

WEDNESDAY  
17 DECEMBER 2025  
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# The Peninsula

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## HAYYAKOM TO QATAR



### Prime Minister, members of United States Senate Committee on Foreign Relation review strategic relations

Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs H E Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim Al-Thani met in Washington yesterday with members of the United States Senate Committee on Foreign Relations. The meeting discussed close strategic relations between the State of Qatar and the United States of America and ways to support and develop them. It also discussed a number of topics of common concern.

### Training premises of UNODC Regional Centre for Combating Cybercrime opens

**DOHA:** Secretary-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, H E Dr. Ahmed bin Hassan Al Hammadi and Acting Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), John Brandolino, officially inaugurated the new training premises of the UNODC Regional Center for Combating Cybercrime in Doha yesterday.

The centre is located at the new headquarters of the Diplomatic Institute of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Lusail.

The opening ceremony was attended by Director of the International Organisations Department at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, H E Sheikha Hanouf bint Abdulrahman Al-Thani, and Director of UNODC Doha Centre, Mustafa Artin, alongside a variety of officials.

Speaking at the inauguration ceremony, Al Hammadi stressed that the State of Qatar gives foremost priority to fostering partnerships with UN organisations, stemming from its unflagging commitment to backing global efforts aimed at achieving criminal justice and

*The State of Qatar gives foremost priority to fostering partnerships with UN organisations, stemming from its unflagging commitment to backing global efforts aimed at achieving criminal justice and combating all kinds of cyber crimes.*

combating all kinds of cyber crimes. He asserted that the centre represents a substantial enhancement to upgrade global capabilities in this domain. Mustafa Artin emphasised that he is grateful for the support Qatar is providing to establish and operate this centre, stressing the importance of this move following the ratification of the United Nations Convention against Cybercrime, which was signed in Hanoi, Vietnam, last October.

He pointed out that Qatar was among the first countries to sign the Convention. — **QNA** ➔ **P10**

### Interior Minister and Interpol Secretary-General discuss ways to strengthen security cooperation

**DOHA:** Minister of Interior and Commander of the Internal Security Force and Chairman of the Security Committee H E Sheikh Khalifa bin Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani met with Secretary General of the International Criminal Police Organization (Interpol) H E Valdecy Urquiza.

During the meeting, the two sides discussed ways to strengthen international security cooperation and exchange expertise in combating organised crime and transnational crimes,

in addition to exploring mechanisms to further enhance joint coordination.

The meeting also witnessed the signing of a memorandum of understanding (MoU) to extend the STADIA Project, which was established within Interpol in 2012 with funding and support from Qatar.

The project aims to assist countries seeking to host major sporting events, strengthen police capabilities, transfer expertise and technology to Interpol member states, and

promote best security practices in organising and securing large-scale sporting events.

The agreement was signed on behalf of the Security Committee by Brigadier Jassim Al Buhashim Al Sayed, Secretary to the Minister of Interior for Coordination and Follow-up and Member and Secretary of the Security Committee, and on behalf of Interpol by H E Valdecy Urquiza, Secretary General of the Organisation. — **QNA**



Minister of Interior and Commander of the Internal Security Force and Chairman of the Security Committee H E Sheikh Khalifa bin Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani witnessing signing of a memorandum of understanding.

### Work underway to set up 40 new schools of global standard by 2030

SANAULLAH ATAULLAH  
THE PENINSULA

**DOHA:** The Ministry of Education and Higher Education has said that implementation is underway to strengthen Qatar's education system, with ongoing construction and development set to deliver more than 40 new schools of high global standards by 2030.

Undersecretary of the Ministry of Education and Higher Education H E Dr. Ibrahim Al Nuaimi has outlined Qatar's comprehensive strategy to strengthen the national education system through modern infrastructure, qualified teachers, flexible academic planning and expanded scholarship opportunities in line with the country's long-term vision up to 2030.

Speaking to Qatar TV recently, Dr. Al Nuaimi stressed that modern school infrastructure remains a cornerstone

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- Modern school infrastructure remains a cornerstone of the ministry's development plans.

of the ministry's development plans. He noted that a national plan launched three years ago has already delivered tangible results. The first phase saw the completion of around 10 new schools, followed by a second phase that added eight more. In the upcoming academic term, four additional schools are set to be handed over, while the third phase will include approximately 14 schools.

"From now until 2030, we expect to have more than 40

modern schools equipped with advanced infrastructure that meets the needs of today's students," he said. These facilities are designed to provide an integrated learning environment that supports students, teachers and school leadership, while keeping pace with global educational standards.

Beyond infrastructure, Dr. Al Nuaimi emphasised that student preparation, teacher development and effective communication with parents are

equally vital. He highlighted the importance of national digital learning platforms, describing them as a key tool in linking parents with schools and students. "These platforms strengthen partnership with families and ensure that parents are actively engaged in their children's educational journey," he explained.

Addressing key educational policies, Dr. Al Nuaimi pointed to significant progress in attracting Qatari male students to the teaching profession. The number of Qatari male students enrolled in colleges of education has increased to around 150, a milestone the ministry considers a major achievement. "Our goal is to prepare these students to become future teachers and academic staff in our schools," he said, expressing hope that the number will continue to rise.

He also encouraged secondary school students to view teaching as a profession of

national importance. "Education is a foundational pillar upon which many of the country's future needs are built," he noted. In addition, the ministry continues to run empowerment and qualification programmes for graduates from other disciplines and universities abroad, ensuring they meet Qatar's educational standards before joining the national school system.

Dr. Al Nuaimi also shed light on the new academic calendar for schools covering the years 2025–2028. Introduced three years ago and continuously evaluated, the calendar aims to balance academic requirements with social and cultural considerations.

It carefully schedules examinations and holidays in a way that aligns with Qatari society, taking into account the holy month of Ramadan, Eid Al Fitr and Eid Al Adha, while ensuring that instructional hours for students are not affected. ➔ **P12**

### Amiri Diwan announces December 18 as official holiday

**DOHA:** On the occasion of Qatar National Day, observed annually on December 18, the Amiri Diwan has announced that tomorrow (Thursday, December 18, 2025) will be official holiday. Employees will resume work on Sunday, December 21, 2025. — **QNA**

### Qatar condemns approval of 19 new settlements in West Bank

**DOHA:** The State of Qatar condemned the Israeli occupation government's approval of the establishment of 19 settlements in the occupied West Bank, considering it a flagrant violation of international legitimacy resolutions, particularly UN Security Council Resolution 2334, and a blatant assault on the rights of the Palestinian people.

In a statement issued yesterday, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs stressed the importance of the international community fulfilling its legal and moral responsibilities by compelling Israel to halt its settlement policy in the occupied Palestinian territories.

The Ministry reaffirmed the State of Qatar's firm and unwavering position in supporting the Palestinian cause and the steadfastness of the Palestinian people, based on international legitimacy resolutions and the two-state solution, in a manner that ensures the establishment of an independent Palestinian state on the 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital. — **QNA**

### Belgium lauds Qatar's leadership as COSPII advances anti-corruption cooperation

JOEL JOHNSON  
THE PENINSULA

**DOHA:** Qatar's commitment to transparency, multilateralism and the global fight against corruption was praised by a Belgium delegate at the Eleventh Session of the Conference of the States Parties to the United Nations Convention against Corruption (COSPII) currently under way in Doha.

In an interview with *The Peninsula*, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Belgium to the United Nations and International Organisations in Vienna, H E Caroline Vermeulen, commended Qatar for hosting the conference for the second time, describing it as a "clear sign" of the country's dedication to strengthening international cooperation against corruption.

She noted that the country has emerged as an active and constructive

player on the multilateral stage, contributing not only to anti-corruption efforts but also to broader initiatives in mediation and global diplomacy.

Ambassador Vermeulen said, "COSPII comes at a critical moment, more than two decades after the signing of the United Nations Convention against Corruption, providing an opportunity for countries to assess progress and identify ways to enhance the global response."

She stressed that corruption and organised crime do not stop at national borders and remain major sources of instability and conflict, making forums such as COSPII essential for fostering cooperation among States Parties.

Belgium is participating in the conference with a strong and diverse delegation, reflecting the priority its government places on good governance and anti-corruption. According to the Ambassador, Belgian experts attending the



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H E Caroline Vermeulen

meeting cover the full spectrum of anti-corruption work, from prevention to law enforcement, underscoring the need for comprehensive and coordinated approaches.

"Robust anti-corruption systems are a prerequisite for effective international cooperation, while international cooperation itself is essential to combating corruption successfully," she said.

"Belgium signed the Convention in 2003 and has since been a strong advocate for closer collaboration and for creating synergies among national,

regional and international anti-corruption instruments, including those within the European Union and the OECD."

The Ambassador also highlighted the crucial role of the private sector, saying businesses bear significant responsibility for promoting integrity through ethical leadership, compliance and transparency in supply chains. She pointed to initiatives in Doha that bring together public officials and private companies to exchange best practices and explore joint solutions, noting that a level playing field is vital for sustainable development. ➔ **P10**







بكمُتعلو ومنكمُتنظر  
قيمير بن حمد

On the occasion of  
**Qatar National Day, 18th of December**  
and in remembrance of the historic day in 1878 when Sheikh Jassim Bin Mohammed Bin Thani, founder of the State of Qatar, set up the pillars of the Modern State of Qatar,

We extend our heartiest congratulations and greetings to

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Amir of the State of Qatar

His Highness  
**Sheikh Hamad Bin Khalifa Al Thani**  
Father Amir

His Highness  
**Sheikh Abdullah Bin Hamad Al Thani**  
Deputy Amir

and to all the honorable people of Qatar  
We hope for more returns of this memorable occasion and wish that Qatar always enjoys security, welfare and prosperity under the wise leadership of His Highness The Amir



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**Chairman, Board Members,  
General Manager & All Staff**





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18 ديسمبر

بكمُ تعالَوْ ومنكمُ تنظُر

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**saur**  
Qatar









# National Day embodies values of patriotism: Minister of Environment

**DOHA:** The National Day of Qatar stands as an enduring national milestone in which the legacy of the Founder, Sheikh Jassim bin Mohammed bin Thani, who laid the powerful, sovereign foundations of the nation that underpin the principles of honour, dignity, and independence, Minister of Environment and Climate Change H E Dr. Abdullah bin Abdulaziz bin Turki Al Subaie has said.

Al Subaie added that the National Day embodies the values of belonging and pride in the Qatari identity, deep-rooted in time-honoured heritage and loyalty, demonstrating the path of building and development led by Amir H H Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani within Qatar National Vision 2030, which has made sustainable development a core pillar for progress in a variety of sectors.

This day represents a national occasion to deepen

values of patriotism and loyalty to the nation and leadership, as well as an opportunity to reflect on the comprehensive development accomplishments that have been achieved, he underlined.

