continued its global track record of accomplishments by securing three new Guinness World Records. This remarkable achievement further strengthens UDC's position as one of the leading real estate developers in the region.

During an official ceremony, Mr. Yasser Salah Al-Jaidah, CEO of United Development Company, received the Guinness World Record certificates in recognition of these milestones, which include the largest outdoor air-conditioned shopping mall, Largest outdoor interactive lighting canopy, located on Gewan Island, and Largest pneumatic waste management network on the Pearl Island.

Largest outdoor air-conditioned mall
The Crystal Walk not only establishes itself as the largest outdoor air-conditioned mall with 7,360 square meters (79222.41 sq ft) but also impresses visitors with its exceptional design and amenities. A standout feature is the breathtaking crystal display, featuring over 10 tons of crystals and a 1000-meter crystal path, the longest in the world, creating a visually stunning environment that enhances the shopping experience.

Thanks to its state-of-the-art cooling technology, The Crystal Walk maintains a comfortable environment by achieving temperatures as low as 21- 23 degrees Celsius during the summer season. This ensures shoppers enjoy a pleasant and refreshing experience, regardless of the outdoor weather. Maintaining a consistently pleasant atmosphere, even during Qatar's hot summers, is achieved through a cutting-edge district cooling system. This system offers significant advantages over traditional individual air conditioning units. Lower energy consumption directly translates to a smaller carbon footprint. The reduced reliance on individual air conditioning units minimizes greenhouse gas emissions, promoting a more environmentally friendly approach to retail development and Centralized cooling systems offer greater reliability than individual units. A centralized system is easier to monitor, maintain, and repair, leading to fewer disruptions and improved overall efficiency.

The 10 Crystal buildings were positioned in an oriented maximizing shading, providing a flow stream of airflow improving cooling while deploying a high-tech energy-efficient cooling system that conserves energy by at least 20% compared with conventional systems and this system mobilized a chilled water district cooling system that future reduce carbon emissions and footprint by at lowest 20 – 50% of the crystal walk.

With over 100 unique retail experiences that cater to a luxurious lifestyle, The Crystal Walk offers a diverse range of brands along with exquisite dining options. This combination of luxury and innovation transforms the mall into a comprehensive lifestyle destination, attracting a distinguished clientele.

Recently, The Crystal Walk has registered for the Global Sustainability Assessment System (GSAS) under the Green Ozone Rating for Design (GORD) certification. This

commitment to sustainable design and construction is evident in features such as optimized building designs for energy efficiency and the incorporation of native landscaping and tropical landscaping with more than 13,000 tropical plants. This recognition highlights the mall's dedication to environmental responsibility and efficiency.

The combination of luxurious offerings, innovative cooling solutions, and commitment to sustainability makes The Crystal Walk a pioneering destination for shoppers and a model for future developments in retail architecture.

Largest outdoor interactive lighting canopy
Beyond the cooling system, the Crystal Walk also boasts the world's largest outdoor interactive lighting canopy, covering an impressive 3,689.55 square meters (39,713.98 square feet). This architectural marvel seamlessly blends art and technology, providing functional shade during the day and transforming into a mesmerizing light display at night, enhancing the already captivating ambience at night. This record-breaking canopy utilizes state-of-the-art LED lighting technology, offering significant advantages over traditional lighting solutions:

- **Energy Efficiency:** The LEDs boast an energy savings of 20% - 50% compared to conventional lighting, contributing substantially to the overall sustainability goals of Gewan Island. This reduction in energy consumption translates to lower operating costs and a significantly reduced carbon footprint.
 - **Longevity:** LEDs have a much longer lifespan than traditional lighting, minimizing maintenance requirements and reducing waste.
 - **Versatility and Control:** The advanced LED system allows for dynamic and customizable lighting displays, offering unparalleled versatility in creating captivating visual effects.
- The lighting canopy is more than just illumination; it's an

This recognition adds to United Development Company's impressive track record of global achievements, having received numerous prestigious awards and certificates across various fields. Notable among these are the Crystal Residence GSAS 3 stars design and build certification, Green Organization Awards, Best CSR Awards, Golden Globe Tiger Awards, and Abu Dhabi Maritime Awards.



interactive spectacle. Over 1000 individual lighting points are meticulously coordinated, creating a mesmerizing array of colors, patterns, and effects. This sophisticated system integrates seamlessly with a state-of-the-art music system, synchronizing the light displays with music to create a truly immersive and unforgettable experience for visitors. The lighting choreography can be programmed to adapt to different events, moods, and times of day and interact with live music, ensuring a constantly evolving and engaging visual feast.

During the day, the canopy provides much-needed shade, enhancing the comfort of shoppers exploring the Crystal Walk's unique retail experiences. This thoughtful design maximizes natural light while minimizing direct sunlight exposure. The combination of advanced cooling systems and intelligent shading strategies allows for a pleasant and comfortable outdoor shopping environment regardless of the climate.

This impressive interactive lighting canopy, alongside the other innovative features of the Crystal Walk, showcases UDC's commitment to creating exceptional spaces where luxury, technology, and sustainability converge. It's not just a retail destination, but a destination for experiencing technological innovation within a luxurious and environmentally responsible environment.

Largest pneumatic waste



management network
Furthermore, the company achieved another global milestone with the largest pneumatic waste management network on The Pearl Island, utilizing an advanced Pneumatic system for efficient and sustainable waste collection. These innovative solutions reflect UDC's commitment to smart environmental practices and sustainability, this system achieves fully operational 66 kilometers (41.01 miles) and more than 500 chute inlets.

The advanced pneumatic waste management system also brings a number of environmental and community benefits. It reduces vehicular movement, leading to a decrease in direct and indirect greenhouse gas emissions in

the area. By minimizing traffic congestion around The Pearl Island, the system helps maintain better road service levels. The system is the first of its kind in the country since the island's inception, with an expanded network and a recent extension to Gewan Island. Moreover, the system promotes a convenient, clean, and sustainable lifestyle, encouraging residents to maintain a clean community.

On Gewan Island, the new waste management system takes advantage of the opportunity to segregate waste at disposal sites through a dual chute system. This initiative engages the community in waste segregation and aims to increase participation in recycling efforts. Currently, the recycling rate stands at 36%, highlighting

the company's commitment to sustainable practices and its ongoing efforts to improve environmental impact.

Commenting on this achievement, Mr. Al-Jaidah said, "This accomplishment reflects our ambitious vision and commitment to developing world-class projects that incorporate advanced technologies and sustainability principles. We are incredibly proud to achieve these Guinness World Records and will continue to deliver exceptional developments that enhance the quality of life for residents and visitors to The Pearl and Gewan Islands. We look forward to reaching new milestones that strengthen our leadership in the real estate sector."

This recognition adds to United Development Company's impressive track record of global achievements, having received numerous prestigious awards and certificates across various fields. Notable among these are the Crystal Residence GSAS 3 stars design and build certification, Green Organization Awards, Best CSR Awards, Golden Globe Tiger Awards, and Abu Dhabi Maritime Awards. These awards highlight the company's continuous commitment to innovation and sustainability, reinforcing its position as a leader in the real estate development sector.

UDC continues its pursuit of further global achievements by developing integrated real estate projects that adhere to the highest standards of quality and innovation. These projects further cement The Pearl and Gewan Islands as premier destinations in the region, attracting visitors and investors seeking exceptional residential and commercial environments.



Qatar attends OIC FMs extraordinary meeting

Qatar participated on Friday in the Extraordinary Meeting of the Council of Foreign Ministers of the Member States of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), held in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, to discuss the ongoing Israeli aggression against the Palestinian people and the calls for their displacement from their land. Qatar's delegation to the meeting was headed by Minister of State for Foreign Affairs H E Sultan bin Saad Al Muraikhi.

QF’s ‘BilAraby’ announces inaugural summit

THE PENINSULA

DOHA: BilAraby, a Qatar Foundation’s initiative that seeks to amplify the voices of Arabic speakers and highlight their creativity, will hold its inaugural summit on 19 April 2025.

The two-day summit will take place at Qatar Foundation’s Multaqa (Education City Student Center) in Doha. Speakers from Qatar, Mauritania, Palestine, Sudan, India, Jordan, KSA, Egypt, Syria, Yemen, and Iraq will come together to explore ideas in the fields of innovation and entrepreneurship, philosophy, psychology, health and well-being, business and economics, and many others.

Over 500 influential figures from the Middle East, North Africa, and beyond will attend BilAraby’s inaugural summit. The summit’s programming will include more than 20 live lectures, exhibitions, and interactive activities, as well as 15 specialized workshops led by

industry experts in the fields of Sustainability, Artificial Intelligence, Medicine, Programming, Animation, Recycling, Arabic Language, Space, Media Production, Social Initiatives and more.

There will also be exploratory sessions, panel discussions, and roundtables focused on the development of Arabic content and the promotion of innovation in the Arabic language.

Executive Director of Strategic Initiatives and Programs at Qatar Foundation, Hisham Nourin emphasised that the selection of speakers followed a rigorous process, with over 700 applicants from 25 Arab countries. The selection criteria focused on identifying inspiring ideas with the potential for meaningful, real-world impact.

“We aim to showcase innovative ideas and visions with the potential for broad application,” said Nourin. “Our primary goal is to reinforce Arab identity and support innovators contributing to

Arab thought and creativity. The ideas and nominations we have received reflect the immense talent, creativity, and potential for positive change within our societies. These individuals deserve recognition, and their ideas should resonate globally in the Arabic language.”

The inaugural BilAraby summit will also reveal the winning design of the initiative’s logo competition, which attracted over 1,500 submissions from across the Arab world since its launch in September 2024.

Launched under the theme “Ideas Have a Voice and an Echo,” BilAraby, inspired by the rich history of Arab identity, encourages creativity and intellectual dialogue, offering diverse content that reflects the richness of Arab societies. The initiative also provides an interactive digital platform to facilitate the exchange of ideas and knowledge, fostering a cultural experience that promotes communication.

QNL Heritage Library celebrates Ramadan

DOHA: Qatar National Library (QNL) has emerged as a guardian of Islamic and Arab heritage, housing treasures of rare manuscripts..

During the holy month of Ramadan, these treasures take on a special spiritual significance, offering visitors and researchers the opportunity to view unique manuscripts documenting Muslim customs during this holy month, as well as copies of the Quran from various eras of Islamic history.

Speaking to Qatar News Agency (QNA), Dr. Mahmoud Zaki, Manuscripts Specialist at QNL Heritage Library, described the Heritage Library as the “heart of Qatar National Library.”

Dr. Zaki explained that the Heritage Library is dedicated to rare books and early publications, as well as non-traditional materials such as maps, documents, manuscripts, photographs, and more. These materials

focus on Qatari, Gulf, Arab, Islamic, and broadly, human heritage in general.

He emphasised that collecting, preserving, providing access to, studying, and presenting heritage across national, regional Arab and Islamic circles, and ultimately, human heritage, are among the most important functions of Qatar National Library.

Dr. Zaki said that the Heritage Library is rich in manuscripts and other valuable collections, particularly rare books from the first Arabic and foreign publications. He noted that among the most valuable of these collections are handwritten Qurans from regions such as China, the Malay Islands, and Southeast Asia, as well as those written by skilled calligraphers from the Ottoman Empire and other areas.

Regarding the holy month of Ramadan, Dr. Zaki said that the written heritage of Muslims includes numerous

letters, small books, and excerpts from the Prophet's (PBUH) hadiths about the virtues of Ramadan, the last ten days, Laylat Al Qadr, and the jurisprudence of fasting, as well as the behaviour of Muslims during Ramadan in terms of worship. Some of these texts even address the topic of welcoming and bidding farewell to the month. Among the most famous of these works are the letters of Ibn Al Jawzi and excerpts from Ibn Asakir.

