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Amir receives phone call from UAE President

DOHA: Amir H H Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani received a phone call yesterday from President of the United Arab Emirates H H Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan.

At the beginning of the call, H H Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan expressed his condolences to H H the Amir following the accident that occurred at an industrial facility in Ras Laffan, while offering his deepest sympathies to the families of the victims, wishing

the injured a speedy recovery, and affirming the UAE's support for and solidarity with the State of Qatar during this difficult time.

H H the Amir expressed his thanks and appreciation to H H Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan for his sincere sentiments and his expression of brotherly solidarity, commending the UAE's stance and its support for the State of Qatar. During the call, they discussed the close relations between the two countries. — QNA

Amir, Indian PM discuss bilateral relations, developments related to Ras Laffan accident

DOHA: Amir H H Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani held a telephone conversation on yesterday with Prime Minister of the Republic of India H E Narendra Modi.

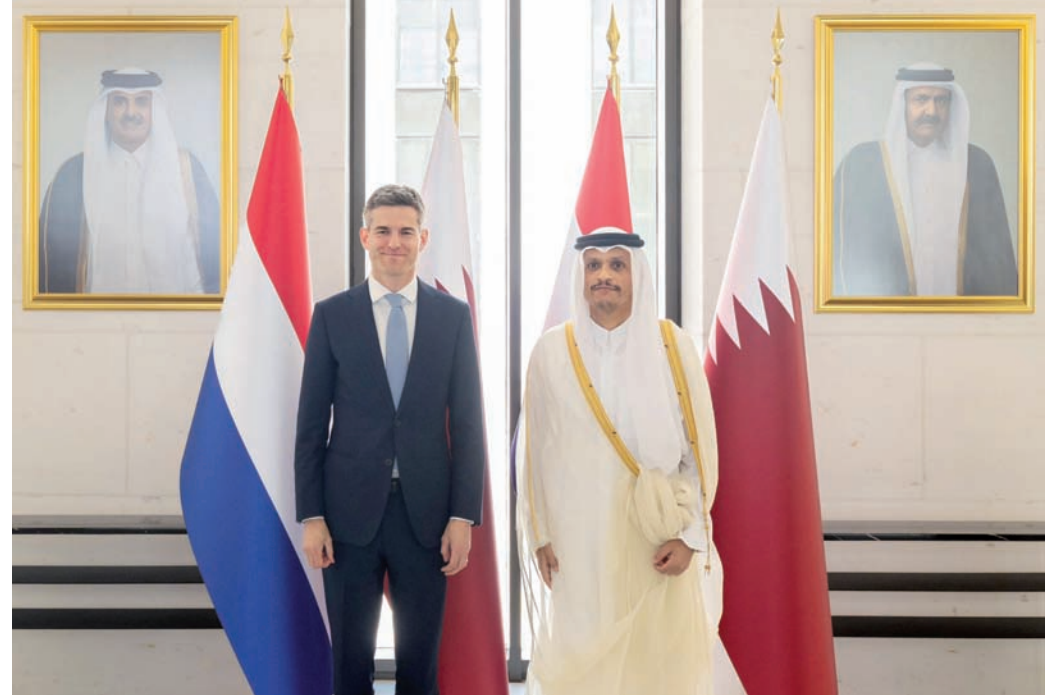
At the outset of the call, H H the Amir expressed his sincere condolences and sympathy to H E the Indian Prime Minister over the victims of the explosion at an industrial facility in Ras Laffan, which resulted in the deaths and injuries of a number of Indian nationals, wishing the injured a speedy recovery.

For his part, H E the Indian Prime Minister expressed his deep thanks and appreciation

to H H the Amir for his heartfelt sentiments, praising the support and medical care provided by the State of Qatar to the injured as well as the efforts of the relevant authorities in responding to the incident.

Both sides expressed their solidarity with the families of the victims, affirming the two countries' firm commitment to ensuring the safety and well-being of their friendly peoples.

The call discussed the friendly relations and cooperation between the two countries and ways to strengthen and develop them. — QNA



Prime Minister reiterates Doha's strong support for ongoing negotiations between US and Iran

DOHA: Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs H E Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim Al-Thani has reiterated Doha's strong support for ongoing negotiations between the United States and Iran, describing dialogue as the key to achieving lasting regional stability.

The remarks came during a meeting in Doha yesterday with Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of the Netherlands H E Tom Berendsen, where the two sides discussed bilateral relations and recent

developments in the Middle East.

The talks focused on diplomatic efforts aimed at strengthening security and stability in the region following the signing of a memorandum of understanding between the United States of America and the Islamic Republic of Iran.

H E Sheikh Mohammed stressed the State of Qatar's full backing for the negotiations, expressing hope that the discussions would lead to sustainable solutions to outstanding issues through

peaceful means.