The Minister further noted that the environmental and climatic resurgence the nation is witnessing comes as an extension of this balanced development approach, which preserves the deep heritage of Qatari society and its future aspirations.

This day is a symbol of the unity of the Qatari national fabric that embodies the sublime meanings of patriotism and strengthens bonds among community members, both citizens and residents, united by their commitment to Qatar and determination for its advancement, Al Subaie pointed out.

He further elucidated that this occasion offers an

opportunity to promote societal awareness of the values of cohesion, interdependence, and respect for cultural diversity, and to ensure that these tenets are inculcated in the emerging generations.

This occasion marks an opportunity to renew the national commitment toward protecting the environment and climate action as core pillars for enduring development and safeguarding the nation's resources for generations to come, His Excellency pointed out. The Minister talked about the key milestones the ministry has accomplished during 2025, emphasizing that the tremendous support the sage leadership gives to issues of environment and climate has cast the State of Qatar in an outstanding position as an active member in regional and international organizations concerned with environment and climate. He explained that the



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ministry moved ahead to execute the National Strategy for Environment and Climate Change (2024-2030), which represents the holistic framework for environmental action in the nation, indicating that 2025 featured paradigm shifts that underscored the nation's commitment to strengthening sustainability and achieving equilibrium between economic development and environmental protection.

The ministry worked to

advance a comprehensive National Environmental Monitoring Network covering ambient air and water-quality monitoring, terrestrial and marine environment surveillance, as well as noise and environmental radiation monitoring, providing accurate environmental data to support policy and decision-making, he highlighted.

The system, the Minister adds, incorporates early-warning mechanisms and

advances toward the digital transformation of environmental services, delivered via integrated digital platforms.

He pointed out that the Ministry has made a breakthrough in protecting the natural environment and biodiversity through executing desertification control programs, developing vegetation cover, and safeguarding endangered species, in addition to coral reef and marine habitats restoration. — **QNA**

## Minister of Justice meets counterparts from Iran, Romania

**DOHA:** Minister of Justice and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs H E Ibrahim bin Ali Al Mohannadi met separately with Minister of Justice of Romania H E Radu Marinescu, Minister of Justice of Iran H E Dr. Amin Hossein Rahimi, and Policy Advisor for Anti-Corruption at the Ministry of Justice and Security of the Netherlands H E Carlijn Spijkers, on the sidelines of the Conference of the States Parties to the United Nations Convention against Corruption in Doha. — **QNA**

## Qatar shows solidarity to Morocco over floods

**DOHA:** Qatar has expressed its full solidarity with Morocco in the face of the devastating floods that struck the coastal city of Safi, resulting in deaths and injuries. In a statement issued yesterday, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs extended Qatar's condolences to the families of the victims, and to the government and people of Morocco, wishing a swift recovery to those injured and safe return of those missing. — **QNA**

# UNDP highlights urgency of turning anti-corruption commitments into action

JOEL JOHNSON  
THE PENINSULA

**DOHA:** As global leaders gather in Doha for the Eleventh Session of the Conference of the States Parties to the United Nations Convention against Corruption (COSP11), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has stressed the growing urgency of translating international commitments into tangible results on the ground.

Speaking to *The Peninsula* in an interview, Sarah Lister (pictured), Global Director for Governance, Rule of Law and Peacebuilding at UNDP, who also heads the delegation, underscored that the UN Convention against Corruption (UNCAC) remains “the only truly global, legally binding framework against corruption,” with relevance that has only increased in today’s complex

global landscape.

“Corruption undermines trust in institutions, weakens economies, and deepens inequality, especially at a time when countries are managing multiple crises, from climate change to conflict to rapid digitalisation,” Lister said. She noted that COSP11 is significant because it shifts the focus from commitments on paper to implementation in practice, including how countries strengthen institutions, prevent corruption, and cooperate across borders.

Lister remarked that Qatar's hosting of the conference highlights the importance of global dialogue and shared responsibility in addressing what is a fundamentally transnational challenge.

She also pointed to the strong high-level participation in Doha as a reaffirmation of

multilateralism at a time when it faces increasing pressure.

Qatar also hosted the third COSP in 2009, which approved the terms of reference for the UNCAC review mechanism, a process that COSP11 now seeks to strengthen further in its next phase.

Explaining why corruption is a core concern for UNDP, Lister cited estimates that more than \$2 trillion is stolen, laundered, or hidden each year globally, draining resources needed for public services and sustainable development.

“Weak governance systems lead to a lack of financial integrity, which in turn drives mistrust, inequality, and undermines development financing,” she said, noting that an estimated \$4 trillion annually is needed to address the global development financing gap.

For ordinary people, she



said, corruption often translates into poorer services, fewer opportunities, and diminished trust in public institutions, disproportionately affecting the most vulnerable.

“That is why anti-corruption is not just a governance issue, it is a development issue, a social justice issue, and ultimately a human development issue,” Lister emphasised, outlining that young people in particular increasingly view corruption as

a direct threat to their futures.

Lister accentuated that UNDP's role in helping countries turn UNCAC commitments into real change, noting that the organisation works in more than 130 countries to strengthen public integrity systems, improve transparency in budgeting and service delivery, and use digital tools to reduce corruption risks.

UNDP also supports citizen engagement, parliamentary oversight, and a strong focus on prevention.

She highlighted UNDP's growing work on data and measurement, including a global dashboard analysing millions of public procurement contracts to identify corruption risks. Preliminary findings show stagnant integrity trends in many countries, underscoring the need for better data and domestic reforms.

## Qatar and UNOCT discuss cooperation

**DOHA:** Special Envoy of the Minister of Foreign Affairs H E Ambassador Faisal bin Abdullah Al Hanzab met yesterday with Acting Under-Secretary-General for the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT) H E Alexandre Zouev, who is visiting the country. During the meeting, they discussed cooperation and strategic partnership between Qatar and the UNOCT, in addition to issues of common interest. — **QNA**

# Judicial code of conduct shores up nation’s judicial independence, integrity, and impartiality: SJC official

**DOHA:** President of the Judicial Inspection Authority at the Supreme Judiciary Council (SJC), H E Judge Ahmed Al Mansouri, affirmed that the Judicial Code of Conduct, issued by SJC in the State of Qatar, has reinforced judicial independence, integrity, and impartiality.

He stressed that the code has effectively contributed to the advancement of the judicial system, yielding positive results that have promoted standards of conduct and outstanding performance across the nation's judiciary.

Speaking during a session within the Conference of the States Parties (CoSPII) to the UN Convention Against Corruption in Doha, Al Mansouri highlighted that this Code represents one of the most powerful practical tools to curb corruption within the judiciary.

Al Mansouri further explained that the strict and rigorous application of the Code, linked to effective oversight and accountability mechanisms, minimises any opportunity for behavioural deviations or the

proliferation of improper practices. The Code, he outlined, offers a reference framework enabling judges to act lawfully, regularly self-assess, and ensure adherence to impartiality, dignity, and balance.

Al Mansouri further elaborated that implementing the Code requires mandatory adherence to ethics, practical workshops simulating real-life scenarios, and periodic evaluations of judicial conduct.

These measures, he said, instil in judges the understanding that any violation of the Code constitutes a direct breach of public trust and strikes at the essence of the judicial mandate. The Authority prioritises reducing case backlogs, improving session management, expediting rulings, and enhancing technical efficiency. In essence, it serves to protect judicial independence, prevent misconduct, and reinforce public trust while upholding judges' autonomy and responsibility in their performance without compromising justice, Al Mansouri elaborated.

Al Mansouri further noted that

the primary objective of judicial inspection is to support quality and safeguard confidence, and that reconciling judicial independence with accountability is possible through a set of principles and guarantees.

Secretary-General of The Hague Academy of International Law and Professor at Paris-Nanterre University, Professor Jean-Marc Thouvenin, discussed the Bangalore Principles on Judicial Conduct and their role in combating corruption within the judiciary. He noted that the Bangalore Principles are an amalgamation of global ethical standards developed by judges to strengthen judicial integrity and independence, comprising six core principles: independence, impartiality, integrity, propriety, equality, competence, and diligence.

President of the Court of Appeal of Porto (Portugal), Jose Igreja Matos, lauded the Qatari judiciary's efforts in recent years, emphasising close collaboration with the UN, particularly the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). — **QNA**

## Training premises of UNODC Regional Centre for Combating Cybercrime opens

**FROM PAGE 1**

The inauguration is the outcome of the Qatar-UNODC ongoing collaboration and enhancement of shared global efforts to combat cybercrime and support nations' capabilities in confronting this growing global challenge.

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Based on the resolution of the shareholders on 13th July 2025  
It has been decided to liquidate  
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CR No 53059

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to send a registered letter including the supporting documents to the  
PB No 32312, Doha - Qatar and Email [premijith@morisonqatar.com](mailto:premijith@morisonqatar.com)  
Stating details of the claims  
Within Seventy-five days from date of this notice

In essence, the centre provides advanced training programmes as well as technological support for nations and law enforcement agencies alike, alongside its role in supporting the implementation of the Convention, reinforcing international cooperation and advancing the legislative frameworks supporting efforts to combat cyber threats. The inauguration further underscores the role undertaken by Qatar on the global stage in terms of combating cybercrime, alongside its establishment of an effective model for capacity-building and strengthening multilateral cooperation to ensure and safeguard the security of the digital space.

## Belgium lauds Qatar’s leadership as COSP11 advances anti-corruption cooperation

**FROM PAGE 1**

Expressing appreciation to the host country, Ambassador Vermeulen said, “Qatar’s role in convening COSP11 reflects a shared objective with Belgium to act as responsible stakeholders in the multilateral system. It is important that we work together, respect international law and strengthen the global fight against corruption.”



**QatarEnergy LNG**  
Tender Invitation

No.	TENDER NUMBER / DESCRIPTION	TENDER ISSUE PERIOD	TENDER FEE (QAR)	TENDER BOND (QAR)	TENDER CLOSING DATE
1	LTC/C/OFS/7335/25 RENTAL SERVICES OF OFFSHORE CARGO CARRYING UNITS AND TUBULAR RACKS ON CALL OFF BASIS	16/12/2025 to 12/01/2026	N/A	500,000	12/01/2026

**Scope of Work:**  
This call-off CONTRACT is for the provision of rental SERVICE for certified Offshore Cargo Carrying Units (hereinafter referred to as the “CCU”), typically baskets, containers, chemical, Heli-fuel tanks and Tubular Racks to support COMPANY Offshore operations at Rigs (Offshore/ Onshore), Shorebase, Vessels/Jack Up Barge (JUB) and Production platform facilities. The duration of Contract shall be five (05) years with a sole option for Company to extend it further for up to two (02) years.

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

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

**Note:** Local Companies (established under the Laws of State of Qatar with local Commercial Registration) are advised to refer to the tender documentation and In-Country Value (ICV) Digital Portal: - <https://icv.qa/en-US/> for details of ICV compliance that may be applicable.