Dr. Zaki explained that these sources can be viewed in the reading room of the Heritage Library through prior arrangement during working hours in the month of Ramadan. Additionally, visitors can explore the Heritage Library’s page under the “Explore the Library” menu on the Library’s website.

Moreover, many manuscripts are available digitally for free access in the Library’s Digital Repository. — **QNA**

Roundtable discussion in Moscow highlights Qatar’s role in global events

MOSCOW: An international roundtable discussion held in the Russian capital, Moscow, stressed the importance of the State of Qatar’s role in global events, including the settlement of the Russian-Ukrainian conflict.

The event, organised by the Russian Sputnik News Agency, with the participation of experts and officials, discussed the role of the Middle East in the Russian-Ukrainian settlement and the economic consequences of the conflict on the region, as well as the impact of the current international situation on issues of security, trade and cooperation between Arab countries and Russia.

First Deputy Chairman of the Russia Muftis Council Rushan Abiyasov said that the State of Qatar and other countries in the region, including Saudi Arabia and the UAE, have been playing an increasingly important role in

international processes, including in terms of promoting a settlement in the Russia-Ukraine conflict. The Middle East plays a key role in resolving various issues, and has become a major actor in global politics and a proactive contributor to shaping a multipolar world order, he added.

For his part, Amal Abou Zeid, Adviser to former President of Lebanon, stressed that Russia-US relations have a major impact on the developments in the Arab region.

“Russia and US representatives have been meeting in Turkiye and Saudi Arabia in an effort to find common ground not only on the Ukraine settlement, but also on several other major topics, including the Palestinian issue,” he said.

In her remarks, Head of the Demographics and Migration Policy Department at MGIMO University, Gyulnara

Gadzhimuradova said that “Russia has been consistent in providing humanitarian, military and diplomatic assistance to countries in the Middle East both in the Soviet period and in the years that followed by helping settle regional conflicts, including the Palestinian issue.”

In turn, Academic Director of the Russian International Affairs Council, Andrei Kortunov talked about what makes the Middle East interested in settling the Russia-Ukraine conflict.

He noted that Gulf countries and the Arab world in general would benefit from any improvements in Russia-Ukraine and Russia-US relations.

“We are talking about new opportunities for cooperation in sectors such as nuclear energy, as well as other areas of science and technology, while also partnering on transport and logistics projects,” he said. — **QNA**



لجنة المناقصات والمزايدات
مشروع توسعة مطار حمد الدولي
Tenders and Auctions Committee
HIA Expansion Project

NOTICE OF INVITATION FOR CONTRACTOR PRE-QUALIFICATION FOR THE
CONSTRUCTION OF CARGO TERMINAL 2 AT HAMAD INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT
(PROJECT NO. HIAEP-0076)

INVITATION TO PRE-QUALIFY

The HIAE Tender Committee wishes to secure a shortlist of competent Contractors for a forthcoming Invitation to Tender for the construction of Cargo Terminal 2 (hereinafter the “Project”) at Hamad International Airport in Doha in the State of Qatar.

As part of this pre-qualification process, the Employer requires interested Contractors to demonstrate capability and experience in delivering similar material handling facilities and logistics facilities with a high-level of automation and interface management with materials handling systems. It is a necessary requirement that Contractors demonstrate relevant experience, capability, understanding and commitment to work with the Employer to achieve outstanding results in the delivery of the Project.

Accordingly, to successfully qualify, Contractors/Joint Ventures are required:

- To possess a Grade A Classification Certificate in Qatar, and
- To have executed a minimum of two (2) projects delivering material handling or logistics distribution facilities more than 100,000 square meters of built-up area in past eight (8) years, and
- To have executed a minimum of two (2) projects having supplied and erected a minimum of 15,000 tonnes of structural steel with a production/erection rate of 1,500 tonnes per month and a minimum of 150,000 cubic meters of concrete with a production/installation rate of 10,000 cubic meters per month in the past five (5) years, and
- To have executed and demonstrated strong capability for delivering a cool chain or similar refrigerated warehousing system within a material handling / logistic distribution facility, and
- To have executed a minimum of one (1) project in the last three (3) years, with a project value exceeding QAR 1.5 billion, and
- To demonstrate that the average workforce (direct employees) of the company exceeds 5,000 for at least three (3) of the previous five (5) years.

THE SCOPE OF THE REQUIREMENT:

Hamad International Airport is expanding its air cargo handling capacity by commissioning the construction of a new fully automated Air Cargo Terminal Facility with multiple levels of floor space totaling circa 260,000 square meters which will house a Material Handling System (by others) with overall handling capacity exceeding 3 million tons of transfer cargo per year. The Project also includes the provision of a 3,200 square meter/10,000ton cooling capacity expansion of the existing Central Utility Plant Facility, and all associated external infrastructure works within the Air Cargo Campus located within the midfield area of Hamad International Airport.

STEP 1 - PRE-QUALIFICATION DOCUMENTS - COLLECTION

Interested Contractors are invited to collect the Pre-Qualification Application Documentation from MATAR - Major Projects Department located at Ras Abu Aboud Road, Hamad International Airport, Doha, State of Qatar between the dates noted below and during the working hours of 9am to 3pm (Sunday to Thursday). Documents will be available for collection upon receipt of a non-refundable cheque payment (cash will not be accepted) in the amount of QAR 30,000 (Qatari Riyals Thirty Thousand only) payable to Qatar Airways.

Start date for document collection: 9 March 2025

Last date for document collection: 23 March 2025

(the last date and time will be strictly enforced)

STEP 2 - PRE-QUALIFICATION APPLICATION – SUBMISSION

The Closing Date for submitting the Pre-Qualification Application Documentation is 27 March 2025, not later than 12:00 noon (Local Doha Time), GMT (+3:00) to:

Chairman of Tender Committee
Hamad International Airport Expansion Tender Committee (HIAETC)
Qatar Airways Group Q.C.S.C.
HIAEP Project Office, Ras Abu Aboud Road, Doha, State of Qatar

All enquiries are to be directed to: HIAETC

Telephone No.: +974 4467 9816

E-mail: hiaetc@hiaproject.gov.qa



شبكة الجزيرة الإعلامية
ALJAZEERA MEDIA NETWORK

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 & Time
1	SOP027-2025	Sale of Used Electrical & Electronic Items	15,000/-	-	26Mar2025 (12:30PM)

- Tender documents can be collected from Al Jazeera Media Network, Procurement & Contracts Directorate, Warehouse 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.
- Tender documents are to be collected from 09Mar2025 to 16Mar2025, between 07:00AM to 01:00PM (excluding Friday & Saturday).
- The Bid must be submitted with a Tender Bond (Bank Guarantee) 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 bid must be valid for a period of 180 days from the Bid Closing Date
- Bids should 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 bids shall be 12:30PM of the bid closing date.
- For more information, please call 44897131.

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SAK Holding signs agreement to develop premium real estate project in Al Mansoura

THE PENINSULA

DOHA: Under the patronage and presence of Sheikh Thani bin Abdullah Al Thani, Chairman of SAK Holding Group, the Group announced the signing of a new partnership agreement with Sheikh Khalid bin Suhaim Hamad Abdullah Al Thani to develop a premium real estate project in the Al Mansoura area of Doha, named “Usoul Al Mansoura Compound.”

This partnership aligns with SAK Holding Group’s efforts to enhance Qatar’s real estate sector through its innovative real estate partnership model, “Sharekna.” The model aims to enable vacant landowners to transform their properties into income-generating real estate projects through smart investment solutions that ensure maximum returns with minimal costs and risks.

The “Usoul Al Mansoura Compound” project is a practical embodiment of the success of the “Sharekna” model. The project will be developed on a total area of approximately 8,000 square metres, featuring two residential towers with a structure of (3 basement floors + ground floor + 9 typical floors).

Additionally, a fully integrated clubhouse will be constructed with (ground floor + first floor), creating a modern residential environment that combines



● *This partnership aligns with SAK Holding Group’s efforts to enhance Qatar’s real estate sector through its innovative real estate partnership model, “Sharekna.”*

comfort and luxury.

The project will offer 500 residential units with diverse sizes and designs, including studios, one-bedroom, two-bedroom, and three-bedroom apartments, catering to various housing needs. The total built-up area of the project is 62,218 square metres, making it a valuable addition to Doha’s real estate landscape.

Commenting on this strategic partnership, Sheikh Thani bin Abdullah Al Thani emphasised that the agreement reflects SAK Holding Group’s commitment to providing innovative real estate solutions that contribute to sustainable development in Qatar’s real estate sector.

He added: “We are committed to developing high-quality projects that meet market demands and provide attractive investment opportunities for both landowners and investors. The ‘Usoul Al Mansoura Compound’ project embodies our vision of achieving a balance between quality, sustainability, and outstanding investment returns.”

Sheikh Khalid bin Suhaim Al Thani expressed his pride in this partnership with SAK Holding Group, highlighting that the “Osoul Al Mansoura Compound” is a successful model of effective partnerships that add value to the real estate sector.

He stated: “This project marks a significant step in developing



Chairman of SAK Holding Group Sheikh Thani bin Abdullah Al Thani (left) with Sheikh Khalid bin Suhaim Hamad Abdullah Al Thani during the agreement signing.

modern residential communities that align with the aspirations of Qatar’s real estate market. We look forward to seeing this development enhance the quality of life in Al Mansoura by offering an integrated residential environment that meets the needs of families and individuals seeking excellence.”

In a related context, Eng. Hisham Al Sahtari, CEO of SAK Holding Group, emphasised that “Sharekna” is a smart investment solution for landowners looking to maximise the potential of their assets without the need for costly traditional investments.

“Signing this new partnership with Sheikh Khalid bin Suhaim Al Thani marks another step toward strengthening the role of the ‘Sharekna’ model in developing high-quality real estate projects in Qatar. We take pride in continuing to offer innovative investment solutions that enable landowners to maximise the potential of their properties through partnerships that generate the highest returns while minimising risks and operational costs,” he stated.

Eng. Hisham Al Sahtari added that

the new project in Al Mansoura reflects SAK Holding Group’s vision of delivering real estate projects that meet the growing market demands. He highlighted the strategic importance of the location in the heart of Doha, making it an ideal choice for modern housing.

He also noted that this project extends the successful track record of ‘Sharekna,’ which has led to the development of several landmark real estate projects, such as “Wyndham West Bay Beach Resort Tower” in the Diplomatic Area, “Wyndham Tower” in West Bay, and major residential and commercial complexes that have attracted significant interest from both investors and tenants.

Thanks to its prime location in Al Mansoura, the “Usoul Al Mansoura Compound” will offer a comprehensive residential experience, catering to those seeking a contemporary lifestyle that blends luxury with convenience and easy access to key facilities and services in the capital.

The project will feature modern architectural designs that reflect global construction trends while adhering to

the highest standards of quality and sustainability.

Eng. Hisham Al Sahtari explained that one of the key advantages of the planned compound is its strategic location in Al Mansoura, an area that holds a significant benefit—it is one of the zones where usufruct rights are permitted under Qatari law. This opens the door for non-Qatari investors to take advantage of long-term ownership opportunities under facilitated conditions. This feature enhances the project’s attractiveness, drawing a broad segment of investors interested in owning residential or investment units in a prime location at the heart of Doha. Ultimately, this boosts the long-term investment value of “Usoul Al Mansoura Towers.”

The “Sharekna” model is one of the most prominent real estate solutions offered by SAK Holding Group, providing diverse investment options tailored to the needs of different landowners. Through the “Classic Partnership” model, landowners can develop their projects without the need for direct financing, as the group covers the costs in exchange for a share of the returns. Meanwhile, the “Smart Partnership” model enables investors to develop large-scale projects without requiring loans.

Eng. Hisham Al Sahtari emphasised that this investment model has significantly contributed to the development of Qatar’s real estate sector by successfully reducing construction costs, providing flexible financing solutions, and implementing professional project management to ensure the highest returns.