He said progress in the talks could enhance regional security, create new opportunities for cooperation, development and prosperity, and serve the shared interests of people across the Middle East and beyond.

The State of Qatar has long positioned itself as a mediator in regional disputes and has maintained channels of communication with both Washington and Tehran, playing a role in efforts to ease tensions and promote dialogue. — QNA

Pakistan Prime Minister praises Qatar's support

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan H E Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif praised the State of Qatar's vital support in helping secure the memorandum of understanding signed between the United States and Iran, which paves the way for a comprehensive agreement between the two sides.

During talks held yesterday with Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian, who is visiting Islamabad,

Sharif also commended the efforts of several regional countries to support regional stability and peace. He affirmed that his country would continue to play a constructive role in promoting lasting peace. He noted that the first round of technical talks between the United States and Iran had been successfully held in Switzerland and expressed confidence that these efforts would contribute to strengthening stability in the region. — QNA → P2

Qatar unveils Digital Transformation Program to build national talent

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DOHA: The Ministry of Education and Higher Education has launched the Digital Transformation Program as part of the Government Scholarship Plan for the 2026-2027 academic year, in cooperation with the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology (MCIT) and the Civil Service and Government Development Bureau.

The initiative aims to develop a new generation of highly skilled digital professionals capable of leading the country's future technology-driven projects and supporting Qatar's digital transformation agenda. The program was unveiled during a press conference held at the Ministry of Education and Higher Education headquarters.

The initiative seeks to guide high school graduates toward digital specializations that directly align with the evolving needs of the government labor market and support national digital transformation projects.

The scholarship program covers a range of priority disciplines, including artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, data science and digital analytics, cloud computing, software engineering, digital platforms and services, digital innovation, smart cities, and telecommunications technologies and networks.

Speaking at the launch, Assistant Undersecretary for Higher Education Affairs Dr. Hareb Mohammed Al Jabri emphasized that the initiative goes beyond the traditional concept of scholarship programs. → P2



Deputy PM attends graduation of 26th National Service Cohort

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Defense Affairs H E Sheikh Saoud bin Abdulrahman bin Hassan Al-Thani inaugurating the Muqdam Al Ghad (Tomorrow's Pioneer) summer training programme yesterday during a graduation ceremony for the 26th cohort of national service recruits at the National Service Academy.

Qatar's commitment to women in sport highlighted on International Olympic Day

FAZEENA SALEEM
THE PENINSULA

DOHA: Qatar's growing commitment to empowering women and girls through sport was highlighted on International Olympic Day as policymakers, athletes and experts gathered to discuss how to advance women's rights, safety and participation in sport.

Hosted by the European Union Delegation to the State of Qatar in coordination with the Employment Standards Office at Qatar Financial Centre, the discussion, titled 'Advancing Women and Girls' Rights, Safety and Participation in and Through Sport,' was held at the 3-2-1 Qatar Olympic and Sports Museum, yesterday.

The event showcased Qatar's efforts to position sport as a vehicle for empowerment

and social development while examining the challenges that women and girls continue to face in their sporting journeys.

In her keynote address, Deputy Director of the Human Rights Department at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Mashaal bint Mana Al Hajri said Qatar views women's participation in sport as a human rights issue and an integral part of the country's development agenda.

"The full and equal participation of women and girls in sports is fundamentally a matter of human rights," she said, noting that this conviction is reflected in Qatar National Vision 2030.

Al Hajri highlighted Qatar's investment in sport, from hosting the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 to preparations for the Asian Games 2030, as well as the increasing participation

The 2022 FIFA World Cup was a landmark, not just for Qatar, but for the entire region. It accelerated Qatar's sports strategy, its investment in infrastructure, in grassroots participation and in hosting rights across multiple disciplines.

of Qatari women in the Olympic Games.

"Qatar's support for women extends across every field and sector, from education, diplomacy and the economy to sports and sports management," she said. "Nowhere is this more visible than in sports itself."

She emphasized that Qatar's progress is not limited to participation on the field but extends to leadership roles. During the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022, more than 300 women contributed to the tournament's delivery in senior positions across the

organizing structure.

Al Hajri also pointed to Qatar's international efforts to promote women's rights in sport, including its leadership, alongside Indonesia and Morocco, in introducing a Human Rights Council resolution affirming every woman and girl's right to participate in sport in a safe, inclusive and discrimination-free environment.

Deputy Head of Mission at the Delegation of the European Union to Qatar Angelos Lenos praised Qatar's growing role in global sport and its efforts to

expand opportunities through investment and international cooperation.

"The 2022 FIFA World Cup was a landmark, not just for Qatar, but for the entire region," he said. "It accelerated Qatar's sports strategy, its investment in infrastructure, in grassroots participation and in hosting rights across multiple disciplines."