A souq-inspired experience in the heart of the mall



City Center Doha, a fully owned subsidiary of Aamal Company Q.P.S.C., has announced the soft opening of its latest attraction, the Arabian Court, a unique cultural and retail destination within the mall. The Arabian Court brings the charm of a traditional Arabian souq into a modern mall setting, creating a space where heritage meets contemporary shopping.

Located at the 3rd Floor, the Arabian Court features a variety of mini booths showcasing abayas, perfumes, handmade crafts, and authentic artisanal products. Visitors will enjoy the ambiance of traditional décor, lanterns, and market-style stalls that recreate the essence of Arabian heritage.

To enhance the family experience, the Arabian Court also hosts daily kids' activities from 1pm to 10pm, including engaging workshops, creative crafts, and cultural games that provide entertainment for children while celebrating tradition.

On this occasion, Murat Kayman, General Manager of City Center Doha, commented: "City Center Doha is more than a shopping destination; it is a hub for cultural and social experiences. The Arabian Court reflects our commitment to offering

**“**

*It is a pleasure to witness the opening of the “Arabian Court”. Aamal is committed to the continuous investment in City Center Doha. The launch of the Arabian Court is a testament to our dedication to ensuring City Center remains an attractive and leading destination, offering unique cultural and retail experiences that resonate with our community.*

**”**

Rashid bin Ali Al Mansoori,  
CEO of Aamal Company



**“**

*City Center Doha is more than a shopping destination; it is a hub for cultural and social experiences. The Arabian Court reflects our commitment to offering visitors authentic experiences that honor tradition while enriching their time at the mall.*

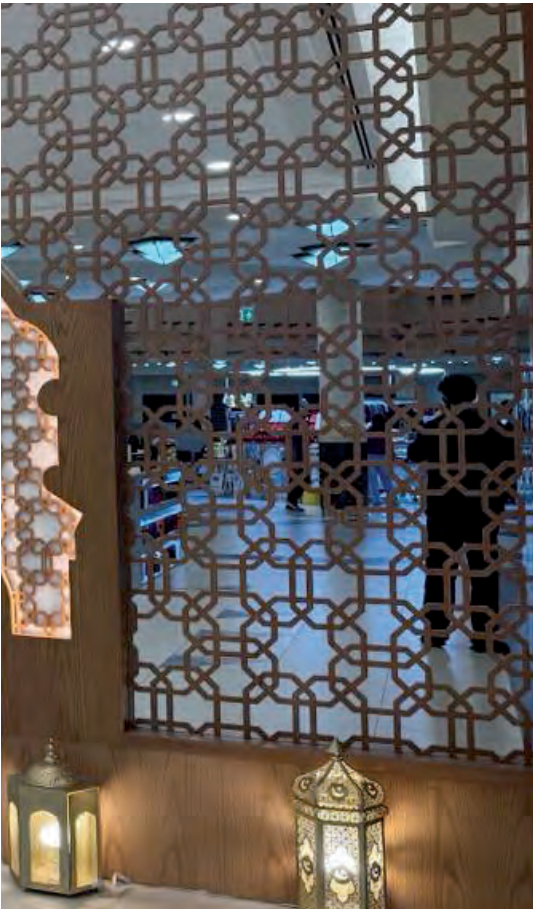
**”**

Murat Kayman,  
General Manager of City Center Doha

visitors authentic experiences that honor tradition while enriching their time at the mall.”

Rashid bin Ali Al Mansoori, CEO of Aamal Company, added: “It is a pleasure to witness the opening of the “Arabian Court”. Aamal is committed to the continuous investment in City Center Doha. The launch of the Arabian Court is a testament to our dedication to ensuring City Center remains an attractive and leading destination, offering unique cultural and retail experiences that resonate with our community.”

The Arabian Court is open daily from 10am to 10pm at City Center Doha’s 3rd Floor next to Fun City, welcoming visitors of all ages to explore, shop, and enjoy an authentic souq-inspired experience.







# ‘National Day embodies connection between leadership and people’

**DOHA:** Minister of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs H E Ghanem bin Shaheen bin Ghanem Al Ghanim affirmed that Qatar National Day is a deeply rooted national occasion. It embodies loyalty to the legacy of the Founder Sheikh Jassim bin Mohammed bin Thani, who established the foundations of the State upon authentic Islamic values and firmly rooted national principles.

In statements to QNA, the Minister added that commemorating this occasion reflects the leadership and people's connection to the nation's rich history and underscores their adherence to the constants and moral values that represent the essence of Qatari identity.

He explained that the National Day serves as an annual milestone to strengthen belonging and loyalty to the nation and its wise leadership, and to recall the journey of

progress and development witnessed by the country, generation after generation, until it became a model of security, stability, and excellence.

The Minister said that this year's National Day celebrations, under the slogan “With You It Rises, From You It Awaits”, reflect the State's profound understanding that human beings are the cornerstone of development and the foundation of progress, and that genuine citizenship is a continuous contribution and a shared responsibility in the nation's advancement.

He added the Ministry embodies these values through its strategic plan (2025-2030), which focuses on building a cohesive and interdependent society, strengthening national identity and Islamic values, and consolidating the principles of moderation and tolerance while raising religious

**“This year's National Day celebrations reflect the State's profound understanding that human beings are the cornerstone of development and the foundation of progress, and that genuine citizenship is a continuous contribution and a shared responsibility in the nation's advancement.”**



and moral awareness.

The Minister pointed out that the National Day also represents an occasion to reaffirm the unity and solidarity that have characterised Qatari society throughout history, preserving the State's stability and prosperity.

He added that maintaining this unity is achieved by strengthening social bonds and protecting society from extremism, and fanaticism

through high-quality programmes and initiatives that promote the concept of moderation and serve all segments of society.

He noted that the Ministry places great importance on human development and fostering sound religious awareness, stemming from a firm belief that human beings are the cornerstone of any sustainable development.

He added that the Ministry's

services and programmes strive to instil the values of love, cooperation, and tolerance in society, in line with the directives of the wise leadership and Qatar National Vision 2030.

The Minister emphasised that the National Day is an occasion to strengthen loyalty and gratitude to the country's leadership and to renew the commitment to continue working for the advancement of the nation and serving the

aspirations of future generations.

He pointed out that Qatar is confidently moving towards the future, relying on its rich history and deeply rooted values, and that the Ministry of Endowments is proud to be an active partner in the development and nation-building process.

He said that this day represents a renewed covenant in which the citizens' connection to their roots and identity is strengthened, and their adherence to the moral and religious values that form the basis of the strength and cohesion of Qatari society is renewed. The National Day also clearly reflects that building a modern state is inseparable from building values and intellectual foundations, as always emphasised by the directives of Amir H H Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani. — **QNA**

## A year of milestones for Malta-Qatar friendship and forward vision

THE PENINSULA

**DOHA:** Malta's Ambassador to Qatar, H E Simon Pullicino (pictured), has highlighted, in his opinion piece, 2025 as a year of deepening cooperation and notable milestones in Malta-Qatar relations.

As 2025 draws to a close, the Embassy of Malta in Doha proudly looks back on a year of dynamic cooperation, milestones, and renewed momentum in the ever-strengthening partnership between Malta and the State of Qatar. This year was even more special, as we celebrated the 50th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations. For the first time since the opening of the Embassy in 2021, the Embassy organized a large-scale National Day reception with the attendance of several distinguished Qatari guests, diplomats, senior officials, business leaders, and community members to celebrate five decades of collaboration and shared values that unite our two nations.

Indeed, we have much to



celebrate as bilateral relations continued to progress in various fields. The resumption of direct flights by Qatar Airways to Malta revitalised connectivity between Doha and Malta, opening new horizons for tourism, trade, investment, and cultural exchanges.

Visit Malta was present at the 2025 edition of Qatar Travel Mart with a prominent stand. Meanwhile, the 2nd Round of Political Consultations, that were held in Doha last August, led from the Malta side by H E Christopher Cutajar, Permanent Secretary within the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and Tourism, underscored both countries'

commitment to further developing cooperation and addressing regional and global challenges through dialogue and diplomacy. This followed the 1st ever Round, held in Malta in January 2024.

During his 2nd visit to Qatar this year on 7 December, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Tourism, the Hon. Dr. Ian Borg held a number of high-level meetings, including with Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, H E Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani, aimed at further strengthening Malta-Qatar relations.

The talks focused on expanding economic and commercial ties, boosting tourism and people-to-people contacts and opening new avenues of cooperation.

The Deputy Prime Minister also met with H E Saad bin Sherida Al Kaabi, Qatar's Minister of State for Energy Affairs and QatarEnergy CEO, to discuss opportunities for collaboration, with a particular emphasis on sustainability and long-term security of energy

supply, priorities common to both countries.

During the visit, the Deputy Prime Minister also participated in the 2025 edition of the Doha Forum, where he addressed global migration challenges, emphasizing the importance of humane, coordinated, and forward-looking solutions anchored in dialogue and international cooperation. His intervention was in full harmony with Qatar's long-standing commitment to peace, humanitarian support, and multilateral engagement.

Allow me to wholeheartedly congratulate the State of Qatar for the successful organization of this year's Doha Forum where, once again, Qatar confirmed its international status as a focal point for strategic dialogue and visionary policy-making. In this very context, I also wish to commend Qatar on a series of international events hosted during this year, including, inter alia, the 2nd World Summit for Social Development and the 11th Session of the Conference of the States Parties to the UN Convention

against Corruption, which continue to confirm Qatar's leading role in multilateralism based on dialogue, conflict resolution through mediation and the support of humanitarian action.

Finally, this Mission wishes to join the friendly people of Qatar in celebrating their upcoming National Day. This year's National Day slogan, inspired by the words of the Amir, His Highness Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani – “With You It Rises, From You It Awaits” – will undoubtedly serve to rekindle the enduring spirit of generosity, unity, and national pride that binds Qatar's leadership with its people.

It will also serve to commemorate the sacrifices of Qatar's forefathers, who dedicated their lives to the glory of this country.

Malta remains steadfast in its commitment to further strengthen and consolidate ties with the State of Qatar. Together, in 2026, our countries will continue to build bridges of friendship and shared prosperity in our respective regions and beyond.

## Work underway to set up 40 new schools of global standard by 2030

FROM PAGE 1

“The calendar has now reached a stable and integrated format that supports the educational process effectively,” he said.

About government scholarships, Dr. Al Nuaimi reaffirmed that Qatar has a long-standing tradition of offering scholarships both inside and outside the country. Today, students benefit from internal scholarships at Qatar University, as well as expanded cooperation with institutions such as Lusail University, particularly in English language education. A new and significant programme has also been launched in partnership with University of Doha for Science and Technology, focusing on education in science and technology.