He added: “We see ‘Sharekna’ not just as a real estate partnership model but as a comprehensive system designed to strike a balance between optimal investment and sustainable development, in alignment with Qatar National Vision 2030.”

The highlights from Sharekna’s key achievements include Wyndham West Bay Beach Resort Tower, Wyndham West Bay Tower, The Curve Tower, Al Kuwari Tower, Al Khayareen Tower, Al Wakra Hotel, Al Rayyan Tower, Danat Al Sadd Tower, and Al Thumama Villas Compound.

Ministry of Sports and Youth’s new strategy to enhance sports’ role in public health

DOHA: The Ministry of Sports and Youth (MSY) has announced the launch of its new strategy, reflecting its future vision and aligning with the aspirations of Qatari youth.

The initiative carries the slogan “Quality Life and Future-Ready Youth.”

In a statement, the ministry highlighted that the strategy aims to enhance the role of sports in improving public health and reducing disease risks. It focuses on nurturing talents across priority sports, improving athlete performance, supporting the private sector in organising sports events, and

developing Qatari professionals in sports and youth fields. Additionally, the strategy seeks to achieve operational efficiency in sports facilities.

The new strategy aspires to create an integrated sports environment that contributes to building a healthy and active society while expanding the base of Qatari talent.

Minister of Sports and Youth H E Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa bin Ahmed Al Thani emphasised that the launch of the “Sports and Youth Excellence Strategy” marks a pivotal step towards sustainable development in this vital sector.

Minister of Sports and Youth H E Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa bin Ahmed Al Thani said the launch of the strategy marks a pivotal step towards sustainable development in this vital sector.

He stated that in Qatar, sports and youth are fundamental pillars in building a vibrant and innovative society, highlighting the ministry’s commitment to developing strategies that align with the ambitions of youth and reinforce

Qatar’s position as a global destination for sports.

In his speech during the strategy’s launch, the Minister added that this strategy reflects the State’s vision of empowering youth and investing in their capabilities while enhancing sports as a means of achieving development and social cohesion. He expressed his hope of achieving the ambitious goals of “Quality Life and Future-Ready Youth” in collaboration with all partners in the sports sector. MSY Undersecretary Eng. Yasser bin Abdullah Al Jamal described the new strategy as a roadmap for advancing this vital

sector and its role in achieving Qatar National Vision 2030. He urged all those involved in its implementation to exert their utmost effort to ensure its goals are met, expressing confidence that the strategy will achieve significant milestones in the journey of excellence in the sports and youth sectors, strengthen Qatar’s position globally, and meet stakeholders’ aspirations.

MSY’s Director of the Planning, Quality, and Innovation Department Maha Al Rumaihi stated that the strategy is the result of extensive collective efforts. She assured that

the ministry is keen to ensure the strategy is comprehensive, sustainable, and based on global best practices, targeting the aspirations of Qatar’s youth and sports community.

The sports and youth sector in Qatar plays a central role in the country’s human, social, and economic development, acting as a cornerstone for building a vibrant and thriving society. To amplify the launch, the Ministry of Sports and Youth utilized advertising screens across various prominent locations in the country, including Lusail, Msheireb, Aspire Park, and Katara, among others. — *QNA*

Response to maiden Visit Qatar E1 Doha GP beyond expectation: E1 Series CEO

E1’s boats produce zero emissions and minimal noise, aligning with its core mission to promote marine conservation.

FROM PAGE 1

E1’s hydrofoil race boats, designed from a “blank sheet,” are a marvel of engineering. Combining technology from motorsport, powerboating, and sailing, the boats glide above water on foils, powered entirely by electric engines. “Nobody had raced foiling electric boats before,” Basso explains. “We had to invent new systems, protocols, and safety standards.”

The result? A sport that’s as much about sustainability as speed. E1’s boats produce zero emissions and minimal noise, aligning with its core mission to promote marine conservation. The championship also partners with marine biologist Carlos Duarte, a world-renowned expert leading E1’s efforts to address ocean ecosystem challenges.

“We’re not just a race—we’re a platform for awareness and solutions,” Basso emphasizes.

E1’s growth isn’t just geographic. The championship boasts a star-studded lineup of team owners, including LeBron James and cricket legend Virat Kohli, whose combined social media



Teams in action during the Visit Qatar E1 Doha GP at The Pearl Qatar.

reach exceeds 1.1 billion. “Every post by our owners is a promotion for the sport, the locations, and our message,” Basso notes. A recent Kohli post garnered 10 million views in three hours—a testament to E1’s viral potential.

E1’s race format is designed to thrill. Teams compete in mixed-gender pairs, alternating between male and female pilots across sessions. Qualifying combines short, high-speed laps and longer strategic runs, keeping fans on edge. “The strategy is unpredictable,” Basso says. “Teams must balance speed and efficiency—a challenge

that mirrors real-world electric vehicle innovation.”

Beyond the races, E1 fosters B2B opportunities and thought leadership. Events feature panels with industry experts and policymakers, including Duarte, who recently won a Nobel-equivalent prize for marine biology.

“We’re building a community around water stewardship,” Basso adds.

E1’s ambitions extend to the Middle East. Basso hints at adding up to three regional races in 2025, citing strong interest from GCC nations.



Qatar Chemical Company Limited
Al Dafna – Amwal Tower – First Floor
P.O. 24646 Doha / Qatar – Tel. 44847111 – Fax 44847695

ANNOUNCEMENT FOR TENDER

No.	Document No.	Description	Tender Bond	Bid Closing Date
1.	QC/TC/MP/10/25	Q-Chem Buildings Modernisation Project	QR 1,137,500/-	12:00 hrs. on 4 th May 2025

Brief Scope:
COMPANY requires the services of a qualified & experienced CONTRACTOR to carry out the architectural, civil, electrical, plumbing and internal / external fitout works with an intention to renovate the Q-Chem buildings at Mesaieed Site safely, in a brownfield environment and without any obstruction to COMPANY personnel and their routine operations inside the building space.

Tender Documents for the above description can be obtained as follows:

A. Pay to Bank and send the original receipt with authorization letter via email.

For each tender pay a **non-refundable document fee (cash only) of QR 1,000/-** Payable to Q-Chem, Bank Account (Contract Services - Tender) – Account Number 001-242007-003 with **HSBC Bank** and submit the original receipt with an Authorization letter on Tenderer Company Letterhead with ID copy of the Tenderer representative **via email to tadvertising@qchem.com.qa** In the authorization letter Tenderer shall nominate a single focal point with contact mobile number, **official email address**, office number, fax number for the communications related to this tender for the transfer and receipt of the tender documents. **The Bank receipt must indicate the tender number and the tenderer name (company name).**

B. Date and Time of Tender documents Issuance via email

Tender documents Issuance from 9th March 2025 to 13th March 2025, 8am-12noon.

C. Proposal details

Proposals should be valid for **240** days from the tender closing date.

D. Submission of Proposals

Guidelines for Electronic Bids Submission Is attached in the Tender documents.

At UN, Qatar showcases its expertise in securing major sporting events

NEW YORK: Permanent Representative of Qatar to the United Nations H E Sheikha Alya Ahmed bin Saif Al Thani participated in the opening session of a meeting organised by the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT) in partnership with the Permanent Mission of the French Republic to the UN, titled “Securing the Legacy: Debriefing from Paris 2024 for Future Major Sporting Events.”

The event marked the fifth anniversary of the UNOCT Global Sports Programme and was held at the UN Headquarters in New York.

In her opening remarks, she highlighted Qatar’s pioneering efforts in supporting the Global Sports Programme to combat terrorism through capacity-building initiatives aimed at helping member states secure major sporting events.

She praised Qatar’s successful hosting of the FIFA World Cup 2022,

Qatar has made pioneering efforts in supporting the UNOCT Global Sports Programme to combat terrorism through capacity-building initiatives.

where the Supreme Committee for Delivery & Legacy implemented comprehensive security measures to ensure a safe event for both spectators and athletes.

She pointed out that a holistic strategy, which included advanced technology and international cooperation, was executed, making the tournament a global model for sports security and safety.

The meeting also featured a session where Director of the Arab and International Police Communication Department at the Ministry of Interior, Lt. Col. Ali

Mohammed Al Ali, highlighted Qatar’s leading role in securing major events.

He presented Qatar’s experience in securing the FIFA World Cup 2022, focusing on the security and preventive measures implemented by the Safety and Security Operations Committee (SSOC) in preparation for the tournament.

This included recommendations during the stadium design phase to meet the highest safety and security standards to ensure the safety of spectators.

Lt. Col. Al Ali emphasised the Safety and Security Operations Committee’s keenness to share its expertise with countries preparing to host major sporting events.

He also stressed Qatar’s continued commitment to strengthening security controls as part of its strategies for enhancing safety systems in line with Qatar National Vision 2030. — **QNA**



Qatar’s Permanent Representative meets UN Special Representative for Afghanistan

Permanent Representative of Qatar to the United Nations H E Sheikha Alya Ahmed bin Saif Al Thani met on Friday with Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Afghanistan and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, Roza Otunbayeva, at the permanent mission’s headquarters in New York. During the meeting, they discussed the latest developments in Afghanistan and ongoing efforts to support stability and development in the country.

Qatar’s tech women leaders playing key role in country's digital drive and growth

THE PENINSULA

DOHA: As International Women’s Day follows on the heels of Web Summit Qatar 2025, the Government Communications Office (GCO) released a report shedding light on the influential women actively shaping Qatar’s future through their expertise, vision and determination, building on Qatar’s commitment to women’s empowerment across sectors.

Leading discussions on Qatar’s tech sector was Eman Al Kuwari, Director of Digital Innovation at the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology, who offered valuable insights during the session ‘From the Caucasus to the Gulf: A new

digital excellence hub.’ Al Kuwari highlighted Qatar’s approach to building digital partnerships that extend beyond traditional boundaries, emphasising the nation’s strategic position in connecting diverse tech ecosystems and the various opportunities it provides to startups.

“Qatar has a rich story to tell, and it’s not just about digital transformation, but how innovation is driving our social and economic development,” said Al Kuwari.

Speaking about her role, Al Kuwari said: “This journey for me is a personal passion, not only to innovate but to serve my country. This is what continues to inspire me each and every day. Technology isn’t just about

innovation for the sake of innovation, but it’s about solving real challenges and unlocking opportunities for the next generations.” On the occasion of Women’s Day, Al Kuwari highlighted the unique perspective Qatari women bring to tech and innovation, stating: “We understand the needs of our communities while also having global exposure. This allows us to design solutions that are locally relevant yet globally competitive.”

Speaking on the critical elements of success, Hessa Al Thani, Head of Qatar & MENA’s Professional Service Sector at the Qatar Financial Centre, emphasised the importance of having a holistic approach.

“Success in tech requires

passion and a comprehensive understanding that goes beyond technology itself,” said Al Thani. “You have to focus not just on tech, but also on environmental and social aspects as they all play significant roles in the industry.” Al Thani, who took part in a session on unlocking startups’ potential, also credits her success to significant exposure and collaborations with ecosystem partners. “It’s always about passed-on knowledge, learning from others, and connecting with the right people from each sector to understand their expectations.

“My advice to Qatari women is to broaden your knowledge about what’s happening globally and listen to diverse perspectives, both locally and interna-

tionally,” she added.

Representing Qatar’s fintech ecosystem was Thuraya Al Mulla, CEO of Receipts, a retail technology company delivering digital receipts to customers’ wallets or banking apps.

Al Mulla described representing Qatar at the Paris Fintech Forum as one of her proudest achievements. “Being the only technology company from Qatar and the region allowed us to practice technology diplomacy and showcase Qatar’s innovations on a global stage,” she noted.