Lenos said that sport has become an important area of cooperation between the European Union and Qatar. He said the panel discussion was a direct outcome of last year's EU-Qatar Human Rights Dialogue, during which both sides identified women's participation in sport as a priority area for joint action.

"Participation is not possible when half the population face barriers that the other half does not," he said. → P2

EDITORIAL

Building workforce of future

QATAR'S launch of the Digital Transformation Program under the Government Scholarship Plan for the 2026/2027 academic year represents a significant step in aligning education with the nation's future economic priorities. The initiative reflects a broader shift in the approach to scholarships, from providing academic opportunities alone to creating a complete pathway that connects education, professional training, employment and career development.

The programme comes at a time when digital capabilities have become central to national development. Technologies such as artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, digital analytics and cloud computing are reshaping industries and creating new requirements for skilled professionals. Developing national expertise in these areas is essential for strengthening digital economy and supporting long-term growth.

A key strength of the initiative is its focus on preparing students for the needs of the labour market. By linking scholarship opportunities with priority sectors, the programme aims to ensure that graduates acquire skills that match current and future workforce demands. The scholarship-with-employment approach also provides students with greater clarity about their career paths while helping government and industry sectors secure qualified national talent.

The inclusion of practical training throughout the academic journey is another important feature. Internships, professional exposure, mentorship and participation in technology-related events allow students to gain experience before entering the workforce. In fast-changing fields, classroom learning must be supported by real-world application, and this approach can help graduates become more adaptable and capable professionals.

The programme also highlights the importance of guiding students towards digital specialisations at an early stage. Awareness initiatives for students and families can help young people better understand emerging fields and the career opportunities available within them.

Qatar's higher education sector has already expanded its offerings in digital transformation, with more than 40 related academic programmes available across local institutions. This growth provides students with more opportunities to pursue specialised studies while contributing to the development of national capabilities.

The cooperation between education, technology and workforce planning authorities demonstrates the importance of coordination in preparing for future challenges. Digital transformation requires not only advanced infrastructure but also skilled people capable of managing innovation and delivering technology-driven solutions.

By investing in national talent and connecting education with employment, Qatar is laying the foundation for a workforce equipped to lead its digital transformation journey. The success of this vision will ultimately depend on developing professionals who can turn knowledge and technology into sustainable progress.

Shura Council takes part in OIC conference in Azerbaijan

The Shura Council, represented by a delegation headed by Speaker of the Council H E Hassan bin Abdullah Al Ghanim, will participate in the 20th Conference of the Parliamentary Union of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) Member States, which begins today in Baku, Azerbaijan. It will discuss a range of topics related to strengthening cooperation and coordination among member states.



Amir congratulates Grand Duke of Luxembourg

DOHA: Amir H H Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani, and Deputy Amir H H Sheikh Abdullah bin Hamad Al-Thani sent yesterday cables of congratulations to HRH Grand Duke Guillaume of Luxembourg on the occasion of his country's National Day.

Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs H E Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim Al-Thani also sent a cable of congratulations to Prime Minister of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg H E Luc Frieden on the occasion of his country's National Day. — QNA

Qatar unveils Digital Transformation Program to build national talent

FROM PAGE 1

He said the ministry is not merely seeking to fill employment gaps but is investing in the minds of young people to shape the future. He noted that connecting students' interests with digital specializations is essential for translating national priorities into reality and preparing a Qatari generation capable of driving a knowledge-based economy.

Director of Human Resources at MCIT Abdullah Mohammed Al Khalifa highlighted that MCIT's role extends beyond identifying required academic disciplines.

He explained that the ministry is building a comprehensive talent-development journey that begins during students' university studies and continues into their professional careers.

He noted that scholarship recipients will be offered professional training opportunities during

summer breaks, enabling them to link academic learning with practical workplace experience.

Director of Workforce Planning at the Civil Service and Government Development Bureau Al Anoud Saad Al Nuaimi described the program as an advanced step toward aligning educational outcomes with the actual needs of government institutions.

She stressed that the Civil Service and Government Development Bureau is committed to providing stable and motivating career pathways for graduates in these critical specializations.

Al Nuaimi also underscored Qatar's need for qualified national talent and called on families and both public and private schools to encourage students to pursue in-demand digital disciplines.

Students enrolled in overseas scholarship programs will receive a total monthly stipend of

QR14,000, in addition to a one-time pre-departure allowance of QR25,000, an annual travel ticket, and additional benefits for students studying at universities included in the prestigious "Amiri List."

For domestic scholarships, the program covers both Qatar University and Doha University for Science and Technology, with students receiving a monthly stipend of QR8,000 to support their academic journey and ensure readiness for employment upon graduation.