As Qatar moves toward expanding STEM education, Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics, Dr. Al Nuaimi highlighted the success of specialised STEM schools. One such school has already graduated several cohorts, with all graduates securing admission to leading universities in Qatar and abroad, including in the United Kingdom and the United States. All of these graduates are Qatari nationals. In addition, the ministry has expanded technical education through specialised schools, including technical schools for construction and for girls, and recently established a new modern technical school in the northern regions. Technological specialisation has also been introduced in general secondary schools alongside scientific and literary tracks, ensuring graduates are well-prepared for both the labour market and higher education.

Dr. Al Nuaimi said that these integrated efforts reflect Qatar's commitment to building a future-ready education system that serves students, families and national development goals alike.

## Visit Qatar launches National Day song

THE PENINSULA

**DOHA:** Visit Qatar in collaboration with the Qatar Philharmonic Orchestra has released a medley of Qatari songs to mark Qatar National Day 2025, inspired by this year's slogan, “We Rise with You and We Await Your Support.”

The video serves as a National Day dedication from Visit Qatar to the people of Qatar, honouring the nation's journey, values and collective spirit. The film is designed to evoke nostalgia and honour cherished memories and significant milestones across generations, spotlighting the traditions, values and shared experiences that continue to unite the nation.

Through compelling storytelling, authentic visuals and emotional resonance, the production fosters a personal connection with audiences, inviting reflection on Qatar's history, cultural roots and the enduring principles that shape its identity. The video is a specially curated musical composition that weaves together a selection of well-known and iconic Qatari songs from the past.

The medley combines excerpts from “Ya Qatar Inti Alhayat” by Abdulaziz Nasser, “Huya Mila” by Fahd Al Mursal, “Hille Barad” by Faleh Al Ajlan, “Aanigi Ham Al Sahayeb w Al Reoud” by Faleh Al Ajlan, and “Amdi TamdiBiladi” by Fahd Al Mursal, creating a unified musical tribute that resonates across generations.

## Doha to host Global Security Forum 2026 from April 12

THE PENINSULA

**DOHA:** The organising committee of the Global Security Forum (GSF) has announced that Doha will host the 2026 edition of the forum, scheduled to take place from April 12 to 14, 2026, under the patronage of Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs H E Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al-Thani.

The 2026 edition of the forum will be held under the theme ‘Collective Security and the Crisis of Legitimacy’, positioning GSF as a leading international platform for dialogue on today's most pressing security challenges and the future of collective action amid a rapidly shifting geopolitical landscape.

The forum aims to convene influential global leaders and decision-makers to address one of the world's most pressing issues of how states and institutions can rebuild legitimacy and reinforce the cooperative frameworks required to ensure global security.

Over three days of high-level keynotes, candid plenary discussions, and strategically focused side sessions, GSF 2026 will examine how collective security can adapt



to an era defined by polarization, technological upheaval, and mounting pressure on the rules-based international order.

Colin P. Clarke, Official Spokesperson of the Global Security Forum, underscored the urgency driving this year's theme, commenting: “The Global Security Forum has always been a place where the world's most trusted voices confront the threats shaping our future.

“Next year's theme speaks to a defining challenge of our time: rebuilding confidence in the institutions, alliances, and norms that keep us safe.

“Around the world, trust in international institutions is fraying, global governance is under strain, and the principles that have long anchored stability are facing unprecedented tests. GSF 2026 will confront these challenges head-on, offering a platform for clarity, collaboration, and action. Our work

has never been more urgent.”

Since its 2018 inception, in partnership with the Qatar International Academy for Security Studies (QIASS), the Global Security Forum has become one of the world's foremost gatherings on security and geopolitical affairs, known for convening heads of state, foreign and defense ministers, national security advisors, intelligence and law-enforcement leaders, multilateral executives, and the experts shaping global policy. GSF has established itself as a rare platform for honest dialogue and actionable insight, uniquely positioned at the intersection of diplomacy, strategy, and global security.

As the international community grapples with diminishing trust, rising fragmentation, and intensified competition between global powers, GSF 2026 aims to chart a path toward renewed legitimacy, strengthened cooperation, and a more stable future.

The Forum will also highlight the ongoing collaboration between the Internal Security Forces and the Ministry of Interior, reflecting their shared commitment to advancing security dialogue and practice.

## Qatar stresses comprehensive UN reform key to global peace leadership

**NEW YORK:** The State of Qatar affirmed that effective global leadership for peace requires comprehensive reform of the United Nations system, fully consistent with the purposes and principles of the UN Charter, stressing that mediation remains an indispensable pillar for the peaceful resolution of disputes and the prevention of conflict escalation.

This came in a statement delivered by the Permanent Representative of the State of Qatar to the United Nations, H

E Sheikha Alya Ahmed bin Saif Al-Thani, during the Security Council's open debate on “Leadership for Peace,” held under the agenda item “Maintenance of international peace and security” at UN Headquarters in New York.

In her statement, she underscored the significance of the selection process for the next Secretary-General of the United Nations and the need to strengthen the Secretary-General's role in the face of unprecedented global challenges.

She noted the growing strain on the multilateral system and the declining adherence to the purposes of the United Nations, its Charter, and the principles of international law.

She explained that the State of Qatar has remained firmly committed to the UN Charter and has long been a strategic partner of the United Nations, as well as a trusted and credible mediator in advancing the Organization's founding goals and mission.

She added that, for more

than two decades, Qatar has played a pivotal role in mediation efforts worldwide, working to achieve sustainable and lasting peace in complex conflicts.

Her Excellency highlighted Qatar's growing engagement in mediation efforts in recent years, encompassing a wide range of initiatives, including facilitating ceasefires, negotiating prisoner exchanges, supporting inclusive national dialogues, resolving border disputes, and contributing to the

conclusion of peace agreements aimed at ending conflicts.

She emphasized that the impact of these efforts has been evident across several regions, including the Gaza Strip in the occupied Palestinian territory, Afghanistan, Lebanon, Sudan, Chad, Ukraine, Colombia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Rwanda, underscoring Qatar's sustained contribution to the promotion of security and stability at both the regional and international levels. — **QNA**





Social Development Minister: National Day reflects loyalty, belonging, and values of unity

**DOHA:** Minister of Social Development and Family H E Buthaina bint Ali Al Jabr Al Nuaimi affirmed that Qatar National Day is an occasion that embodies the meanings of loyalty and belonging, and reinforces the values of unity and cohesion that have characterized Qatari society throughout its history. It is also an occasion to celebrate the nation’s achievements across various fields.

In a statement to QNA, she said that the day provides an opportunity to strengthen Qatari identity and consolidate the values of citizenship and social responsibility, particularly



*The day provides an opportunity to strengthen Qatari identity and consolidate the values of citizenship and social responsibility, particularly under this year’s slogan ‘With You It Rises and From You It Awaits’ which reflects the central role of people in the country’s progress.*



under this year’s slogan ‘With You It Rises and From You It Awaits’ which reflects the central role of people in the country’s progress and emphasises the importance of collective efforts in building a cohesive society. She noted that the Qatari family serves as the primary nurturing environment where children are raised with love and loyalty to the homeland, making it a fundamental pillar of comprehensive development.

The Minister highlighted that the Ministry of Social Development and Family follows a clear vision that places the family at the center of social development, working to empower families, enhance their stability, and support their educational and social roles.

She further explained that this approach aligns with the Ministry’s 2025–2030 Strategy (From Care to Empowerment), which aims to invest in human capital, develop programmes that strengthen family cohesion, expand social protection coverage, and empower priority groups to ensure a balanced and stable society.

The Minister stressed that the family would remain the cornerstone of societal stability and the foundation of national progress, affirming the Ministry’s continued commitment to implementing social and economic empowerment plans, developing programmes that enhance quality of life, and supporting citizens in various fields. She expressed pride in the achievements realised by the nation. In conclusion, Al Nuaimi reaffirmed that Qatar will continue its journey toward further progress and prosperity through the unity, dedication, and love of its people for their homeland. — **QNA**

Qatar’s role in promoting regional peace and stability widely acknowledged: Indian envoy

THE PENINSULA


**DOHA:** Ambassador of India to Qatar H E Vipul has said that Qatar’s role in promoting regional peace and stability is widely acknowledged and appreciated by all.

“On behalf of India, and the entire Indian community in Qatar, I wish to extend hearty congratulations to the leadership and people of the State of Qatar on the auspicious occasion of National Day of Qatar 2025,” the Ambassador said in a statement.

He said that the theme for this year’s celebrations, “With You It Rises, From You It Awaits” keeps people at its centre which resonates with the focus and success of Qatar in achieving unprecedented progress in the realms of socio-economic and human development.

“Today, Qatar is well-known all over the world not only for its energy production and world class infrastructure, but equally for being a thriving hub of culture, education, learning and sports. It has built some of the best known institutions in the fields of education and culture, such as Qatar Foundation, Qatar National Library and Qatar Museums. In sports, we all fondly remember the success of FIFA 2022, as we also witness the excellent organization of the FIFA Arab





*Today, Qatar is well-known not only for its energy production and world class infrastructure, but equally in culture, education, learning and sports.*

**H E Vipul**

Cup this year.”

The Ambassador further said, “The forward thinking and inclusive approach of the Qatari leadership, focusing on technology, innovation and sustainability as part of Qatar National Development Strategy is opening up new vistas for development and cooperation. The year 2025 has been important in this context with Doha hosting prolific events.

He noted that Qatar’s role in promoting regional peace and stability, including its mediation efforts in Gaza to achieve ceasefire and release of all hostages, is widely acknowledged and appreciated by all. “India stands firmly in support of peace and stability in the region and deeply values the important role played by Qatar in this regard. The Second World Summit for Social Development held recently in Doha demonstrated Qatar’s commitment to ensuring that no one

is left behind in our global sustainable development journey.”

“On Qatar’s National Day, I am delighted to recall that this year has been a special one for India-Qatar friendship, which dates back several centuries. We were honoured with the State Visit of Amir H H Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, to India in February 2025 during which both sides elevated their relations to ‘strategic partnership.’”

The Ambassador further said that the Indian community takes great pride in being a part of the incredible journey of Qatar over the past more than five decades. “I am grateful to the entire leadership and people of Qatar for the warmth and support extended to the Indian community living in Qatar. As we look ahead, we wish continued success to the State of Qatar, and look forward to being a continuing partner for peace, progress and prosperity for all humanity.”

Korean envoy hails Qatar’s unity, mediation role and strong future-focused development

THE PENINSULA

**DOHA:** Ambassador of the Republic of Korea to the State of Qatar H E Hyunsoo Yun has extended warm congratulations to Amir H H Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani and the people of Qatar on the country’s National Day, describing December 18 as “a celebration of unity and national progress, reflecting Qatar’s achievements in development, diplomacy, and social cohesion.”

The Ambassador praised Qatar’s growing international role, stating that “Qatar’s role as a mediator is remarkable,” with Doha providing space for dialogue on complex global issues.