“While many regions are still fighting for women’s empowerment, in Qatar, women have long been supported by their families and country,” Al Mulla stated. “Women are leading in

all sectors, including technology and financial technology. We’re innovating and taking on leadership roles across industries. I think the world should look to Qatar when it comes to women in power.”

Shaikha Al Shaibi, founder of ByShelves, shared insights about her pioneering application that connects users with bookstores, stationery stores and educational resources.

Reflecting on International Women’s Day, Al Shaibi offered advice to aspiring women entrepreneurs: “Never give up and don’t start big. Start small because baby steps always lead to bigger impact. Choose the right people, plan ahead, and have a concrete timeline for your business.”

QBWA and Canadian, Australian embassies host Suhoor event for International Women’s Day

THE PENINSULA

DOHA: The Qatari Businesswomen Association (QBWA) hosted a special Suhoor event, in conjunction with the Embassies of Canada and Australia, on March 5 in celebration of International Women’s Day 2025.

In her opening remarks, Aisha Hussein Alfardan, Vice Chairwoman of QBWA, underscored the power of collaboration. “At QBWA, we believe in the power of collaboration to uplift and empower women. This International Women’s Day, our partnership with the Canadian and Australian Embassies reflects our shared commitment to building meaningful connections, celebrating achievements, and creating opportunities for women to thrive. Together, we continue to build a future where women’s contributions are recognized, valued, and supported across all sectors,” said Alfardan.

Canadian Ambassador to Qatar H E Isabelle Martin highlighted the connection between International Women’s Day and Ramadan. “It is a pleasant coincidence that this year’s International Women’s Day falls during the Holy Month of Ramadan, allowing us to bring together incredible women from the local Canadian, Qatari, and Australian communities around a traditional Suhoor dinner. The Government of Canada’s theme for International Women’s Day 2025 is ‘Strength in Every Story,’ which emphasises creating opportunities for women and girls to unlock their potential and drive innovation,” said Ambassador Martin.

She also noted Qatar’s remarkable story of rapid modernisation, with many distinguished women playing a central role in the country’s success.

Australian Ambassador to Qatar H E Shane



Canadian Ambassador to Qatar H E Isabelle Martin (left), Australian Ambassador to Qatar H E Shane Flanagan (right) with Vice Chairwoman of QBWA Aisha Hussein Alfardan during the event.

Flanagan spoke about the significant contributions of women in Qatar. “Women in Qatar are making an impact in all fields – from business and digital innovation to education, science, government, and sports. Your contributions have not only helped Qatar to prosper but have also transformed this country into a modern and desirable place to live,” Ambassador Flanagan stated.

Ambassador Flanagan also acknowledged Qatar’s humanitarian efforts, particularly in conflict zones where women and girls are disproportionately affected.

The event featured a panel discussion with three influential women: Dr. Leonie Lethbridge, COO and Executive General Manager of Commercial Bank and recently named one of the 100 Most Powerful Businesswomen of 2025 by Forbes; Dr. Sohaira Siddiqui, Executive Director of Al Mujadilah and Associate Professor at Georgetown University in Qatar; and Mashael Al Sulaiti, Chairperson of MAS Law Firm and QBWA member.

They shared insights on this year’s theme of the day: “For ALL Women and Girls: Rights. Equality. Empowerment.”

Waseef holds blood donation campaigns

THE PENINSULA

DOHA: Waseef, a leading real estate management and marketing company, organised blood donation campaigns in Barwa Al Baraha, Barwa Village, Madinatna, and Sailiya Housing projects, in cooperation with the Blood Donation Center at Hamad Medical Corporation.

The campaigns, which lasted for four days, aim to contribute to enriching the blood bank with the required stock of blood units to ensure their availability when needed.

This comes from Waseef’s constant commitment to supporting social responsibility and emphasising its active role in serving the community and raising community awareness of the value and importance of blood donation.

The campaign contributed to raising awareness among families living in Barwa Village, Madinatna, and Al Sailiya housing projects, in addition to raising awareness among workers living in Barwa Al Baraha project, about the importance of donating blood and encouraging them to support such humanitarian work.

The campaign received a wide response, and a large number of beneficiaries of these projects participated in it, under the supervision of a medical team from Hamad Medical Corporation inside the mobile blood donation unit equipped with the latest equipment. Waseef also worked during the campaign to provide all necessary facilities to the Hamad Medical Corporation staff, and distributed instructions and guidelines to donors.



People donate blood during the Waseef campaign.

QRCS project to perform 100 free-of-charge therapeutic catheterizations in Yemen

THE PENINSULA

DOHA: In partnership with Qatar Charity, Qatar Red Crescent Society (QRCS) has started a project to perform 100 free-of-charge therapeutic catheterizations at the Cardiovascular Center in Taiz, Yemen, for the benefit of vulnerable, displaced, low-income, and disabled patients with heart disease.

Funded by the donations of the benevolent people of Qatar, the \$100,000 project also involves the provision of medical solutions, consumables, and other supplies for the cardiac catheterizations.

In his statements, Dr. Abu Zarr Al Gendi, Director of the Cardiovascular Center in Taiz,

said, “QRCS and Qatar Charity continue to address the suffering of people. The patients with heart disease are among those who suffer most, especially those requiring cardiac catheterizations. We have many registered patients who experience difficult living conditions and cannot afford treatment.”

Nabil Jamel, Director-General of Taiz Planning and International Cooperation Office, praised the development programmes and plans supported by Qatar, through QRCS and Qatar Charity.

“I would like to thank our brothers at QRCS, Qatar Charity, and the Cardiovascular Center,” said Mr. Jamel. “I hope that this support would



The project will benefit vulnerable, displaced, low-income, and disabled patients with heart disease.

continue and expand.”

Eng. Ahmed Hassan Al Sharaji, head of QRCS’s office

in Yemen, expressed his happiness at the launch of therapeutic catheterizations, which

happened to take place during the holy month of Ramadan — a symbol of mercy and giving.

“This project is part of the ongoing efforts made by QRCS and its partners to back the Cardiovascular Center in Taiz, with the aim of improving the quality of diagnostic and therapeutic services provided for the patients with heart disease. I hope this support would make a real difference in the lives of patients in need of cardiac catheterizations and reduce their suffering and the suffering of their families,” he added.

Dr. Abdullah Al Naim, head of Qatar Charity’s office in Yemen, stated, “These operations are part of our humanitarian initiatives in Yemen

over the past few years, which are designed to ease the pain of vulnerable patients and upgrade the services of specialized medical facilities, amid a protracted crisis that caused economic failure and collapse of the health system.

“I would like to express my pleasure at the continued cooperation with our partners QRCS and the Cardiovascular Center in Taiz, to make a difference in the lives of poor patients with heart disease, especially during the month of compassion and solidarity. I would like also to express gratitude to the benevolent donors of Qatar for their contributions to such significant humanitarian initiatives. May Allah bless their giving.”

Qatar reiterates commitment to empowering women

GENEVA: The State of Qatar has reiterated its steadfast commitment to women's empowerment and inclusive economic growth, pledging to continue its collaboration with international partners to support initiatives that create opportunities for women exporters and provide them with the necessary tools for leadership, innovation, and success in the digital economy.

This statement was delivered by Qatar's Permanent Representative in Geneva H E Dr. Hind Abdul Rahman Al Muftah (pictured), during the event announcing the beneficiary countries of the Women Exporters in the Digital Economy (WEIDE) Fund, held at the headquarters of the World Trade Organisation (WTO).

She described the event as a pivotal moment in the journey towards women's economic empowerment and expressed Qatar's pride in the selection of four beneficiary countries: the Dominican Republic, the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, the Republic of Mongolia, and the Federal Republic of Nigeria. She emphasized that this initiative is not merely a financial investment but a catalyst for change, aimed at supporting women exporters and enabling them to access global markets.

She further highlighted Qatar's long-standing advocacy for women's empowerment in the global economy, stressing



support, capacity building, and enhanced market access for women-led small and medium enterprises (SMEs).

She emphasised that Qatar is not merely a supporter of this initiative but a committed partner in driving sustainable economic progress through exclusivity. She added that Qatar's commitment extends beyond this fund, citing that the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 Legacy Fund has allocated \$50 million to support projects promoting social and economic development.

She noted that this investment reflects Qatar's deep-rooted dedication to supporting initiatives that enhance social and economic progress, highlighting Qatar's

partnerships with the WTO, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), and the World Health Organization (WHO), in collaboration with the Supreme Committee for Delivery & Legacy, to ensure a lasting global impact.

She described the WEIDE Fund as a game-changer for women's empowerment, as it removes barriers that hinder women exporters, provides them with opportunities to scale their businesses, expand into global markets, and contribute to economic growth. She stressed that women's empowerment goes beyond financial support, requiring enhanced access to digital platforms, appropriate financing, and technical support,

Al Muftah highlighted Qatar's long-standing advocacy for women's empowerment in the global economy, stressing that as the world undergoes rapid digital transformation, it is crucial to provide resources, skills, and networks to women exporters so they can seize emerging opportunities.

all of which play a crucial role in shaping the future of the digital economy. — **QNA**



Ministry of Labour welcomes delegation from Bhutan

The Ministry of Labour has welcomed a delegation from the Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Employment of the Kingdom of Bhutan as part of ongoing efforts to enhance bilateral cooperation in the labour sector. The visit included a meeting with the directors of the Ministry of Labour's various departments, alongside representatives from the Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Employment and the Department of Recruitment and Employment of the Kingdom of Bhutan. During the meeting, both sides reviewed the latest legislative developments in the labour sector and the new programmes being implemented by the Ministry of Labour. They also explored the prospect of exchanging expertise to further enhance the work environment.

Six books to celebrate International Women's Day

THE PENINSULA

DOHA: On International Women's Day, the world celebrates strength, progress and the accomplishments of women who have broken boundaries in every field. Whether seeking inspiration, new perspectives or simply the next engaging book to dive into, the librarians at Qatar National Library have handpicked six empowering reads.

From personal development to entrepreneurship, this list features thought-provoking and powerful stories that highlight the transformative role women have played in history, culture, business and beyond.

Gravitas: The 8 Strengths That Redefine Confidence by Lisa Sun with Kathryn Huck emphasises that confidence is not just about bold actions but

understanding and leveraging one's inner strengths to enhance leadership potential. *A Healthy State of Panic* by Farnoosh Torabi offers practical advice on overcoming fear and using emotions as tools for building wealth and achieving personal success. *In Shark Tales: How I Turned \$1,000 Into a Billion-Dollar Business*, Barbara Corcoran shares her remarkable journey from a \$1,000 loan to building a billion-dollar real estate empire, offering practical advice and inspiration for women entrepreneurs. *#Girlboss* by Sophia Amoruso tells the story of her journey from eBay seller to CEO, providing a blueprint for self-reinvention and turning passion into success. *Arab Women and Their Evolving Roles in the Global Business Landscape*,

edited by Ebtihaj Al A'ali, Minwir M Al Shammari, and Hatem Masri, explores the challenges and increasing contributions of Arab women in shaping global business. Finally, *Women Entrepreneurship in Family Business*, edited by Vanessa Ratten, Leo-Paul Dana, and Veland Ramadani, delves into the roles of women in family businesses, offering insights on how they can navigate challenges and thrive.

"At Qatar National Library, we are proud to provide access to these exceptional books that celebrate the empowerment, resilience, and brilliance of women. Celebrate International Women's Day by diving into these thought-provoking reads and join the movement of women shaping the world today," the Library said in a statement issued yesterday.

Snap Inc, VCUarts Qatar empower next generation of AR talent at Web Summit

THE PENINSULA

DOHA: Dedicated to empowering the next generation of Augmented Reality (AR) innovators, Snap Inc teamed up with Virginia Commonwealth University School of Arts Qatar (VCUarts Qatar) to host an exclusive AR workshop for 50 Foundation year and Bachelor of Fine Arts (BFA) students at Web Summit Qatar.