Registration through the Government Scholarship Platform will open in two phases. The first phase, covering overseas scholarships, Education City universities, and private universities, will run from July 1 to August 15, 2026. The second phase, dedicated to domestic scholarships at government universities, will take place from November 15 to December 30, 2026.



Undersecretary of the Ministry of Interior H E Abdullah bin Khalaf bin Hattab Al Kaabi chaired the Qatari delegation, while Saudi Arabia was headed by Assistant Minister of Interior of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia H E Dr. Hisham bin Abdulrahman Al Falih.

Qatar-Saudi Arabia security panel holds meeting

RIYADH: The sixth meeting of the Qatar-Saudi Arabia Joint Security and Military Committee was held in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

Undersecretary of the Ministry of Interior H E Abdullah bin Khalaf bin Hattab Al Kaabi chaired the Qatari delegation, while that of Saudi Arabia was headed by

Assistant Minister of Interior of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia H E Dr. Hisham bin Abdulrahman Al Falih.

During the bilateral meeting, several agenda items as well as the progress made on joint security and military initiatives between the two countries were discussed, as part of ongoing efforts to strengthen

bilateral cooperation and coordination.

The meeting is a continuation of the two countries' efforts to enhance their security and military partnership and integration as well as to support and develop mechanisms for bilateral cooperation and coordination. — QNA

OAPEC expresses solidarity with Qatar over factory explosion

KUWAIT: The Organization of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries (OAPEC) has expressed its solidarity with the State of Qatar following an explosion incident at a factory in Ras Laffan Industrial City due to a technical malfunction during operation, which caused a number of casualties.

Secretary-General of OAPEC, Eng. Khalid Al Otaibi expressed his sincere condolences and heartfelt sympathy to the State of Qatar and to the families of the victims, wishing the injured a speedy recovery.

He also pointed out the efforts of the competent authorities in dealing with the incident. — QNA

Pakistan PM praises Qatar's support

FROM PAGE 1

For his part, Pakistani President Asif Ali Zardari, during a separate meeting with the Iranian president, reiterated Pakistan's opposition to unilateral measures and its support for dialogue and diplomacy as the best means of addressing regional and international challenges.

He stressed Pakistan's commitment to preserving the unity of the Muslim world and strengthening its fraternal relations with the Arab Gulf states.

Qatar's commitment to women in sport highlighted on International Olympic Day

FROM PAGE 1

The event featured a panel comprising Commissioner of the Employment Standards Office at Qatar Financial Centre Luigia Ingianni; Qatari archer Nada Zeida; basketball player and entrepreneur Abdulrahim Abuissa; triathlete and the first Qatari woman to complete the Ironman challenge Lulwa Al Marri; and fencer and filmmaker Sheikha Maha. The discussion was moderated by Unesco Chairholder on Governance and Social Responsibility in Sport at Hamad Bin Khalifa University, Dr. Christos Anagnostopoulos.

Panellists reflected on both the progress achieved and the barriers that remain for women and girls in sport. They spoke about the challenges faced

Panellists reflected on both the progress achieved and the barriers that remain for women and girls in sport. They spoke about the challenges faced by pioneers who entered sporting spaces with few role models before them, creating opportunities for future generations. The discussion highlighted the importance of representation and storytelling in shaping perceptions of

what young girls can achieve, while also emphasising the need for long-term investment, accessible pathways and trusted systems to sustain participation. Addressing future priorities, panellists agreed that inspiration alone is not enough to create lasting change. They called for stronger infrastructure, accountability mechanisms and policies that translate into tangible improvements in girls' everyday sporting experiences. Closing the event, Dr. Anagnostopoulos praised Qatar's long-term commitment to integrating sport into national development.

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"For around two decades now, this country has done something still rare in the world," he said. "It has woven sport deliberately into the fabric of its national development, treating sport

not as a pastime at the margins, but as an instrument of human progress." He added that the global conversation on women in sport has evolved significantly. "It is profoundly encouraging to see how far sport has travelled,



Panellists reflected on the progress made and the ongoing challenges facing women and girls in sport. PIC: SALIM MATRAMKOT/ THE PENINSULA

from an era when decisions were made without women and girls, to one where they were made for them, to the era we are entering now, where they are made with them, and increasingly by them."

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Qatar ranks first in region, and among world's top five for economic resilience

FROM PAGE 1

The country ranked first regionally and globally for the balance of trade and recorded the world's lowest rates of unemployment, youth unemployment, and long-term unemployment, while maintaining one of the highest national savings rates globally.

These strengths contribute to an economy that ranks first

in the region and among the world's five most resilient.