“This year alone, Qatar engaged in several international conflicts,” he noted, pointing to efforts related to Gaza, Sudan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

On Gaza, Yun said, “Korea deeply appreciates Qatar’s pivotal role in facilitating dialogue, achieving periods of ceasefire, and laying the groundwork for further steps toward a sustainable and permanent peace.”

He stressed that “Qatar’s unwavering commitment to humanitarian principles and peaceful negotiation is indispensable,” adding that “the two-state solution remains the



*Qatar’s role as a mediator is remarkable, Korea deeply appreciates Qatar’s pivotal role in several international conflicts.*

**H E Hyunsoo Yun**



only realistic and enduring path.”

Highlighting Qatar’s domestic transformation, Yun said the country has made “step-by-step progress towards carrying through goals articulated in Qatar National Vision 2030,” with advances in diversification, sustainability and human development.

He cited rapid progress in renewable energy, noting that solar power plants represent “a major step toward the national goal of reaching 4 GW of renewable capacity by 2030.”

He also described Qatar’s focus on artificial intelligence as “both strategic and commendable,” pointing to institutions building capabilities that “create a solid base for future innovation,” while emphasising the value of partnerships with countries like South Korea.

The ambassador highlighted Qatar’s achievements

in food security, industrial growth and advanced manufacturing, saying these successes demonstrate a move “far beyond the outdated image of a purely resource-based economy.”

Turning to bilateral ties, Yun said Korea and Qatar have built “a strong and trusted partnership over the past fifty years,” elevated in 2023 to a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership.

“Korea is always open to cooperation,” he concluded, expressing hope that the partnership would “continue to deepen and broaden” in the years ahead. I sincerely hope that Korea and Qatar will continue to deepen and broaden our partnership in the years ahead. Our two nations share a strong foundation built on trust, respect, common aspirations as well as high value on family and respect towards elders.

Doha Institute for Graduate Studies celebrates QND

**DOHA:** Doha Institute for Graduate Studies (DI) celebrated Qatar National Day, which falls annually on 18 December. The celebration witnessed broad participation from the Institute’s academic, administrative, and student communities.

Organised by the Communications and Public Relations Department in the DI, the event was held outdoors and featured a range of heritage and folkloric performances reflecting the Qatari identity, most notably the Ardha, one of the most iconic traditional arts.

The programme also included a variety of social and cultural activities that encouraged interaction and engagement among attendees.



**Nasema Abdeen**

These activities comprised an interactive question-and-answer session on the history of the State of Qatar with valuable prizes, as well as poetry recitations and national songs.

The celebration also showcased a collection of classic vintage Qatari cars and falcons,

embodying key aspects of Qatar’s authentic heritage. In addition, a lunch of traditional Qatari cuisine was offered, giving attendees the opportunity to enjoy local dishes.

On the occasion, Dr. Abdelwahab El-Affendi, President of the Doha Institute, extended his congratulations to the leadership and people of Qatar on the National Day.

He emphasised that Qatar has always been, and will continue to be, a hospitable country and a leader in its stances, wherever it is seen and wherever it is cherished.

He noted that the sense of reassurance, security, and stability enjoyed by the country has made it one of the safest nations



Musicians performing during the event.

in the world, adding that this occasion represents a wonderful opportunity to celebrate, spread joy, and enjoy an event that brings together the Institute’s community around shared values of belonging and appreciation.

Nasema Abdeen, Director of the Communications and Public Relations Department, expressed her pride in hosting this

carnival-style celebration at the Doha Institute with the participation of its students, faculty members, staff, and alumni.

She noted that the diversity of nationalities and cultures within the Institute provides an important opportunity to introduce Qatari identity and its rich heritage, and to deepen understanding of the history and

culture of Qatari society.

Abdeen explained that the celebration had a wide variety of live performances and heritage-based activities aimed at reviving authentic Qatari values and popular traditions. She affirmed that such events represent an important space for showcasing the culture and identity of Qatar.

Georgetown professor is making religion make sense in time for holidays

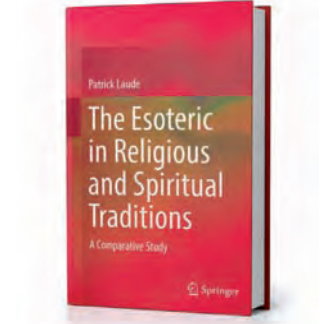
THE PENINSULA

**DOHA:** As the holiday season approaches, a new resource is helping to shed light on why religion matters today, and it comes from Georgetown University in Qatar Professor of Theology and Religious Studies, Dr. Patrick Laude.

In his new book, *The Esoteric in Religious and Spiritual Tradition - A Comparative Study* (Springer 2025), Dr. Laude takes on what many would consider an age-old mystery—whether the “esoteric,” or inner dimensions of religion, can be meaningfully understood across traditions—and offers one of the most comprehensive answers to date. In doing so, Dr. Laude

argues that esoteric traditions help address contemporary tensions in how people experience faith today. “Religious consciousness is torn between competing narratives, from a return to the ‘fundamentals’ to calls for more informal practices of spirituality,” he observes. Identifying inner dimensions of religion offers ways of holding these opposites together.

Focusing mainly on Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, and Islam, Laude’s book proposes a coherent way to think about spiritual knowledge not as something marginal or obscure, but as a recurring and deeply human orientation within religious life. “There is a lot of confusion about what the term esoteric means,”



he explains, adding: “It is often dismissed as obscure, fanciful, or elitist, and I set out to go beyond these stereotypes.” Drawing on four decades of inspiring scholarship at the intersection of religions, Dr. Laude set out to test whether the concept could be defined rigorously and applied across traditions.

He constructed a comparative framework that identifies both great diversity and surprising coherence across religions. “My main argument is that the esoteric is identifiable as a fundamental direction of the human quest for religious meaning and spiritual realization,” Dr. Laude says.

His book reflects on six key unifying principles that may give some orientation during this age of confusion, including the ideas that humans can recover wholeness through direct access to the source of religious inspiration, that reality is one and that this unity is at the heart of the very nature of mankind, and that empirical existence and the Ultimate hold distinct, but not contradictory, truths.

Vodafone Qatar announced as strategic partner for Tattoo Doha 2025

THE PENINSULA

**DOHA:** Vodafone Qatar has been announced as a strategic partner for Tattoo Doha 2025, the international military music and marching festival currently taking place until December 20 at Katara Open Theater in Katara Cultural Village.

Tattoo Doha 2025 brings together military bands and performers from around the world in a show that combines military discipline with cultural expression. As a strategic partner, Vodafone Qatar is providing a comprehensive suite of telecom and digital services

throughout the festival, including free public Wi-Fi in the arena, ensuring visitors and guests remain connected and enjoy a seamless festival experience.

For organisers, performers, and key stakeholders, Vodafone Qatar will provide dedicated connectivity solutions, push-to-talk services, and devices to support smooth operations across the venue.

Event organisers will also receive pre-loaded SIMs.

Vodafone Qatar’s on-ground sales team and advisors are also present during the event to support attendees connectivity requirements, offering both prepaid and postpaid SIM.





# Minister of Justice: Qatar moving forward confidently in its achievements

THE PENINSULA

**DOHA:** Minister of Justice and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs H E Ibrahim bin Ali Al Mohammadi affirmed that the State of Qatar’s celebration of this year’s National Day comes as the country proceeds confidently in its achievements and remains steadfast in its path of development and progress, guided by the wise leadership of Amir H H Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al- Thani.

In a statement to QNA on the occasion of the National Day, The Minister said that the National Day carries a profound significance that highlights the values and principles established by the founder, Sheikh Jassim bin Mohammed bin Thani, which laid the foundations of the modern state, built on willpower and unity.

He pointed out that this state continues its humanitarian

*This year’s National Day slogan, ‘With you it Rises, From You it Awaits,’ accurately reflects the idea that the state is built on the efforts of its people, and on the belief that the nation’s renaissance is achieved through the dedication and skills of its youth.*



mission supporting peace, upholding the principles of justice, and defending the rights of peoples to dignified living, freedom, and equality.

Al Mohammadi added that the progress achieved in various national sectors, foremost among them the justice sector and legal services, is the result of His Highness’ farsighted vision, which placed serving citizens, facilitating their access to

justice, and protecting their rights at the forefront of priorities, embodying the values of justice and the rule of law.

He explained that this year’s National Day slogan, ‘With you it Rises, From You it Awaits,’ accurately reflects the idea that the state is built on the efforts of its people, and on the belief that the nation’s renaissance is achieved through the dedication and skills of its youth, and that

a prosperous future is the fruit of their unity, knowledge, and deep-rooted values.

The Minister pointed out that the Ministry has continued this year to achieve qualitative steps in developing the judicial work system and enhancing the competitiveness of legal services through the launch of the 2025–2030 Strategic Plan, aligned with the Third National Development Strategy (2024–2030)

and Qatar National Vision 2030.

The plan includes 100 operational projects derived from seven strategic pillars, linked to 27 strategic initiatives and 27 performance indicators that allow precise monitoring of implementation and outcomes, thereby strengthening governance and raising performance efficiency.

He emphasised that the directives of Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs H E Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim Al-Thani have been a fundamental support for the Ministry’s institutional development path, ensuring the provision of high-quality and easily accessible judicial services that meet the needs of individuals and government entities in line with global best practices.

He stated that the Ministry achieved major progress this year in its comprehensive digital

transformation project, with the Real Estate Registration and Authentication sector launching the first phase of the automation of legal services. This is supported by an integrated technological system that includes the upgraded “Sak” application, which has become a unified platform for all real estate registration and authentication services.

He added that the new “Sak” application provides, for the first time, authentication transactions via video communication and services linked to the Digital ID System (QDI). It also offers a unified interface for the “Absher,” “Real Estate Valuation” and “Real Estate Bulletin” apps, as well as the ability to display property information directly through QR Code scanning, with the option to obtain printed copies via Qatar Post without the need to visit the Ministry.

## QNL, Arab Book Award explore the future of Arab publishing

THE PENINSULA

**DOHA:** Qatar National Library hosted a cultural seminar titled “The Arab Book in General and the Qatari Book in Particular: A Foresight Reading,” organised in cooperation with the Arab Book Award. The seminar brought together a distinguished group of intellectuals and cultural figures.

The event was held to mark World Arabic Language Day, observed annually on December 18, and as part of the Arab Book Award’s efforts to stimulate cultural activity, support the book industry, and open professional discussions on the future of publishing in the region.

The seminar opened with an eloquent literary address inspired by the classical maqamat tradition, delivered by Minister of State and President

of Qatar National Library H E Dr. Hamad bin Abdulaziz Al Kawari. In his remarks, he recalled the deep-rooted foundations of the Arab book and skillfully linked the authenticity of Arab heritage with future aspirations for Arabic publishing.