The workshop, titled "Building a Snapchat Lens, Building Your Career," provided students with a unique opportunity to gain firsthand knowledge from industry leaders, equipping them with the tools needed to thrive in the rapidly evolving AR landscape.

The session, led by Joseph Darko, Snap Inc.'s Global Head of AR Developer Relations, was designed to showcase both the creative and technical potential of AR technology. Augmented Reality is digitally overlaid onto the real world, which Snap believes is the healthiest, most compelling way to communicate.

Over the years, Snap's AR technology has evolved significantly, transitioning from fun, playful lenses to a powerful tool

for both personal expression and business innovation. Globally, Snapchat sees over 6 billion AR Lens plays every day on average, and in the MENA region, more than 85% of daily users interact with Lenses each day.

Committed to empowering the next generation, Snap taught students how to build their own Snapchat Lens, while also introducing them to practical strategies for succeeding in the AR developer community. Through its longstanding investments in AR, Snap is not only shaping the future of communication but empowering the next generation of developers in the region, aligning with the digital transformation agendas of the Middle East.

"Augmented Reality is the next frontier in human connection, and it was incredible to share the secrets to AR success with the talented students at VCUarts Qatar," said Joseph Darko, Global Head of AR Developer Relations at Snap Inc.

"This workshop showcased how AR can amplify creativity, drive innovation across industries, and create tangible career opportunities for aspiring

developers. At Snap, we're committed to building experiences that connect people and brands in authentic, meaningful ways, and we're proud to support talent in MENA – a region where we see enormous potential for AR to transform all sectors."

The partnership between Snap and VCUarts Qatar underscores the importance of experiential learning and industry collaboration in preparing students for the future of work. Students who attended the workshop left with a deeper understanding of how AR is already reshaping industries like fashion, sports, tourism, culture and AI—sectors in which Snap is leading the charge in leveraging AR for branding and consumer engagement.

Lejla Niksic, Director of Strategic Engagement at VCUarts Qatar, said, "This collaboration with Snap empowers our students to explore innovative technologies like AR, allowing them to bridge the gap between creativity and the rapidly evolving digital landscape, ensuring they are equipped to lead in a future driven by innovation."

Niksic further emphasised, "For



Snap Inc's Global Head of AR Developer Relations Joseph Darko addressing attendees during the event.

VCUarts Qatar, collaborating with Snap enhances our positioning as a key player in fostering cutting-edge creative practices that align with industry needs and technological advancements, ultimately preparing our students to thrive in a world where digital engagement is central to various design fields.

The alignment of our shared commitment to creativity and innovation makes this partnership a natural fit, ensuring that our students not only gain valuable skills but also embody the forward-thinking and entrepreneurial

spirit that both VCUarts Qatar and Snap strive to cultivate."

Varvera Guljajeva, VCUarts Qatar Associate Professor of Kinetic Imaging, brought her entire class to the Snap workshop at Web Summit Qatar and expressed how meaningful it was for students to hear directly about new developments that they can explore and learn. According to Guljajeva, one of her students already has plans to incorporate Lenses into their current class project to make it more interactive.

WCM-Q students present research projects at annual poster event

THE PENINSULA

DOHA: First-year pre-medical students at Weill Cornell Medicine-Qatar (WCM-Q) showcased their biology laboratory research findings on the antimicrobial effect of herbs, spices and other natural substances at the annual poster presentation event.

The event was the culmination of two semesters of research where the students were provided with a choice of four different species of bacteria, and were required to investigate the effect based on bacteria's response, and determine the possible mechanism at play in these extracts that inhibits the growth of bacteria.

A total of 53 students, divided into groups of three, worked together to execute the research projects from beginning to end, demonstrating their ability to conduct and communicate science.

Altogether, 18 posters were presented, where the students reviewed literature, formulated a question and hypothesis, conducted experiments in the laboratory, and analyzed the data. The students then wrote a short synopsis of their findings and presented it in a poster manner to their fellow students and faculty.

Some of the posters will be showcased at the Doctors of the Future Conference, a gathering of educational leaders and future medical students that is scheduled to take place



Students Aiza Tanveer Hassan, Hyeonjeong Oh and Dounia Baroudi during the presentation of their projects.

on April 11-12, 2025 and organized by WCM-Q.

Professor of biology, Dr. Kuei-Chiu Chen said, "We are committed to helping students master the essential skills of research. We focus on enabling them to critically evaluate scientific literature, conduct thorough statistical analyses on their data, draw insightful conclusions, and effectively communicate their findings."

Reema Al Emadi, Maryam Alghanem, and Khalid Al Thani presented a poster on the inhibitory effect of *Senna alexandrina* (senna leaves), *Euterpe oleracea* (açai fruit), and *Lepidium sativum* (cress seeds) on opportunistic pathogens — *Serratia marcescens* and *Corynebacterium amycolatum*.

Reema Al Emadi said, "There is a

growing challenge of antimicrobial resistance, and there is a need for natural and sustainable alternatives to synthetic antibiotics. While plant-based antimicrobials are well-studied, the knowledge to their effectiveness against *Serratia marcescens* and *Corynebacterium amycolatum* is limited. Therefore, our study aimed to research less investigated bacterial species to reveal antimicrobial properties of senna leaves, açai fruit, and cress seeds, and to see their potential as natural antimicrobials to reduce reliance on synthetic antibiotics and combat resistant infections effectively." The findings highlight the antimicrobial potential of plant-based compounds and their ability to target different bacterial structures.

Nour Alqubbaj, Maryam Sohail,

and Dongeun Lee presented their poster, titled "The Antibacterial effects of *Vitex agnus-castus* paste on *Escherichia coli*, *Staphylococcus aureus*, *Serratia marcescens* (red strain), and *Corynebacterium amycolatum*."

Maryam Sohail said, "We used *Vitex agnus-castus* (chaste tree) as an antimicrobial agent against Gram positive and Gram negative bacteria strains. Traditionally, the plant has been used in many cultures to treat pre-menstrual and post-menopausal symptoms. Our results showed that vitex has much potential in the pharmaceutical industry to combat antimicrobial resistance."

Students Aiza Tanveer Hassan, Dounia Baroudi, and Hyeonjeong Oh presented a poster about their research investigating the antibacterial activity of lime, apple, and kiwi extracts on *Staphylococcus aureus* and *Escherichia coli*. They chose to study the bacteria because they are found in the intestines, and the fruits are part of the daily diet of many households. The trio concluded that pH is not the only factor inhibiting the growth of bacteria — other components, like flavonoids, may also play a role.

Other student research projects investigated the antimicrobial effects of tarragon, ashwagandha, red pepper, coriander, mustard seeds, oregano, kumquat, cumin seeds, and oils found in eucalyptus and tea tree, among others.

MES observes Qatar Environment Day

THE PENINSULA

DOHA: In observance of Qatar Environment Day 2025, MES Indian School reaffirmed its commitment to environmental sustainability, guided by the principles of Qatar's National Vision 2030.

Under the leadership of Principal Dr. Hameeda Kadar, the school has continuously promoted responsible environmental practices among students, ensuring that conservation is an integral part of their daily lives. The school's Campus Care Force, known as the Green Guardians, actively upholds eco-friendly practices beyond a single-day celebration. Through daily initiatives such as maintaining campus cleanliness, nurturing plants, and engaging in organic farming, the students have transformed their surroundings into a thriving green space.

Dr. Hameeda Kadar, the school Principal, commended the Campus Care Force for their unwavering dedication, stating, "Environmental responsibility is not just a duty but a way of life. Our students are setting an example by embracing sustainability in their everyday actions, reflecting Qatar's commitment to a greener future."

MES Indian School remains devoted to instilling eco-consciousness among its students, ensuring that their collective efforts contribute meaningfully to Qatar's sustainability goals.

These activities are supported and guided by the teachers in charge of the Campus Care Force: Jency George, Pushyami Racherla and Pradnya Pande.

Muslim nations adopt Arab alternative to Trump’s Gaza plan

JEDDAH: International support grew yesterday for an Arab counterproposal to US President Donald Trump’s plan to take over Gaza and displace its residents, with Islamic nations endorsing it and European governments giving their backing.

Unlike the Trump plan, the Arab proposal aims to rebuild Gaza without displacing the territory’s 2.4 million inhabitants, who endured more than 15 months of devastating conflict before a fragile ceasefire took effect on January 19.

The 57-member

Organisation of Islamic Cooperation formally adopted the counterproposal at an emergency meeting in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, three days after the Arab League ratified it at a summit in Cairo.

The OIC “adopts the plan... on the early recovery and reconstruction of Gaza”, the Islamic bloc said in a statement.

It urged “the international community and international and regional funding institutions to swiftly provide the necessary support”.

Trump triggered global outrage when he suggested the

US “take over” Gaza and turn it into the “Riviera of the Middle East”, while forcing its Palestinian inhabitants to relocate to Egypt or Jordan.

Egyptian Foreign Minister Badr Abdelatty welcomed the OIC endorsement and said he now hoped to gain support from the wider international community, including the US.

“The next step is for the plan to become an international plan through adoption by the European Union and international parties such as Japan, Russia, China and others,” Abdelatty said.

“This is what we will seek and we have contact with all parties, including the American party.”

Meanwhile, Hamas accused Israel yesterday of “committing the war crime of collective punishment” by halting aid to Gaza for a seventh day, saying it also impacted Israeli hostages still held there. On Sunday, Israel announced it was blocking aid deliveries to Gaza until Hamas accepted its terms for an extension of the ceasefire.

While Israel has said it wants to extend the first phase until mid-April, Hamas has

insisted on a transition to the second phase intended to lead to a permanent end to the war.

Hamas statement said Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s government was “committing the war crime of collective punishment against over two million Palestinian civilians through starvation and the deprivation of basic life necessities for the seventh consecutive day.”

“The repercussions of such crime extend beyond our people in Gaza to include the occupation’s prisoners held by the resistance, who are also affected

by the lack of food, medicine and healthcare.”

The group said Netanyahu “bears full responsibility” for the consequences of the aid block and accused him of “indifference” towards the hostages held in Gaza. A group of UN human rights experts has said that Israel is again “weaponising starvation” in Gaza by blocking the entry of humanitarian aid.

“As the occupying power, Israel is always obliged to ensure sufficient food, medical supplies and other relief services,” the experts said on Thursday. — *AFP*

South Korea’s impeached President Yoon released from detention



Impeached South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol reacts to his supporters as he arrives at the presidential residence in Seoul yesterday. (AFP)

SEOUL: Impeached South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol was released from detention yesterday after a court voided his arrest on procedural grounds — but he remains under investigation over his declaration of martial law.

The suspended president, who was detained in a dawn raid in January on insurrection charges over his December 3 attempt to subvert civilian rule, walked out of the detention centre smiling, before bowing deeply before a small crowd of cheering supporters.

“I bow my head in gratitude to the people of this nation,” Yoon said in a statement released through his lawyers.

A court had cancelled his

arrest warrant a day earlier on technical and legal grounds — a decision that prosecutors probing Yoon called “unjust”.

Yoon was freed after the prosecutors waived their right to appeal the court verdict, which specifically concerned technical details of his detention on criminal charges.

Yoon also faces a separate Constitutional Court ruling on whether to uphold his impeachment and formally strip him from office, with the judges’ decision expected any day.

Prosecutors said that “given the Constitutional Court’s ruling and related considerations, the Prosecutor General has instructed the team to actively present its arguments before the

trial court instead,” of appealing Yoon’s release from detention.

South Korea must hold a fresh presidential election within 60 days if Yoon is removed. The criminal case against him will continue even if he is formally stripped of office. “Because Yoon’s release is related to the procedural aspects of his detention, it will have no bearing on the Constitutional Court’s deliberation on his impeachment,” Yoo Jung-hoon, a lawyer and political columnist, told AFP.