The report also highlights Qatar's standing as one of the world's most competitive environments for individuals and businesses. Qatar ranks first regionally and globally for the absence of personal income tax, consumption tax, capital and property taxes, and social security contributions.

It also ranks 1st in the region

and 4th globally for entrepreneurship.

The country further leads the region in labor productivity, disposable income, banking sector assets, country credit rating, and the strength of its small and medium-sized enterprises.

Qatar's strong performance reflects the cumulative impact of long-term investment in infrastructure, public services,

and institutions, which continues to strengthen the country's competitiveness and improve quality of life. Qatar ranks 1st in the region and 2nd globally for energy infrastructure, 1st in the region and 3rd globally for health infrastructure, and 1st in the region and 6th globally for quality of life.

These strengths are complemented by a safe and stable

society, with Qatar ranking 1st in the region and 5th globally for the effectiveness of its justice system and recording the second-lowest homicide rate in the world.

These results highlight Qatar's continued progress in advancing Qatar National Vision 2030 and the Third National Development Strategy, further strengthening its position as a global destination for business,

investment, and quality of life, while supporting long-term economic growth and prosperity.

Published annually by the International Institute for Management Development (IMD), the World Competitiveness Yearbook assesses economies across economic performance, government efficiency, business efficiency, and infrastructure.

Deputy Prime Minister attends graduation of 26th National Service Cohort

DOHA: Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Defence Affairs H E Sheikh Saoud bin Abdulrahman bin Hassan Al-Thani attended yesterday a graduation ceremony for the 26th cohort of national service recruits at the National Service Academy.

The graduates completed a year-long training program that combined practical and theoretical instruction, achieving a range of objectives designed to prepare them for service and leadership responsibilities.

During the ceremony, HE Sheikh Saoud launched the Muqdam Al Ghad (Tomorrow's

Pioneer) summer training program, which will run from June 28 to July 23.

The initiative is aimed at developing leadership skills and strengthening national identity among participants aged between 11 and 15, helping equip them to meet future challenges with a strong sense of patriotism.

At the conclusion of the event, His Excellency honoured the top-performing graduates from the 26th cohort in recognition of their achievements during the training program.

The ceremony was also attended by Minister of Transport H E Sheikh



Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Defence Affairs H E Sheikh Saoud bin Abdulrahman bin Hassan Al-Thani with other officials and graduates during the graduation ceremony.

Mohammed bin Abdullah bin Mohammed Al-Thani, Minister of State for Interior Affairs H E

Sheikh Abdulaziz bin Faisal bin Mohammed Al-Thani, and Chief of Staff of Qatar Armed

Forces Lt Gen (Pilot) Jassim bin Mohammed Al Mannai, alongside senior military

officers of the Qatari Armed Forces and families of the graduates. — QNA

Women's empowerment in sport deepens equality and sustainable development: NHRC Chairperson

GENEVA: Chairperson of the National Human Rights Committee (NHRC), H E Maryam bint Abdullah Al Attiyah, underscored yesterday the importance of Human Rights Council Resolution (59/17) on ramping up efforts to empower women and girls in and through sport.

She described this resolution as a vital step toward fostering equality and broadening the engagement of women and girls, as well as leveraging sport as an effective empowerment tool and achieving sustainable development, particularly Goal 5.

Addressing a panel discussion on the intensification of efforts to empower women



NHRC Chairperson H E Maryam bint Abdullah Al Attiyah speaking at the event.

and girls in and through sport within the 62nd session of the United Nations Human Rights

Council in Geneva, Al Attiyah highlighted that women athletes have proven their distinctive capabilities and have taken the lead in the domain of sport on the world stage.

She noted that, albeit the breakthrough achieved globally in this field, women and girls are still beset with challenges that hamper their full and equal engagement in sporting activities.

Foremost among these challenges, Al Attiyah pointed out, is that women's sport hasn't been adequately dealt with seriously, creating wage and opportunity gaps, limited investment and attention, and weak women's representation in the

uppermost echelons of leadership and decision-making.

She recalled that there are some social and cultural stereotypes that impair women's full enjoyment of their right to sport, indicating that women and girls who are gripped by marginalisation or armed conflicts face additional challenges.

In these unstable situations, Al Attiyah clarified, limited resources and damaged infrastructure preclude opportunities for their access to sport and the benefit of sport's positive impact.

The Chairperson further emphasised that sports facilities that are devastated by armed conflicts aggravate these

challenges and preclude engagement opportunities and sustained sporting activities.

The official called for pursuing policies and programs that ensure equal opportunities and easy access to sport as a human right and an empowerment tool, through devising creative solutions that ensure vibrant sport practices in various conditions.

Women's representation in leadership and sport governance echelons is material to their participation inside stadiums and in decision-making processes alike, Al Attiyah underlined.