The seminar featured contributions from academic and historian Dr. Mustafa Aqeel Al-Khatib; Dr. Al-Siddiq Omar, a member of the Steering Committee of the Arab Book Award; and Dr. Aisha Jassim Al-Kuwari, Chief Executive Officer of Rosa Publishing House. The session was moderated by Dr. Mohammed Khaled Al-Rahawi, Associate Professor of Arabic Language at Qatar University.

The discussion began with the first thematic axis focusing on quality standards, presented by Dr. Al-Siddiq Omar

Al-Siddiq, a member of the Arab Book Award committee. He emphasised that the challenges facing the Arab book are closely linked to the broader state of weakness afflicting the Arab world, noting that genuine advancement can only be achieved through serious knowledge and scholarship.

He explained that much contemporary Arab authorship tends toward narrative and fiction, with a limited number of high-quality works, alongside a noticeable decline in rigorous academic studies in the humanities, social sciences, philosophy, Islamic studies, history, as well as in critical text editing, dictionaries, and encyclopedias.

He added that the Arab Book Award was established to strengthen the status of the Arab book and encourage authors and researchers to produce

robust scholarly works through its two categories, “Single Book” and “Lifetime Achievement”, thereby contributing to both the quantitative and qualitative advancement of Arabic publishing.

Dr. Mustafa Aqeel Al-Khatib, winner of the Arab Book Award in its first edition, affirmed that literary and academic awards serve as an important incentive for writers and authors and do not restrict creativity.

He noted that the Arab book continues to suffer marginalisation in many regions, and that a large segment of those under the age of twenty are unfamiliar with prominent figures of modern Arab thought and culture. He stressed that the Arabic language is distinguished by its stability and enduring nature, making it a language of civilization, culture, and thought,



Minister of State and President of Qatar National Library H E Dr. Hamad bin Abdulaziz Al Kawari with other officials and guests during the event.

rather than merely a tool for communication. Dr. Aisha Al-Kuwari stated that the Arab book industry faces challenges that go beyond production volume to include distribution, impact, and sustainability.

She explained that the industry constitutes an integrated ecosystem encompassing

the writer, publisher, reader, and supportive cultural policies. She identified limited distribution, high production costs, and declining reading rates, particularly among young people, as key challenges, calling for a restructuring of the publishing system without compromising the quality of Arab creativity.

## Japan hails Qatar’s progress and strong bilateral ties on National Day

THE PENINSULA

**DOHA:** The Ambassador of Japan to Qatar H E Naoto Hisajima has extended warm congratulations to Amir H H Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, and the government and people of Qatar on the occasion of Qatar National Day, praising the country’s remarkable progress under the Amir’s leadership, its active role on the global stage, and the strong, enduring relations between Qatar and Japan.

“Qatar has long achieved prominence in the Middle East and has greatly enhanced its presence in the international community under the leadership of H H the Amir. Over the years, Qatar has channelled significant efforts into the cultural, sports, education, and tourism sectors, among others emphatically stressing on the knowledge based economy. These efforts have contributed

*Over the years, Qatar has channelled significant efforts into the cultural, sports, education, and tourism sectors. These efforts complete the picture of Qatar*

*H E Naoto Hisajima*



to complete the picture of Qatar as an even stronger and more vibrant country in the world today,” the ambassador said.

“Qatar’s active diplomacy to promote better and closer relations with other countries is also highly appreciated.

With Japan in particular, Qatar has always shared an excellent and special relations since the establishment of its diplomatic relations. And as we celebrate this auspicious

occasion with Qatar, we reiterate our hope for our long lasting cooperative relations to be further strengthened in the future.

“I would also like to take this opportunity to congratulate Qatar for the historic qualification for the 2026 FIFA World Cup. I am very excited and look forward to watching Al-Annabi (Qatar National Team) deliver a powerful performance in the world cup matches next year,” the envoy said.

## COSP11 deliberates on reinforcing international cooperation

**DOHA:** The Conference of the States Parties to the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC) discussed avenues for boosting international cooperation in the field of asset recovery during a session themed: “Global Forum on the Asset Recovery Procedures Chain”, within the second day of the Doha conference deliberations.

The forum was organised by the StAR Initiative, in collaboration with the Basel Institute on Governance under the International Centre for Asset Recovery (ICAR), and the International Anti-Corruption Coordination Centre (IACCC), with the participation of officials, experts, and representatives of international organizations and

bodies concerned with combating corruption.

In addition, the forum explored mechanisms to bolster coordination between requesting and requested countries in global asset recovery cases, alongside the exchange of practical experiences and highlighting progress achieved in this field, contributing to strengthening transparency and accountability and supporting anti-corruption global efforts.

The most menacing forms of corruption are represented in plundering the public funds allocated to serving the citizens, the speakers underlined. They pointed out that recovering these funds is of utmost priority not solely to pursue perpetrators, but rather to relay a

clear message that impunity is unacceptable.

Head of Delegation and Representative of the Algerian Ministry of Justice, Abdelrazak Ben Salem, affirmed that the Ministry has established an expert committee comprising all relevant sectors, including the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the General Treasury, the Directorates of Property, and all competent authorities, to advance a comprehensive strategy for asset recovery and to monitor compensatory measures at both the criminal and civil levels.

Abdelrazak clarified that the committee has created a national database and identified priority countries for collaboration in this domain. — *QNA*

## Engineer Saad bin Ebrahim appointed President of Office of QF Chairperson

THE PENINSULA

**DOHA:** Engineer Saad bin Ebrahim Al Muhannadi, (pictured) a member of Qatar Foundation’s Founding Board and the organisation’s former president, has been appointed as President of the Office of the Chairperson of Qatar Foundation.

A Lifetime Member of Qatar Foundation’s (QF) Board of Directors and Board of Trustees, Engineer Al Muhannadi was instrumental in the establishment of the organisation 30 years ago, and has played a pivotal role in the evolution of its ecosystem of knowledge and the advancement of its mission over the three decades since.

Having joined QF in 1995, he went on to become Assistant Director and then Director of the organisation’s Capital Projects Directorate, before being appointed Vice President of Capital Projects and Facilities Management in 2005.

He was responsible for the planning, design, construction, and maintenance of the educational, science and research, and community development infrastructure required for QF

to support the development of Qatar, and ensuring QF’s Education City provided a healthy



and safe environment for all.

Engineer Al Muhannadi’s lifetime board positions at QF reflect his long, dedicated, and distinguished service to the organisation and its mission. He also serves as Chairman of Msheireb Properties.

In his role as President of the Office of the Chairperson of Qatar Foundation, he will provide strategic leadership and strengthen institutional alignment with regard to H H Sheikha Moza bint Nasser’s position as Chairperson of Qatar Foundation, Chairperson of Education Above All Foundation, and other initiatives in which Her Highness is engaged.

## QNB main sponsor of ‘Al Majlis’ during FIFA Arab Cup

THE PENINSULA

**DOHA:** QNB Group continues its participation as a Main Sponsor of “Al Majlis”, a sports programme broadcasted on Al Kass Sports Channels, during the FIFA Arab Cup Qatar 2025, hosted by Qatar across six world-class stadiums with the final due to be held on 18 December

This partnership reflects QNB’s commitment to sponsoring major events hosted by the nation, confirming its status as the

Arab and global sporting capital. The exceptional hosting of the Arab Cup is another significant occasion. This step highlights the bank’s role as a strategic partner in promoting global and regional championships in line with Qatar’s sustainability strategy and its National Vision 2030.

Within this sponsorship, the bank organised “Guess the Winner” contest via its social media platforms offering 8 iPhone 17 Pro max for the lucky winners.

## WCM-Q to host workshop on social-emotional and cognitive development

THE PENINSULA

**DOHA:** The Institute for Population Health (IPH) at Weill Cornell Medicine-Qatar (WCM-Q) will host a workshop to help health and education professionals enhance their social-emotional and cognitive skills. The workshop is scheduled to take place on January 31, 2026, at WCM-Q.

Titled “Unlocking the Connection: Human Development and Social-Emotional Excellence,” the interactive six-hour training course will explore the dynamic relationship between adult developmental stages and the social-emotional competencies (SECs) essential for success in professional and social life.

Grounded in constructive development theory and research on social-emotional learning, the course will guide participants through understanding how adults derive meaning from their life experiences and how that shapes their ability to manage emotions, build relationships, and make responsible decisions. Through self-reflection, case studies, and group discussions, participants will gain insights into their own personal growth and learn practical strategies to support their social-emotional development and that of their mentees and peers.

Directed by Dr. Maha Elnashar, lecturer in population health sciences and director of the Centre for Cultural Competence in Healthcare at IPH, the course is designed for individuals interested in personal growth, leadership development, social-emotional competencies, and educational innovation.





Elevation of Qatar achieved through the sincerity of people: Transport Minister

“As part of its efforts to accelerate digital transformation and enhance accessibility to its services, the Minister said that the Ministry of Transport has launched its official mobile application, ‘Darb,’ for smartphones and tablets.

**DOHA:** Minister of Transport, H E Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulla bin Mohammed Al-Thani affirmed that Qatar National Day represents an annual milestone to reaffirm the values of loyalty to the homeland and its wise leadership, which is steadily progressing in the journey of development and renaissance while consolidating the principles of unity and solidarity that were instilled by the Founder Sheikh Jassim bin Mohammed bin Thani.

He said that this year’s National Day slogan “With You It Rises, From You It Awaits”, reflects a renewed message to continue working and building, based on the firm belief that the development of the nation is linked to the development of the human being, and that the elevation of Qatar is achieved through the sincerity of its people and their efforts to serve society.

The Minister extended his warmest congratulations to the Amir H H Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani, the Father Amir H H Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani, the Deputy Amir H H Sheikh Abdullah bin Hamad Al-Thani, and to the esteemed government and the generous Qatari people.

The National Day celebrations reinforce the Ministry of Transport’s firm commitment to continuing to implement its national vision and mission, and to achieving the goals of its strategy through the development of an integrated, safe, flexible and sustainable transport system that adopts the latest smart systems and technologies, which contributes to strengthening the transport infrastructure and serving various economic, service and environmental sectors, and consolidating the role of the State of Qatar as an effective link in the regional and global economies, in support of achieving Qatar National Vision 2030, the Minister stated.

Regarding the achievements of the Ministry of Transport, the Minister emphasised that on September 7, 2025, Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, H E Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim Al-Thani launched the Ministry of Transport’s Strategy 2025-2030 under the slogan: ‘Reaching Beyond Horizons’.

As part of its efforts to accelerate digital transformation and enhance accessibility to its services, he said that the Ministry of Transport has launched its official mobile application, ‘Darb,’ for smartphones and tablets.

The Minister affirmed that the State of Qatar has strengthened its international standing in the transport and communications sector by winning membership in the Council of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) for the second time in Category III for the years (2026-2028). — *QNA*

QND a milestone driving sustainable urban development: Municipality Minister

“The Minister prioritised placing people’s well-being at the heart of urban planning by developing green spaces and pedestrian-friendly pathways that promote the humanization of cities and align with the Third National Development Plan (2024-2030).