“However, with social confusion and strife among Yoon’s supporters and protesters intensifying due to his release, the court may feel a greater need to act swiftly,” he added. — *AFP*

OIC announces resumption of Syria’s membership

JEDDAH: The Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) yesterday announced the resumption of Syria’s membership.

The decision was adopted by the OIC’s Council of Foreign Ministers following an extraordinary ministerial meeting held at the OIC headquarters in Jeddah.

The decision also condemned Israeli aggression against Syria and incursions into its territory, which constitute a blatant violation of international law and an assault on Syrian sovereignty, escalating tensions and conflict. It called on the international community and the UN Security Council to take immediate action to enforce international law on Israeli occupation, halt its aggression, and withdraw from the Syrian territories it has occupied. — *QNA*

‘Alarming regression’ in S Sudan, UN warns

NAIROBI: South Sudan is in “alarming regression” as clashes in recent weeks in the northeast threaten to undo years of progress towards peace, the UN commission on human rights in the country warned yesterday.

A fragile power-sharing agreement between President Salva Kiir and First Vice President Riek Machar has been put in peril by the clashes between their allied forces in the country’s Upper Nile State. On Friday, a United Nations helicopter attempting to rescue soldiers in the state was attacked, killing one crew member and wounding two others. An army general was also killed in the failed rescue mission, the UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) said Friday. The incident sent shudders through the young and impoverished nation, long plagued by political instability and violence. Kiir late Friday urged calm and pledged no return to war. The chair of the UN commission, Yasmin Sooka, said South Sudan was “witnessing an alarming regression that could erase years of hard-won progress”. “Rather than fuelling division and conflict, leaders must urgently refocus on the peace process, uphold the human rights of South Sudanese citizens, and ensure a smooth transition to democracy,” she said. — *AFP*



World in brief

Iran leader slams ‘bullying’ after Trump threats

TEHRAN: Iran’s supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei yesterday slammed what he described as bullying tactics a day after US President Donald Trump threatened military action against Iran. “Some bully governments — I really don’t know of any more appropriate term for some foreign figures and leaders than the word bullying — insist on negotiations,” Khamenei told officials. “Their negotiations are not aimed at solving problems, they aim at domination,” Khamenei said.

Khamenei said that bullying powers aim to assert their own expectations. “They are setting new expectations that they think will definitely not be met by Iran,” he said. Khamenei also slammed the three European countries for “declaring that Iran has not fulfilled its nuclear commitments under the JCPOA”. “You say that Iran has not fulfilled its commitments under the JCPOA. Okay, have you fulfilled your commitments under the JCPOA?” he responded. — *AFP*

Pakistan committed to empowering women: PM

ISLAMABAD: Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif said yesterday that the country was committed to empowering women and gender equality to promote community and society development.

“It is our mission and an unwavering commitment to ensure emancipation of the country’s women population. Women’s empowerment could only be achieved by providing them equal access to education, skill development and employment opportunities,” Sharif said while addressing an event held to mark the International Women’s Day.

He said that the federal government has been collaborating with provinces for collective actions to promote women’s integration in programs contributing to the national economy, urging women to join different professions of their expertise in order to positively contribute to a stronger economy. — *XINHUA*

Kim inspects ‘nuclear-powered submarine’ project

SEOUL: North Korean leader Kim Jong Un inspected a project to build a nuclear-powered submarine, state media reported yesterday, saying that “radically” boosting the navy was a key part of Pyongyang’s defensive strategy.

Kim visited shipyards focused on building warships, the Korean Central News Agency reported, without giving details of the exact date or location of the inspection.

Kim “learned about the building of a nuclear-powered strategic guided missile submarine,” the report said.

The report is likely referring to a nuclear-powered submarine capable of launching ballistic missiles, Yonhap news agency reported, adding this was the first time the nuclear-armed North had revealed construction of a ballistic missile submarine.

Kim said the country’s “sea defence capability... will be fully displayed in any necessary waters without limitation,” KCNA said.

“The development of the naval force into an elite and nuclear-armed force constitutes an important content in the strategy for the development of the national defence,” it added. — *AFP*

Myanmar junta chief says election to be held by January

BANGKOK: Myanmar’s junta chief said the country would hold an election in December or January, the first in the war-torn nation since the military staged a coup in 2021.

“We are planning to hold the election in December 2025 or... by January 2026,” General Min Aung Hlaing was quoted as saying in the state-run newspaper Global New Light of Myanmar published yesterday.

The vote would be “free and fair” he said on Friday during a state visit to Belarus, adding that 53 political parties had “submitted their lists” to participate. “We also invite observation teams from Belarus to come and observe” the slated election, he said during a meeting with Belarusian President Aleksandr Lukashenko in Minsk.

The Myanmar military seized power in 2021, making unsubstantiated claims of massive electoral fraud in 2020

polls won resoundingly by Nobel laureate Aung San Suu Kyi’s National League for Democracy (NLD).

It has since unleashed a bloody crackdown on dissent and as fighting ravages swathes of the country had repeatedly delayed plans for fresh polls that critics say will be neither free nor fair.

The junta is struggling to crush widespread opposition to its rule from ethnic rebel groups and pro-democracy “People’s Defence Forces”.

In 2022, the junta-stacked election commission announced that Suu Kyi’s NLD would be dissolved for failing to re-register under a tough new military-drafted electoral law. Junta-appointed foreign minister Than Swe in December told delegates from five neighbouring countries at a meeting in Bangkok that “progress was being made” towards an election in 2025. — *AFP*

DR Congo offers bounty for arrest of M23 leaders

KINSHASA: Authorities in the Democratic Republic of Congo are offering a five-million-dollar reward for help in arresting leaders of the M23 group that recently captured two major northern towns, the justice ministry announced.

“A reward of five million dollars is offered to any person who helps arrest the convicts Corneille Nangaa, Bertrand Bisimwa and Sultani Makenga,” the ministry said in a statement dated Friday.

Nangaa, a leader in the River Congo Alliance (AFC) that is a military-political coalition to which the M23 belongs, is a former president of the DRC’s electoral commission. Bisimwa and Makenga are respectively the president and military chief of the M23. Tried in absentia in Kinshasa, all three men were convicted and sentenced to death in August 2024. — *AFP*

Troops injured in road crash as ex-cyclone batters Australia

LABRADOR, AUSTRALIA: Australian troops were seriously injured yesterday in a major road crash while responding to ex-Cyclone Alfred, which has battered a swathe of the eastern coast and cut power to more than 330,000 properties.

The former tropical cyclone — now downgraded to a tropical depression — made landfall in the late evening over Bribie Island on the Queensland coastline after lingering for days offshore.

The weather system has whipped up gale-force winds that toppled trees, brought down power lines, and damaged buildings.

And it is still creating heavy rainfall, swelling rivers in parts of a 400km stretch of the coast



A damaged home is pictured after a tree uprooted by strong winds crashed into the structure in the suburb of Elanora as Cyclone Alfred passed near the Gold Coast yesterday. (AFP)

straddling southeast Queensland and northeast New South Wales, government fore-

casters said.

Near the flood-prone New South Wales city of Lismore,

two Australian Defence Force (ADF) trucks deployed to help the community were involved in a crash, resulting in 36 injuries — some serious, government officials and emergency services said.

Patients were transported to four hospitals. “Right now our focus is on the welfare of those involved and their families,” Prime Minister Anthony Albanese said.

“Our ADF heroes were on their way to help Australians in need,” he said in a joint statement with the defence minister. A 61-year-old man’s body was found earlier in the day after his four-wheel drive pick-up truck was swept off a bridge into a river in northern New South Wales. — *AFP*

Families of MH370 victims in China seek end to decade of ‘torment’

BEIJING: Relatives of Chinese passengers lost on Malaysia Airlines flight MH370 gathered in Beijing yesterday seeking answers from authorities 11 years after the plane disappeared in one of aviation’s greatest enduring mysteries.

The Boeing 777 carrying 239 people disappeared from radar screens on March 8, 2014 while en route from Kuala Lumpur to Beijing.

Two-thirds of the passengers were Chinese, while the others were from Malaysia, Indonesia, Australia, and elsewhere.

Despite the largest search in aviation history, the plane has never been found.

But Malaysian Transport Minister Anthony Loke last month announced that maritime exploration firm Ocean Infinity had resumed the hunt for the missing plane. Family members said they had been in the dark about the new search.

“It was promised that we would be informed immediately (but) we can only find out about this kind of news online,” 68-year-old Li Eryou told AFP before meeting representatives from China’s transport and foreign ministries.

“Many families don’t even know how to access this information, so they are completely unaware,” said Li, who lost his 29-year-old son on the plane.

“We all feel extremely angry and frustrated,” Li said.

Jiang Hui, whose mother was on the plane, said that he was still in the dark about the new search.

“When will it start? Where will the search take place?

How long will it last? What discoveries have been made? What theories led to the decision to restart the search?” Jiang told reporters.

He hoped the search will “bring an end to the 11 years of suffering”.

The grieving families also gathered yesterday at an intersection in front of the Malaysian embassy in Beijing, the road to which was sealed off by at least 20 police officers.

The attendees shouted in unison “Give us back our loved ones!” Some held placards asking “When will the 11 years of waiting and torment end?” Police presence was particularly heavy in the area with officers shooing journalists away and warning them to stop taking photographs of the demonstration. — **AFP**

CHANGE OF NAME

I, JOANNE JARAMILLO DE AUSTRIA
جوان جاراميلو دي اوستريا
Holder of Philippines Passport No. P8344015B
(Qatar ID No.28760832500)
hereby change my name to

JOANNE CABLAO JARAMILLO
جوان كابلاو جاراميلو

Any objection, please contact the Immigration and Passport Office within 15 days from the publication of this notice.

I, Hanin Alherakiy
حنين الحراكي
Holder of Republic of Turkiye Passport No. U24168315
(Qatar ID No.29876000445)
hereby change my name to

HANIN ABU WATFA
حنين ابووظفة

Any objection, please contact the Immigration and Passport Office within 15 days from the publication of this notice.

MARRIAGE NOTICE

Ms. BENITA JUDITH SIMON, holder of **Indian** Passport No. **V8540847**, issued at **DOHA** on **24/03/2022** and **Mr. ANDRES MAURICIO CASTANO ZULUAGA** holder of **COLOMBIA** Passport No. **AY010559** issued at **C.WASHINGTON** on **08/12/2021.**, intend to marry each other. In case of any objections, please contact Marriage Officer, Indian Embassy Qatar within 30 days of publishing.

Email: admn.doha@mea.gov.in
Fax: (974)-44655471, Tel: (974)-44255777

PENOMAG
Classifieds

Sunday 09 March 2025Contact: Tel: 44557 857 or email: adv@pen.com.qa

AXESS
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Trump signs order to limit who gets public service student loan forgiveness

WASHINGTON: In a move that could upend a popular federal program, President Donald Trump issued an executive order on Friday directing his education secretary to revise eligibility requirements for Public Service Loan Forgiveness.

The program forgives a portion of the education debt held by people who work in the government and certain non-profit jobs for a decade. Trump wants to exclude organizations that he says support “illegal immigration, human smuggling, child trafficking, pervasive damage to public property and disruption of the public order.”

“The PSLF Program has mis-directed tax dollars into activist organizations that not only fail to serve the public interest, but actually harm our national security and American values, sometimes through criminal means,” the order says. “The PSLF Program also creates perverse incentives that can increase the cost of tuition, can load students in low-need majors with



US President Donald Trump steps off Air Force One at Palm Beach International Airport in West Palm Beach, Florida, on March 7, 2025. (AFP)

unsustainable debt, and may push students into organizations that hide under the umbrella of a nonprofit designation and degrade our national interest.”