She further called for having a secure and overarching

sporting atmosphere in place through combating discrimination, violence, and harassment, as well as strengthening protection, accountability, and support mechanisms to ensure their equal and secure participation.

Over the course of the past decades, there has been remarkable participation of women in sport in the State of Qatar, Al Attiyah noted, recalling the creation of the Qatar Women's Sports Committee (QWSC) in 2000, which helped broaden their participation base and create opportunities for engaging in multiple sporting activities and tournaments. — QNA

Awqaf Ministry Information Systems Department earns ISO 9001:2015 certification

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DOHA: The Information Systems Department of the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs has achieved a significant institutional and digital milestone by obtaining the internationally recognised ISO 9001:2015 Quality Management System certification, reaffirming the ministry's commitment to excellence, governance, and continuous improvement.

The certification marks the latest in a series of achievements for the ministry, following its successful attainment of ISO/IEC 27001 for Information Security Management and ISO/IEC 20000 for IT Service Management. Together, these certifications strengthen the ministry's position as a leading government entity in adopting global best practices for digital governance and technology management.

The ISO 9001:2015 certification recognises the ministry's efforts to enhance internal processes, improve institutional performance, and raise the quality and reliability of digital services. It complements the ministry's information security framework under ISO/IEC 27001:2022, which safeguards data and digital assets, and its IT service management system under ISO/IEC 20000-1:2018, which ensures efficient service delivery, responsiveness, and technical support.

The ministry said the achievement reflects the successful development of an integrated technology ecosystem aligned with the highest international standards in quality, security, and operational sustainability. It also demonstrates the ministry's ability to manage its technical operations efficiently through structured methodologies that meet evolving global requirements.

The certification further underscores the ministry's commitment to fostering a culture of institutional excellence and continuous improvement by implementing internationally recognised quality management practices. These efforts are aimed at delivering reliable, efficient, and user-focused digital services to the community and across the ministry's administrative units.

The accomplishment aligns with the Ministry of Endowments and Islamic Affairs' 2025-2030 strategic plan, which places institutional and digital transformation among its top priorities and seeks to establish an integrated system of religious services built on quality, innovation, and sustainable impact.

It also supports the objectives of Qatar National Vision 2030, particularly in the areas of human development,

strengthening government institutions, and advancing a knowledge-based economy through the effective use of technology and enhanced public service delivery.

The ministry noted that obtaining ISO 9001:2015 was the result of sustained efforts by national professionals and specialised technical teams within the Information Systems Department. Administrative and technical processes underwent comprehensive audits and evaluations in accordance with rigorous international standards.

By successfully meeting these requirements, the department demonstrated its adherence to best practices in quality management across all stages of system planning, design, operation, and modernisation, while also strengthening workforce capabilities, risk management frameworks, and business continuity measures.



King of Thailand receives credentials of Qatar's Ambassador

HM King Maha Vajiralongkorn of the Kingdom of Thailand received the credentials of H E Abdulaziz bin Mohammed Al Sada as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the State of Qatar to the Kingdom of Thailand. The Ambassador conveyed the greetings of Amir H H Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani to H M the King of Thailand. For his part, H M the King of Thailand entrusted the Ambassador with his greetings to H H the Amir.

Lawh Wa Qalam: M. F. Husain Museum celebrates its six-month milestone

THE PENINSULA

DOHA: It is six months since Qatar Foundation's Lawh Wa Qalam: M. F. Husain Museum opened its doors in Education City, establishing itself as a vibrant cultural destination that celebrates the life and work of one of the most influential figures in the history of modern art: Maqbool Fida Husain. And since welcoming its first visitors, the museum has steadily gained local and international recognition, with its recent inclusion in TIME World's Greatest Places 2026 reinforcing its status as a must-visit cultural landmark.

The recognition from TIME – part of the publication's annual list of 100 extraordinary destinations around the world – reflects the museum's growing profile and distinctive offering, which invites visitors to engage with Husain's artistic legacy through exhibitions, immersive experiences, and community programming.

The museum's impact extends beyond international recognition to meaningful community engagement, with more than 8,500 art lovers and community members visiting the space over the past six months. It has also hosted more than 40 interactive workshops, giving people of all ages and interests the opportunity to explore a range of artistic techniques, including drawing, painting, and calligraphy.



"Reaching this six-month milestone is a landmark moment for Lawh Wa Qalam: M. F. Husain Museum, and also a moment of celebration given the wonderful engagement with the museum that we have seen from visitors of all ages," said Jowaher Al Marri, Manager of Communications Outreach at Qatar Foundation.