**DOHA:** Minister of Municipality H E Abdullah bin Hamad bin Abdullah Al Attiyah affirmed that Qatar’s National Day is one of the enduring national milestones in the country’s history, as it highlights the developmental journey undertaken by our forefathers and embodies the achievements accomplished under the wise leadership of Amir H H Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani.

In a statement on the occasion of National Day 2025, the Minister said that this occasion invokes a sense of pride in what has been achieved, and a renewed opportunity to re-emphasize the importance of everyone’s mission and responsibility to contribute to nation-building and sustainable development.

He added that the Ministry of Municipality views this day as a motivation to intensify efforts toward building modern and sustainable cities, achieving a balanced urban environment, and providing municipal services that keep pace with the aspirations of society and the rapid development the state is witnessing.

He explained that National Day is an occasion to deepen the values of loyalty and belonging and to strengthen national identity in the hearts of future generations by promoting a culture of responsible work and unifying efforts in service of the nation.

Highlighting the Ministry’s most notable efforts, he affirmed that the Ministry continues to implement a set of notable projects that support comprehensive development and enhance quality of life. He prioritized placing people’s well-being at the heart of urban planning by developing green spaces and pedestrian-friendly pathways that promote the humanization of cities and align with the Third National Development Plan (2024-2030), which is based on key pathways including smart and sustainable cities, green building, environmental sustainability, and strengthening agriculture and food security.

The Minister explained that the Ministry is working on implementing the smart cities strategy, developing the municipal services system using modern technologies, and enhancing the efficiency of public facilities, in addition to completing the procedures for obtaining the Smart and Sustainable Cities standard (ISO 37106) in cooperation with the World Council on City Data.

Regarding efforts to strengthen food security, the Minister of Municipality said that this year witnessed the launch and implementation of many qualitative initiatives, including expanding climate-smart agriculture projects, developing modern irrigation systems and supporting organic production. — *QNA*

QND celebrates unity and resilience, says Ambassador of Thailand

THE PENINSULA

**DOHA:** Ambassador of Thailand to Qatar H E Sira Swangsilpa (pictured) has said that in 2025 Qatar demonstrated outstanding leadership in conflict mediation and humanitarian diplomacy, championing dialogue and the principles of international law.

“On the occasion of Qatar National Day 2025, I extend my warmest congratulations to the leadership and people of the State of Qatar. This day celebrates Qatar’s remarkable achievements and the unity and resilience that continue to define the nation,” the Ambassador said.

“In 2025, Qatar demonstrated outstanding leadership in conflict mediation and humanitarian diplomacy, championing dialogue and the principles of international law. These values strongly resonate with Thailand and reflect the foundations of our own foreign policy. Thailand is deeply grateful for Qatar’s vital support in securing the safe release and return of Thai nationals earlier this year – an act of friendship we will always remember.”

He added, “This year marked the 45th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Thailand and Qatar. Our ties have grown stronger through high-level exchanges. Cooperation across key sectors has continued to expand. The Embassy has worked closely with Qatari partners on environmental conservation and sustainable development, including mangrove restoration and joint initiatives with the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change, Qatar University, Earthna, and Qatar Museums.”

He further said, “Thailand greatly values its close and friendly ties with Qatar. The Royal Thai Embassy remains committed to further advancing cooperation and strengthening mutual understanding. I wish Qatar and its people continued peace, prosperity, and harmony. Happy Qatar National Day.”



Attorney General holds talks with Iranian, Kyrgyz officials

Attorney General of the State of Qatar H E Dr Issa bin Saad Al Jafali Al Nuaimi has held separate meetings in Doha with senior legal officials from Iran and Kyrgyzstan. H E Dr Al Nuaimi met yesterday with Minister of Justice of the Islamic Republic of Iran H E Dr Amin Hossein Rahimi, and with Prosecutor General of the Kyrgyz Republic, H E Maksat Asanaliyev. The discussions focused on a range of issues of mutual interest, including ways to strengthen cooperation in the field of public prosecution and legal affairs. The meetings come as Qatar continues to expand judicial and legal cooperation with regional and international partners.

Qatar, Norway hold political consultations in Doha

**DOHA:** The Ministries of Foreign Affairs of the State of Qatar and the Kingdom of Norway held a round of political consultations in Doha yesterday. The Qatari side was chaired by Secretary-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs H E Dr. Ahmed bin Hassan Al Hammadi, while the Norwegian side was chaired by

State Secretary at the Norwegian Foreign Minister H E Stine Renate Haheim.

During the consultations round, cooperation relations between the two countries were discussed, as well as ways to support and develop them. Secretary-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs H E Dr. Ahmed bin Hassan Al Hammadi

also met yesterday with State Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Mongolia H E Lkhanaajav Munkhtushig, who is visiting the country.

The meeting reviewed bilateral cooperation and explored ways to further strengthen and advance it. — *QNA*

Comprehensive medical services support fans and players at Arab Cup

THE PENINSULA

**DOHA:** Drawing on its experience delivering medical services at world-class sporting events, the FIFA Arab Cup Qatar 2025 Local Organising Committee (LOC) has deployed comprehensive medical operations to ensure high-quality care for everyone involved in the tournament. This includes players, spectators and guests across stadiums, training grounds and team hotels.

These services are being delivered through a partnership between Aspetar, the globally recognised orthopaedic and sports medicine hospital and the Official Medical Partner of the FIFA Arab Cup Qatar 2025, and Hamad Medical Corporation, the country’s national healthcare provider.

According to LOC Director of Medical, Dr. Khalid Al Khulaifi the FIFA Arab Cup Qatar 2025 has once again showcased Qatar’s ability to deliver a high standard of medical services at a major football tournament.

IIS students excel at ‘The Qatar Talk 2025’



IIS officials and participating students with trophy and certificate.

THE PENINSULA

**DOHA:** Students from the Ideal Indian School (IIS) Gavel Club delivered an exceptional performance at the recently held interschool speech competition, “The Qatar Talk 2025.”

Four speakers, Joyal, Afrin Salma, Mohammad Mustafa S of Grade 12 and Samridhi Panwar of Grade IX represented the school across two major categories: Tall Tales and Inspirational Speech.

In the Final Round, Afrin Salma of IIS

emerged as the Champion in the Inspirational Speech category, securing the top position and receiving a trophy, a cash prize of QR3,000, and several additional honours. Her achievement stands as a milestone for both the Gavel Club and the school community. The trophy was presented by H E Vipul, Ambassador of India to Qatar. The Principal Shaikh Shamim Saheb, the Gavel Club Counsellor, Sajid Shamim, and the Teacher In-charge, Anwar Sadath, extended their congratulations to Afrin Salma.

DPS-MIS wins Asia and India books of records recognition for largest sustainable mosaic art

THE PENINSULA

**DOHA:** DPS Modern Indian School’s Silver Jubilee celebrations witnessed an inspiring attempt at a world record by creating a monumental mosaic artwork (pictured) spanning 2500 square feet, crafted by 2500 students.

This collaborative initiative ‘Silver Synergy’ aspires to earn recognition from the India Book of Records, Asia Book of Records, and Guinness World Records. It celebrates 25 years of the school’s excellence and the strong bond of Indo-Qatar friendship.

Inspired by Qatar National Vision 2030 and a commitment to sustainability, the school repurposed cardboard cartons into individual panels. Guided by their art teachers, students from Grades I to X painted each panel, infusing their work with colour, pride, and imagination.



The youngest artists, 212 Kindergarten students contributed cheerful handprints, symbolising hope, innocence and togetherness. In the final stage, teachers and staff carefully assembled the 2,500 painted panels on the basketball court, each square reflecting a story, a dream, and a fragment of the

school’s spirit, with every brushstroke celebrating their love for the school and its 25-year journey.

Many Hands, One Masterpiece, 2,500 students, One Vision, A Legacy in Silver; the largest Sustainable Mosaic Artwork celebrating 25 years of DPS Modern Indian School’s excellence.



## Russian FM slams Europe as 'quack doctor' on Ukraine issue

**MOSCOW:** Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov on Monday slammed Europe as a “quack doctor” for missing opportunities to help resolve the Ukraine crisis, while expressing optimism over recent engagements with the United States.

In an interview with Iranian media, Lavrov reiterated Russia’s position that the root causes of the conflict must be addressed, including NATO’s eastward expansion, Ukraine’s potential NATO membership, territorial disputes and security guarantees.

Lavrov said that Europe has repeatedly turned a blind eye to efforts to resolve the crisis, using the situation instead to strengthen its own position and obstruct attempts by the United States and other parties to reach a fair settlement. — *XINHUA*

## Germany detains 21-year-old suspect over attack plot

**BERLIN:** Authorities of Germany’s eastern state of Saxony-Anhalt said yesterday that they had detained a 21-year-old man suspected of planning an attack on large crowds, according to public broadcaster ARD.

The suspect, whose specific nationality was not disclosed but who was described as being from “Central Asia,” was taken into police custody last Friday. He has since been placed in detention pending deportation, according to the interior ministry of the state of Saxony-Anhalt. Tamara Zieschang, the state’s interior minister, said the suspect entered Germany in 2024 and had recently been training as a nursing specialist. Authorities began monitoring him after detecting signs of increasing radicalization, including a strong interest in weapons. — *XINHUA*

# Trump sues BBC for up to \$10bn for ‘defaming’ him

**WASHINGTON:** President Donald Trump on Monday sued the British Broadcasting Corporation for up to \$10bn, alleging it defamed him by improperly editing footage of his Jan. 6, 2021, speech in a 2024 documentary.

The lawsuit, filed in a federal court in Miami, argues the BBC spliced together portions of Trump’s remarks to show him explicitly encouraging violence at the US Capitol.

“The formerly respected and now disgraced BBC defamed President Trump by intentionally, maliciously, and deceptively doctoring his speech in a brazen attempt to interfere in the 2024 Presidential Election,” a spokesperson for Trump’s legal team wrote in a statement.

“The BBC has a long pattern of deceiving its audience in coverage of President Trump, all in service of its own leftist political agenda.” The White House declined to comment.

In November, the BBC apologized for the edit but rejected any legal basis for a defamation claim over the documentary episode, “Trump: A Second Chance?,” which aired in October 2024 ahead of last year’s presidential election.

“While the BBC sincerely regrets the manner in which the video clip was edited, we strongly disagree there



US President Donald Trump speaks during a Mexican Border Defence Medal presentation in the Oval Office of the White House in Washington, DC, on December 15, 2025. (AFP)

is a basis for a defamation claim,” the BBC wrote on November 13. On Tuesday, a spokesperson said the company would be defending the case but would not be commenting further about the legal proceedings.

BBC Director General Tim Davie and News CEO Deborah Turness resigned in November amid the controversy, which began after the Telegraph, a British newspaper, published a whistleblower report from Michael Prescott, a former BBC editorial standards adviser.