The order takes aim at non-profit organizations that it says support gender-transition care for minors, engage in public

protests that include blocking highways or fund groups that are designated as foreign terrorist organizations.

As it stands, nonprofit employees are eligible for student loan forgiveness if they focus on areas that serve the public good, such as education, public health

or public interest law. According to the Education Department, there are more than 2 million people with eligible employment.

“The president claims to be committed to ‘free speech,’ but we’ve quickly discovered that pledge doesn’t apply to higher education and now, PSLF,” said Randi Weingarten, president of the American Federation of Teachers. “He wants to impose an ideological litmus test antithetical to American values and contrary to the statute at hand. It’s an illegal attack on millions of dedicated public service workers who placed their faith in PSLF’s bipartisan promise, only to see it ripped away.”

The order may not take immediate effect. Education Secretary Linda McMahon may need to convene a panel of experts for a negotiated rulemaking to change the criteria for qualifying employers and then invite the public to comment on any proposed revision.

— **THE WASHINGTON POST**

UK, France, Italy, Germany hail Arab plan to rebuild for Gaza

BERLIN: Britain, France, Germany and Italy yesterday backed a proposal by Muslim-majority nations to rebuild Gaza as a “realistic path”.

The counter-proposal to US President Donald Trump’s plan to take over Gaza and displace its residents “promises — if implemented — swift and sustainable improvement of the catastrophic living conditions for the Palestinians living in Gaza,” the foreign ministers of the four countries said in a joint statement. The 57-member Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) at an emergency meeting in Saudi Arabia, yesterday formally adopted a plan put forward by the Arab League. The Egyptian-crafted plan, an alternative to Trump’s widely condemned takeover, proposes to rebuild the Gaza Strip under the future administration of the Palestinian Authority.

Unlike the Trump plan, it aims to do so without displacing the territory’s 2.4 million inhabitants, who have suffered 17 months of war. — **AFP**

Ecuador security forces given blanket amnesty in cartel fight

GUAYAQUIL: Ecuador’s president announced on Friday an amnesty for security forces fighting drug cartels in the port city of Guayaquil, where 22 people were killed in fierce gunfights between rival gangs. As teams of heavily armed police launched raids and collected tens of bodies in the city’s troubled Nueva Prosperina neighbourhood, President Daniel Noboa announced a blanket pardon designed to signal resolve.

“All police and military personnel who have operated in, or who will be deployed to Nueva Prosperina, already have a presidential pardon,” he said on social media. He urged the security forces — some already accused of human rights abuses during an increasingly brutal drug war — to “act with determination and without fear of reprisal.” AFP reporters accompanied police SWAT teams on a series of raids in Nueva Prosperina on Friday. — **AFP**

US halts commercial satellite imagery access for Kyiv

WASHINGTON: Washington has “temporarily suspended” Ukraine’s access to US government-purchased commercial satellite imagery, a National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency spokesperson said on Friday.

Maxar, one of the companies contracted by the US program that provided the imagery to Kyiv, confirmed the suspension, while saying there is “no change to the way we support our other customers nor their programs or contracts.”

The suspension of Ukraine’s access to the satellite imagery — which its forces have used for tracking the movement of Russian troops and assessing damage after strikes — comes after Washington halted other key assistance for Kyiv.

For Ukraine’s armed forces, US intelligence is as important as military supplies in bloody fighting against Russian troops. — **AFP**

German conservatives, centre-left agree in principle to form govt

BERLIN: Germany’s conservative election winner Friedrich Merz came a step closer yesterday towards forming a government which he has pledged will revive Europe’s top economy and its armed forces with massive new spending.

The bold moves are part of his plan to rebuild Berlin’s standing in Europe, which Merz has said must respond to the sweeping changes driven by US President Donald Trump that have rocked the transatlantic alliance.

Merz’s CDU/CSU bloc and the Social Democrats (SPD) of defeated Chancellor Olaf Scholz

Merz’s CDU/CSU bloc and the Social Democrats (SPD) of defeated Chancellor Olaf Scholz yesterday announced they had wrapped up exploratory talks and would now move onto the next, decisive stage of full-fledged coalition negotiations.

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next, decisive stage of full-fledged coalition negotiations.

“We concluded the consultations between CDU/CSU and SPD and we have drawn up a joint exploratory paper,” Merz said. He praised the “extremely good and very collegial atmosphere” of the talks that had passed a major hurdle less than two weeks after the February 23 elections.

Merz said both sides shared “the conviction that we have a great task ahead of us”.

He said all were “aware of the great challenge we are facing— above all the international situation, but also...

UK says Australia ‘considering’ joining group to protect Ukraine peace

LONDON: The UK yesterday said that Australia’s Prime Minister Anthony Albanese was considering joining a group of countries prepared to protect an eventual ceasefire in the Russia-Ukraine war.

Britain and France have been leading efforts to form the so-called “coalition of the willing”, with the United States’ long-term commitment to Europe’s security now in doubt under President Donald Trump.

British Prime Minister Keir Starmer

“spoke to the Prime Minister of Australia Anthony Albanese this morning,” the UK leader’s office said yesterday.

“He welcomed Prime Minister Albanese’s commitment to consider contributing to a Coalition of the Willing for Ukraine and looked forward to the Chiefs of Defence meeting in Paris on Tuesday.”

European countries have been rushing to boost support for Ukraine as Trump pursues direct talks with Russian leader Vladimir Putin to end Moscow’s three-year-long invasion of Ukraine. — **AFP**

FARC dissidents capture 29 Colombian soldiers, police

BOGOTA: Twenty-eight police officers and one soldier held hostage in southwest Colombia were released yesterday, according to an AFP witness on the ground.

Around noon yesterday, residents of the community of La Hacienda in the department of Cauca told the detainees that they were free to go. The men, held since Thursday, collected their riot gear and left along a dirt road, escorted by local residents, the AFP witness said.

The government said on Friday that the officers were being held by a dissident FARC guerrilla group.

Officials said guerrillas and members of the public confronted and overwhelmed security services who were trying to reestablish state control in two municipalities.

Government images showed



Some of the 28 policemen and one soldier who had been taken captive by FARC rebel group, wait for their transfer after being released in El Plateado, Colombia, yesterday. (AFP)

gangs pelting a flaming armored vehicle with rocks, and riot police detonating smoke grenades amid a running gun battle.

President Gustavo Petro blamed a FARC renegade faction known as the Central General Staff (EMC), accusing it of “using

the civilian population” to attack troops. A statement from self-described “local communities,” however, said locals acted in “self-defense” when attacked by the armed forces, who are alleged to have used machine guns and live rounds. — **AFP**

Two dead, 230 sickened in US measles outbreak

WASHINGTON: A measles outbreak in the southwestern United States has killed two people and infected more than 200, prompting a top health agency to issue a travel warning.

As of Friday, Texas had reported 198 cases and New Mexico 30, bringing the total to 228. Each state confirmed one death, and both were unvaccinated.

The Texas patient was a child while the New Mexico patient was an adult who tested positive for measles after death.

Although the official cause of the adult’s death has not been released by the New Mexico Office of the Medical Investigator, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has classified it as a measles-related fatality.

“More cases are expected as this

outbreak continues to expand rapidly,” the CDC warned in a Health Alert Network advisory to healthcare workers, public health officials, and potential travelers.

“With spring and summer travel season approaching in the United States, CDC emphasizes the important role that clinicians and public health officials play in preventing the spread of measles,” the agency said. “They should be vigilant for cases of febrile rash illness that meet the measles case definition and share effective measles prevention strategies, including vaccination guidance for international travellers.” Measles is highly contagious, spreading through respiratory droplets and lingering in the air for up to two hours after an infected person leaves an area. — **AFP**



World in brief

Kuwaiti migrant dies seeking to reach UK: France

LILLE: A Kuwaiti migrant in his 60s died yesterday while seeking to cross the Channel from northern France to England aboard a small boat, regional authorities said.

The man died after suffering a cardiac arrest on the boat that was carrying him and fellow migrants across the Channel, the prefecture for the Pas-de-Calais region in northern France told AFP. The boat returned to the beach and the man was taken off but was declared dead at the scene despite intervention from police and medics, it added.

The prefecture said the man was of Kuwaiti nationality and aged around 60. But there was no further information on his identity or why he had chosen to travel clandestinely to the UK. He is the sixth person to lose their life this year trying to cross the Channel in this manner. “This boat set off again once it had dropped off the people who wanted to disembark on the beach,” said the French maritime prefecture of the Channel and the North Sea, adding that the boat was “quite heavily loaded”, without giving a precise figure on the number of people on board. — **AFP**

Greek government survives no-confidence motion

ATHENS: The Greek government survived on Friday a censure motion tabled by the opposition over a deadly train accident two years ago. A total of 157 Members of Parliament voted against the motion, while 136 deputies voted in favor with 293 participating in the vote in the 300-member strong plenary.

Greece’s main opposition party submitted the censure motion against the government on Wednesday. The Panhellenic Socialist Movement–Movement for Change accused the ruling conservatives of mishandling safety failures that led to the country’s worst train tragedy and attempting to cover up political responsibility. Addressing the plenary before the vote, Greek Prime Minister Kyr- iakos Mitsotakis, dismissed the allegations. — **XINHUA**

Zelensky’s approval rating rises amid US tensions

KIEV: Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky’s approval rating has risen amid growing tensions with the US administration, according to a poll, whose results were released on Friday.

The survey, conducted by the Kyiv International Institute of Sociology (KIIS) found that Zelensky’s approval rating increased to 68 percent in early March, up from 57 percent a month ago.

Meanwhile, his disapproval rating dropped from 37 percent to 27 percent, it said. Commenting on the poll results, Anton Hrush- etsky, the executive director of KIIS, said that “Ukrainians per- ceive the rhetoric of the new US government as an attack on the whole of Ukraine and all Ukrainians.” Zelensky’s meeting with US President Donald Trump and Vice President JD Vance at the White House on Feb. 28 turned into a heated exchange, leading to the cancellation of the scheduled news conference and an anticipated bilateral raw materials agreement. — **XINHUA**

Brazil says discussing Trump’s import tariffs with US

BRASÍLIA: Brazil and the United States are engaged in talks on import tariffs announced by President Donald Trump, just days before they are due to take effect, the government of Pres- ident Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva said on Friday.

Ties between the countries have been strained since Trump said he would impose a 25-percent tariff on steel and aluminum imports from March 12, prompting Lula to vow reciprocity.

Brazil is the second-largest exporter of steel to the United States after Canada, sending it 4.08 million tonnes of the metal in 2024.

Brazil’s Foreign Minister Mauro Vieira spoke to US Trade Representative Jamieson Greer by telephone Friday, and the pair agreed to create a working group “to address tariff-related issues,” the foreign ministry said on X.

This came a day after Vice President Geraldo Alckmin held a video conference with Greer and US Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick, and agreed on further talks “in the coming days,” according to Brazil’s commerce ministry. — **AFP**

Trains back to normal at Paris Gare du Nord after WWII bomb defused

PARIS: Rail services resumed yesterday at Gare du Nord station in Paris, one of a the busiest rail hubs in Europe, after all trains were cancelled for much of the previous day following the discovery of a World War II bomb.

Gare du Nord hosts Eurostar services to London and into continental Europe via Belgium, high-speed trains to northern France, as well as a plethora of regional and suburban services.

Sone 500 trains and 600,000 people were affected Friday “with the entire northern part of the country paralysed”, said Transport Minister Philippe Tabarot, after one of the

toughest days in years on the French rail network in years.

“We are pleased and relieved that it is over,” he said Friday, adding the bomb weighed 500kg with 200kg of explosives packed inside. Defusing operations were completed by Friday afternoon, allowing travel to resume. Rail services resumed progressively from 1700 GMT Friday and were back to normal yesterday.