"We are proud to have created a space where people can engage with M. F. Husain's remarkable artistic legacy while exploring their own creativity. Being named as one of the TIME World's Greatest Places 2026 is a significant achievement and an affirmation of the unique cultural and visitor experience that Lawh Wa Qalam offers.

"As we look ahead to the next six months and far beyond, we are committed to expanding our exhibitions, workshops, and public programmes, creating

new opportunities for learning, inspiration, and cultural exchange, and encouraging the next generation of creative thinkers to connect with art in meaningful ways. We are looking forward to welcoming even more people to discover the museum and the remarkable artistic legacy of Maqbool Fida Husain."

Located in the heart of Education City, Lawh Wa Qalam: M. F. Husain Museum spans over 3,000 square meters and houses more than 150 pieces of artwork, including personal objects and Seeroo fi al ardh – Husain's final and most ambitious work, a multimedia space combining painting, film, sound, and storytelling in an absorbing immersive experience. The space features galleries, immersive spaces, and creative programmes, and offers guided tours, talks, team-building activities, and community engagement programmes.

National Cyber Security Agency bolsters national cadres with advanced cybersecurity skills

JOEL JOHNSON
THE PENINSULA

DOHA: The National Cyber Security Agency (NCSA), represented by the National Cyber Security Academy, hosted the Cyber Security Capacity Development Program (Level 2) as part of its ongoing efforts to strengthen Qatar's cyber resilience by developing a highly skilled national workforce to address evolving digital security challenges.

According to NCSA, the programme is designed to empower national cadres with both essential and advanced cybersecurity skills through a comprehensive learning pathway that combines theoretical knowledge with practical application and specialised training.

The initiative aims to enhance participants' technical competencies while preparing them to safeguard digital infrastructure and critical information assets with greater efficiency.

Hosted by the National Cyber Security Academy, the Level 2 programme builds on foundational cybersecurity concepts and introduces participants to more advanced areas of cyber defence. The structured curriculum integrates classroom instruction, hands-on exercises and specialised learning tracks to provide a well-rounded educational experience that reflects current industry needs and emerging cyber threats.

The agency noted that the programme is part of its broader strategy to strengthen national cybersecurity capabilities by investing in human capital and equipping professionals with the expertise required to protect the country's digital ecosystem.

By fostering practical skills alongside technical knowledge, the academy seeks to develop cybersecurity professionals who can effectively respond to increasingly sophisticated cyber risks facing both public and private sector organisations.

The initiative also supports Qatar's efforts to build a sustainable cybersecurity workforce

According to NCSA, the programme is designed to empower national cadres with both essential and advanced cybersecurity skills through a comprehensive learning pathway that combines theoretical knowledge with practical application and specialised training.

capable of meeting the demands of an increasingly digital economy. As entities continue to expand their digital operations and adopt advanced technologies, officials stress that the need for qualified cybersecurity specialists has become more critical than ever.

Through its integrated approach to capacity building, the National Cyber Security Academy aims to ensure participants gain not only a strong understanding of cybersecurity principles but also practical experience that can be directly applied in real-world environments.

The specialised tracks offered under the programme enable participants to deepen their expertise in key areas of cybersecurity based on organisational and national priorities.

The NCSA reaffirmed its commitment to developing national talent and promoting a culture of cybersecurity awareness across the country. It added that the initiatives, such as the Cyber Security Capacity Development Program, play a vital role in enhancing national preparedness against cyber threats while supporting Qatar's vision of establishing a secure and resilient digital environment.

The Level 2 programme forms part of the agency's continuing efforts to reinforce institutional capabilities, encourage professional development and ensure the country's workforce remains equipped to address the rapidly evolving cybersecurity landscape.



Qatar, Finland discuss cooperation in agriculture

Minister of Municipality H E Abdullah bin Hamad bin Abdullah Al Attiyah met at his office on yesterday with Political State Secretary to Foreign Minister and Defence Minister in the Republic of Finland H E Pasi Rajala. The two sides discussed cooperation between the two countries in areas of mutual interest, particularly in agriculture and food security. The meeting was also attended by the Ambassador of Finland to Qatar, along with a delegation from Finland's Ministry of Defence and the National Emergency Supply Agency.

QNA launches social media monitoring and analysis training programme

DOHA: Qatar News Agency (QNA) launched a training program titled "Monitoring and Analysing Social Media," as part of the QNA Training Centre's 2026 training plan.

The three-day course aims to develop participants' abilities in monitoring and analysing content published on social media platforms, seeking to enhance their skills in tracking trending issues and extracting indicators and insights that contribute to building a comprehensive understanding of the topics under discussion.

This, in turn, supports decision-making processes based on available data.

The course, presented by Hisham Shaaban, a journalist

specialising in social media at QNA, covers a range of topics related to the concept and importance of social media, the fundamentals of media monitoring and analysis, and the scope and mechanisms of monitoring.