“I’m suing the BBC for putting words in my mouth - literally to put words in my mouth,” Trump said earlier Monday. “They had me saying things that I never said coming out. I guess they used AI or something. So we’ll be bringing that lawsuit. A lot of people are asking, when are you bringing that lawsuit? Even the media can’t believe that one day they actually put terrible words in my mouth.” The complaint does not mention artificial intelligence. — *THE WASHINGTON POST*

# M23 militia to pull out of key DR Congo city at US request

**GOMA:** The M23 armed group said yesterday it would withdraw from the key city of Uvira in the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo at the request of Washington, which vowed “action” over the “clear violation” of a US-brokered peace accord.

The Rwanda-backed militia seized the strategic city near the border with Burundi last

Wednesday, days after the Congolese and Rwandan governments signed the peace deal in Washington -- an agreement US President Donald Trump had hailed as a “great miracle”.

The M23’s advance has thrown the future of the peace process into doubt and raised fears of a wider regional war.

Its capture of Uvira — a city

of several hundred thousand people — allowed it to control the land border with Burundi and cut the DRC off from military support from its neighbour.

US Secretary of State Marco Rubio said Saturday that Rwanda had clearly violated the peace agreement it signed with its neighbour on December 4, and vowed unspecified “action” in

response.

A day earlier, US ambassador to the United Nations Mike Waltz accused Rwanda of “leading the region toward more instability and toward war”.

Leader of the M23’s political branch Corneille Nangaa announced in a statement that the group would “unilaterally withdraw its forces from the city

of Uvira, as requested by the US mediators”. The group called for “adequate measures” to be put in place to manage the city, including “demilitarisation, protecting its population and infrastructure, and monitoring the ceasefire with a neutral force”.

It gave no details on the implementation of the measures. — *AFP*

## Singapore court dismisses challenge to mandatory death penalty

**SINGAPORE:** Singapore’s High Court dismissed yesterday the first legal challenge in years to the city-state’s mandatory death penalty for certain drug crimes, a blow for campaigners in a year that has seen executions peak.

Human rights activists and relatives of three executed drug convicts had petitioned the court, arguing that the mandatory death penalty violates parts of Singapore’s constitution guaranteeing the right to life and equal protection under the law. They also said legislation restricts judges from using their own discretion in issuing sentences, despite amendments in 2012 that carved out some exceptions.

Judge Hoo Sheau Peng ruled that the petitioners lacked legal standing, while saying that “in any event, (the case) is bound to fail on the merits.”

The petitioners said in a statement to AFP they were disappointed by the ruling and may appeal it. “We are surprised that the judgement came so quickly, as there were a number of fresh and nuanced arguments raised,” they said. — *AFP*

## UN warns 17 million risk food insecurity in Afghanistan

**GENEVA:** The number of people facing acute food insecurity in Afghanistan this winter is on the rise, and now stands at more than 17 million, the United Nations warned yesterday.

“The situation is getting worse, and we need to act now as Afghanistan is entering the winter period where needs are highest,” said Jean-Martin Bauer, director of food security and nutrition analysis at the UN’s World Food Programme.

More than 17 million people are facing acute food insecurity: “three million more than last year”, he told a press briefing in Geneva. Furthermore,

“there are almost four million children in a situation of acute malnutrition”, he said. Speaking from WFP’s Rome headquarters, Bauer said the situation was down to a combination of factors, including drought affecting crops and livestock, earthquakes that have plunged many families into poverty, and cuts in international aid.

Added to this, the forced return of more than 2.5 million Afghans from Iran and Pakistan this year “is putting stress on very limited resources” and the “very limited infrastructure in the country”.

WFP expects a similar number of

people to return to Afghanistan in 2026.

The organisation currently has only 12 per cent of the funds needed for its programmes in the country. Bauer indicated that due to lack of money, WFP is unable to undertake its usual winter preparations, such as pre-positioning food resources in vulnerable communities.

He urged donors to step forward to avert “the most extreme impact” in Afghanistan.

“What we need is \$570 million over the next six months to provide essential assistance to about six million people in Afghanistan,” he said. — *AFP*

## Russia labels German broadcaster *Deutsche Welle* ‘undesirable’

**MOSCOW:** Russia has labelled German broadcaster *Deutsche Welle* an “undesirable” organisation, a justice ministry register showed Tuesday, amid Russia-Germany tensions over Ukraine and allegations of Moscow’s interference in Germany.

*Deutsche Welle (DW)*, which has a Russian-language

service but closed its Moscow bureau in 2022, appears on the Russian justice ministry’s list of “undesirable organisations” seen by AFP.

The broadcaster had already been declared a “foreign agent”, both labels used against critics of President Vladimir Putin and Russia’s policies.

Since Russia launched its assault of Ukraine in February 2022, the country’s justice ministry has banned dozens of groups critical of the Kremlin or Moscow’s conduct in the war.

The “undesirable organisation” label makes anyone who works with a group or donates money to them liable to prosecution in Russia. — *AFP*

## Reparations for Ukraine: New European body set up

**THE HAGUE:** Top European officials including President Volodymyr Zelensky agreed yesterday to set up an international body to decide on tens of billions of euros of eventual reparations to compensate Ukraine over Russia’s invasion. The International Claims

Commission for Ukraine, signed by 35 countries, will assess and decide on claims for reparations, including any amount to be paid out.

“We expect that every mechanism for compensation... will start and receive strong and sufficient international support so

that people can truly feel that any kind of damage caused by the war can be compensated,” Zelensky told delegates.

“This war and Russia’s responsibility for it must become a clear example so that others learn not to choose aggression,” added the president. — *AFP*

## Defence of Europe’s eastern flank an ‘immediate’ priority: EU leaders

**HELSINKI:** Defending Europe’s eastern flank should be an “immediate” priority for the European Union in the face of the threat posed by Russia, eight EU leaders meeting in Helsinki said yesterday.

“Russia remains a threat today, tomorrow and in the foreseeable future for the whole of Europe,” Finnish Prime Minister Petteri Orpo told reporters following the first Eastern Flank Summit gathering the leaders of Bulgaria, Estonia, Finland, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania and Sweden.

“Russia’s war of aggression against Ukraine and its repercussions constitute a profound and enduring threat to

## Macron tells EU leaders Mercosur deal ‘doesn’t add up’ for France

**PARIS:** President Emmanuel Macron has reiterated to EU leaders that a proposed trade deal with Mercosur countries doesn’t work for French agriculture, officials at the French presidency said yesterday.

“The president made it very clear to Commission President Ursula von der Leyen and European Council President Antonio Costa (late Monday) that the deal doesn’t add up in terms of protection for French farmers,” an Elysee official said, after the EU leadership, backed by Germany, insisted the deal with the South American bloc must be signed by the end of the year.

European Commission chief von der Leyen is planning to go to Brazil on Saturday to sign the agreement which, after 20 years in the making, would create the world’s biggest free-trade area.

However, she first needs approval from the EU’s member states and heavy-weight France has requested a delay until 2026, considering its conditions not yet met.

The deal would allow the EU to export more vehicles, machinery, wines and spirits to Latin America, while facilitating the entry of South American beef, sugar, rice, honey and soybeans into Europe.

Fearing fallout for its agricultural sector, France has been clamouring for robust safeguard clauses, tighter import controls and more stringent standards for Mercosur producers. — *AFP*

## Benin jails around 30 people over foiled coup attempt

**COTONOU:** Benin jailed yesterday around 30 people, most of them soldiers, accused of links to a thwarted coup attempt this month, legal sources told *AFP*, while several mutineers are still on the run.

Soldiers appeared on national television on December 7 to announce President Patrice Talon had been deposed but the attempted putsch was swiftly defeated by loyalist army forces with the help of the Nigerian air force and French special forces.

Several people were killed and the alleged coup leader lieutenant-colonel Pascal Tigri and other mutinous soldiers remain on the run. — *AFP*



## Plane crashes in Mexico

Aerial view of emergency services working to extinguish a fire caused by the crash of a Cessna Citation aircraft that struck an industrial warehouse in the Santa Maria Totoltepec neighborhood near Toluca International Airport in Mexico state yesterday. A small plane crashed shortly before reaching the airport in the central Mexican city of Toluca, killing at least four people, local Red Cross and authorities said. (AFP)

## Serbian President blames ‘witch hunt’ for ditched Kushner hotel plan

**BELGRADE:** Plans to build a hotel on the site of Belgrade’s bombed-out Yugoslav army headquarters have been dumped, the country’s President said yesterday, blaming a “witch hunt” for scaring away the investment firm linked to Donald Trump’s son-in-law.

Affinity Partners, a Miami-based firm associated with Jared Kushner (*pictured*), confirmed to AFP that it is pulling out of the planned project, which has been mired in corruption allegations and public opposition for months.

“Because meaningful projects should unite rather than divide, and out of respect for the people of Serbia and the City of Belgrade, we are withdrawing our application and stepping aside at this time,” the statement, first reported



in the *Wall Street Journal*, said.

The announcement came after Serbian Culture Minister Nikola Selakovic and three others were indicted over alleged abuse of office and forgery of an official document that had allowed the removal of the site’s “cultural-heritage status”. — *AFP*

## Honduras police disperse election protest, injuring eight

**TEGUCIGALPA:** At least eight people were injured yesterday when police broke up a demonstration by leftist protesters demanding release of final results from Honduras’s election, authorities said.

Outgoing President Xiomara Castro condemned the operation in which protesters from her party were removed from a camp set up in front of the National Electoral Council building.

Images shared on social media showed a man with a bloodied face, as well as tents, mattresses, and other objects scattered on the ground.

Tegucigalpa Mayor Jorge Aldana told AFP that eight people had been injured but were recovering. “They treated us like criminals,” Aldana said.

The Central American country has not yet certified results from the November 30 election in which Nasry Asfura, a 67-year-old right-wing businessman backed by US President Donald Trump, holds a razor-thin lead over Salvador Nasralla, a 72-year-old fellow conservative. — *AFP*







بكمُتعالو ومنكمُتَنظَر

قَيمِر بن حَمد

On the occasion of  
Qatar National Day, 18th of December  
and in remembrance of the historic day in 1878 when  
Sheikh Jassim Bin Mohammed Bin Thani, founder of the State of  
Qatar,  
set up the pillars of the Modern State of Qatar,  
We extend our heartiest congratulations and greetings to

His Highness  
**Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad Al Thani**  
Amir of the State of Qatar

His Highness  
**Sheikh Hamad Bin Khalifa Al Thani**  
Father Amir

His Highness  
**Sheikh Abdullah Bin Hamad Al Thani**  
Deputy Amir

and to all the honorable people of Qatar  
We hope for more returns of this memorable occasion and  
wish that Qatar always enjoys security, welfare and prosperity  
under the wise leadership of His Highness The Amir



جامعة جورجتاون قطر  
GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY QATAR



CELEBRATING TWO  
DECADES IN QATAR

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