“Traffic has resumed nor- mally, everything is open, ev- erything is running normally,” a spokesperson for French rail operator SNCF told AFP Sat- urday. — **AFP**

Gaza protesters vandalise Trump’s Turnberry golf resort in Scotland

LONDON: US President Donald Trump’s prized Turnberry golf resort in Scotland has been vandalised by protesters who sprayed “GAZA IS NOT 4 SALE” in huge white letters on the lawn.

The activists also damaged greens and sprayed blood-red paint over the luxury resort’s clubhouse overnight yesterday.

The Palestine Action group said it was a “direct response to the US adminis- tration’s stated intent to eth-

nically cleanse Gaza”.

Trump sparked outrage last month when he suggested the US “take over” Gaza and turn it into the “Riviera of the Middle East”, while forcing its Palestinian inhabitants to relocate to Egypt or Jordan.

The activists cited an AI-generated video the US pres- ident shared online last week, which showed the razed Pal- estinian territory rebuilt as a Trump-branded seaside resort. — **AFP**

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Reflection AI lofty mission focuses on building tools that have full autonomy rather than simply serving as a kind of co-pilot or assistant. The startup expects that approach to lead more quickly to superintelligence.

Ex-DeepMind researchers’ new startup aims for superintelligence

WASHINGTON: Two top researchers from Google’s artificial intelligence lab DeepMind have raised \$130 million for a new company with the goal of achieving superintelligence through AI-powered coding agents capable of self-direction.

The startup, Reflection AI, has so far been operating under the radar. It plans to emerge from stealth with the announcement of its new funding, which includes a \$25m seed funding round led by Sequoia Capital and CRV, as well as a \$105m Series A round led by Lightspeed Venture Partners and CRV.

Other investors include LinkedIn co-founder Reid Hoffman, Scale AI Chief Executive Officer Alexandr Wang, SV Angel and the VC arm of Nvidia Corp. The startup’s latest valuation is \$555m.

Reflection AI was founded by Misha Laskin and Ioannis Antonoglou, who were previously research scientists at Alphabet Inc’s AI unit, helping lead reinforcement learning for its model, Gemini. Antonoglou, a founding engineer at DeepMind, helped create AlphaGo, a breakthrough AI model that was the first to beat human-level experts at the board game Go.

A growing number of tech companies have bet on so-called agents that can perform certain tasks, including coding, on a user’s behalf. But Reflection’s lofty mission focuses on building tools that have full autonomy rather than simply serving as a kind of co-pilot or assistant.

The startup expects that approach to lead more quickly to superintelligence – or AI that is smarter than most humans, more broadly. Other AI companies, including OpenAI, Anthropic and DeepMind, are also working to build more powerful AI systems that match or outperform people in many tasks.

Laskin said that the company already has paying customers in fields that have large coding teams, such as in the financial services and technology sector. The company is focused on first automating tedious and rote engineering work, such as migrating software databases or refactoring code.

“I don’t think it’s about replacing engineers’ jobs,” said Lightspeed partner Raviraj Jain who is taking a seat on Reflection’s board. “I think it’s more about instead of engineers doing grunt work, they’ll become like architects who will



Protester climbs Big Ben in support of Palestine

A protester holding a Palestinian flag gestures from the side of the Elizabeth Tower, commonly known by the name of the clock’s bell “Big Ben”, at the Palace of Westminster, home to the Houses of Parliament, in central London, yesterday. UK police closed the area around Big Ben in London after a man holding a Palestinian flag climbed the tower. The man climbed several metres up the tower and stood barefoot on a ledge holding the flag, witnesses said. (AFP)

Instagram testing new ‘Community Chat’ feature

WASHINGTON: Instagram is working on a new feature called “Community Chat,” which allows users to create group conversations of up to 250 members within the app, focused on specific topics, and control who can join.

Unlike “Broadcast Channels,” where only content creators can send messages to their followers, “Community Chat” enable all members

to participate in the conversation.

The feature includes built-in moderation tools such as message deletion and member removal. Additionally, the platform will review these chats according to its community standards. Instagram clarified that the feature is still in an internal prototype stage, aiming to help users connect with others who share similar interests. — **QNA**

Google debuts experimental Gemini embedding model

SAN FRANCISCO: Google has added a new, experimental “embedding” model for text, Gemini Embedding, to its Gemini developer API, the company announced.

“Trained on the Gemini model itself, this embedding model has inherited Gemini’s understanding of language and nuanced context, making it applicable for a wide range of uses,” Google said in a blog post.

“We’ve trained our model to be remarkably general, delivering exceptional performance across diverse domains, including finance, science, legal, search, and more.” The company noted that Gemini Embedding is in an “experimental phase” with limited capacity and it’s “working towards a stable, generally available release in the months to come.” — **XINHUA**

Sleeping man struck by train in Peru but survives

LIMA: A man somehow survived after being struck yesterday by a cargo train while sleeping along train tracks in Peru, local authorities said.

“The train knocked him over but through some miracle did not kill him,” General Javier Avalos, a security official for the town of Ate in Lima province, said.

The train was on a regular run toward the Peruvian Andes when it struck 28-year-old Juan Carlos Tello, he said, adding that it stopped quickly.

Surveillance footage released by the city shows the locomotive dragging the young man for several yards (meters). — **AFP**

Oops, we tipped it again: Mission over for sideways US lander

WASHINGTON: Intuitive Machines’ second Moon mission ended in disappointment on Friday after the US company confirmed that its spacecraft had tipped over and was unable to recharge its solar-powered batteries -- mirroring its first attempt last year.

It marked a premature conclusion to a mission that had sparked excitement in the space community, thanks to its cutting-edge payloads, including a futuristic hopping drone, multiple rovers, an ice drill, and a 4G network test.

Houston-based Intuitive Machines (IM) had hoped to make history with Athena, a hexagonal lander roughly the height of a giraffe, designed to touch down on a spot called the Mons Mouton plateau, closer to the lunar south pole than any mission before.

But after blasting off last week aboard a SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket and traveling more than a million kilometers through space, the spacecraft stumbled at the final hurdle on Thursday, coming down at an awkward angle.

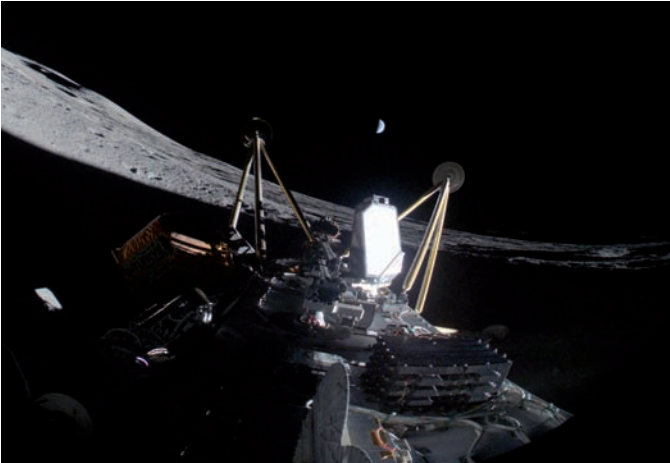
IM confirmed Friday that it had fallen face-first into a crater, at least 250m from its intended landing site.

A photo released by the company showed Athena resting on an incline, with Earth visible between two of its splayed landing legs -- a fate similar to IM’s prior landing with its Odysseus spacecraft in February 2024.

Faulty instruments

“With the direction of the Sun, the orientation of the solar panels, and extreme cold temperatures in the crater, Intuitive Machines does not expect Athena to recharge,” the company said in a statement, adding “the mission has concluded.”

NASA’s Nicky Fox, associate



This image courtesy of Intuitive Machines shows the company’s Athena spacecraft on its side after landing on the Moon.

administrator for science, struck a positive note.

“Each success and setback are opportunities to learn and grow, and we will use this lesson to propel our efforts to advance science, exploration, and commercial development as we get ready for human exploration of Mars.”

NASA was able to power on the ice drill and move it around, but not use it for its intended purpose.

The science investigations and technology demonstrations were originally expected to last approximately 10 days, with the company hoping to capture a lunar eclipse from the Moon’s perspective on March 14.

IM executives on Thursday suggested that issues with Athena’s laser altimeters contributed to the bad landing, similar to the previous mission, when Odysseus came in too fast, caught a foot on the surface, and toppled over.

Specifically, the Terrain Relative Navigation laser, designed to provide altitude and velocity readings, was returning “noisy” data that could not be fully trusted, while the Hazard Relative Navigation sensors only sent intermittent signals.

Athena, like Odysseus, has a tall, slender build, standing 15.6 feet (4.8m) in height, raising stability concerns.

But CEO Steve Altemus insisted that the lander’s weight distribution kept the center of gravity low, and the company remains confident in its design.

Texas rival succeeds

Adding to the disappointment, the latest mishap came just days after Texas rival Firefly Aerospace successfully landed its Blue Ghost lander on its first attempt.

These missions are part of NASA’s \$2.6bn Commercial Lunar Payload Services (CLPS) programme, which seeks to leverage private industry to lower costs and support Artemis -- NASA’s effort to return astronauts to the Moon and eventually reach Mars.

Meanwhile, two probes that had hitched a ride on the same SpaceX rocket as the IM equipment have also been lost, adding to the sense of an ill-fated voyage. NASA’s Lunar Trailblazer probe was designed to map the Moon’s water distribution, while Odin, a small private probe, aimed to capture close-up photos of an asteroid. — **AFP**

Hermes celebrates felt at Paris Fashion Week

PARIS: French brand Hermes put felt at the heart of its Fall-Winter collection at its Paris Women’s Fashion Week show yesterday in a beige-toned setting resembling a labyrinth.

The label sent out models in fitted designs with sharp cuts, small belts accentuating the waist and jackets with padded shoulders, bucking the oversized trend seen on many other catwalks over the last week.

Felt appeared first in mica grey or slate grey, paired with leather at the purpose-built venue in central Paris that was shaped like a horseshoe and decked out in brown felt.

The advantage of felt, which other brands like Marie Adam-Leenaerdt have also highlighted this Fashion Week, is “being able to work it like leather, cut it however you want”, explained the house’s designer, Nadege Vanhee.

The collection also featured short biker-style jackets and a bomber jacket.

At Vivienne Westwood

yesterday, creative director Andreas Kronthaler put British tailoring and the brand’s trademark tweeds at the heart of the collection.

The jackets in muted greens, greys and mauve were large to the point of oversized with broad shoulder pads, paired with long ties that dragged on the floor.

The unisex show also featured male models in chunky pumps and over-the-knee heeled boots with heels, underlining the growing convergence between men’s and women’s fashion.

The appearance of several mountain outfits also pointed to the growing interest of luxury labels in the high-end ski apparel market.

One of the other big trends of the last week -- fake fur -- was clearly on show at yesterday’s show by Lebanon-based Elie Saab.

French designer Ludovic de Saint Sernin unveiled what he called a more “mature” collection designed for both work and all-night dancing. — **AFP**



A model presents a creation by Hermes for the womenswear ready-to-wear Fall-Winter 2025/2026 collection as part of the Paris Fashion Week, in Paris yesterday. (AFP)

TRENDING IN QATAR

On The Peninsula social media platforms

Gaza protesters vandalise Trump's Scottish golf resort

US President Donald Trump’s prized Turnberry golf resort in Scotland has been vandalised by protesters who sprayed “GAZA IS NOT 4 SALE”.

Arab League condemns attacking forces in Syria

The Arab league expressed deep concern over the recent security developments and confrontations in Al Sahel area in Syria.

WhatsApp group admin shot dead for removing member

A Pakistani man has been charged with murder after allegedly shooting the administrator of a community WhatsApp group.

Chinese blockbuster 'Ne Zha 2' hits Malaysian screens

Chinese animated blockbuster “Ne Zha 2” hit Malaysian movie screens at Twin Towers in Kuala Lumpur, the capital of Malaysia.