It also introduces participants to the key issues subject to monitoring, as well as methods for tracking and analysing them.

Furthermore, the course covers skills in preparing and editing monitored materials, mechanisms for verifying news and identifying misleading sources, awareness of the editorial orientations of media institutions, professional guidelines related to media monitoring, linguistic editing, and

the preservation and archiving of monitored materials.

The course includes practical applications and training projects that allow participants to apply their acquired knowledge and skills in preparing case studies and research papers on monitoring and analysing social media platforms, and to discuss their findings at the end of the training program.

The course is part of QNA's efforts, through the QNA Training Centre, to develop national media competencies and keep pace with the rapid developments in the media sector, contributing to improving the quality of media content and production. — QNA

CNN's Global Perspectives to take place on October 29 in Doha

THE PENINSULA

DOHA: CNN's flagship events series Global Perspectives will take place in Doha on October 29, convening dignitaries, political and business leaders and visionaries for important conversations on geopolitics, technology, media and culture.

Global Perspectives: In Doha marks the first time that CNN will hold its flagship events series in the Middle East and Gulf region.

The event will take place at the Rosewood Doha, with Media City Qatar as Host Partner, building on an established relationship following CNN's decision to launch a new operation in Qatar last year as part of the network's broader global

and regional content strategy.

The new date for Global Perspectives: In Doha was agreed following a meeting between CNN Worldwide Chairman & CEO Sir Mark Thompson and Chairman of Media City Qatar, H E Sheikh Abdulla bin Ali Al Thani.

At October's event, CNN journalists including Christiane Amanpour, Richard Quest, Becky Anderson and Eleni Giokos will lead conversations with leaders from the region and beyond, examining how regions such as the Gulf are shaping the world's next chapter of economic power, technological innovation and cultural influence. Editorial content and news-making interviews from the event will

run across CNN platforms.

Following the success of the inaugural Global Perspectives: On Africa summit and an impactful program at the World Economic Forum in Davos, the Global Perspectives series continues to travel the world to explore the big ideas, bold leadership and dynamic economies at the frontlines of global transformation.

CNN will host two full editions of its flagship event series this fall with Global Perspectives: In Doha as well as Global Perspectives: In Bangkok. Global Perspectives: In Doha had been originally scheduled for 20 April but was postponed due to events in the region.

Global Perspectives: In Doha marks another milestone in the



Chairman of Media City Qatar H E Sheikh Abdulla bin Ali Al Thani and CNN Worldwide Chairman & CEO Sir Mark Thompson during the meeting.

growing collaboration between CNN and Media City Qatar. Since

establishing its operation in Doha in 2025, CNN has

expanded its presence through initiatives including CNN Creators, ongoing talent development initiatives, and now the region's first edition of Global Perspectives.

Global Perspectives also provides opportunities for commercial partners to reach and engage with those attending Global Perspectives, as well as CNN audiences across the world. In addition to branding and activation at the event for official Host Partner Media City Qatar, Dangote is the first additional sponsor announced for Global Perspectives: In Doha, with branding at the event, and advertising alignment with Global Perspectives content on CNN platforms.

Qatar highlights role of sport in empowering women at UNHRC

GENEVA: Permanent Representative of the State of Qatar to the UN Office in Geneva, H E Dr. Hind Abdulrahman Al Muftah, participated in a panel discussion on the intensification of efforts to empower women and girls in and through sport within the 62nd session of the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) in Geneva.

In a statement delivered on behalf of the core group of resolution 59/17 on empowering women and girls in and through sport, which includes the State of Qatar, the Republic of Indonesia, and the Kingdom of Morocco, she underscored the importance of sports as an effective tool to promote human rights, as well as values of tolerance, leadership, and equal opportunities.



Permanent Representative of the State of Qatar to the UN Office in Geneva, H E Dr. Hind Abdulrahman Al Muftah, speaking during a panel discussion at the 62nd session of the UNHRC in Geneva.

Sports play a pivotal role in empowering women and girls and backing efforts aimed at achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly Goal 5 related to

gender equality, Al Muftah said.

The Representative added that despite the progress made in the field of women empowerment, women and girls are

still beset by challenges and structural barriers that literally preclude their full participation in sport.

These hiccups, she noted, include discrimination, inequality in obtaining resources and opportunities, weak representation in uppermost leadership and decision-making echelons, inequality in wages, as well as harassment and violence inside sports environments.

Al Muftah recalled that UNHRC resolution 59/17 calls for doubling down on efforts to ensure that women and girls participate in sport in a comprehensive and purposeful manner, equally with men.

She encouraged nations, sports organizations, and all relevant entities to pursue policies and measures that deepen equality, ensure secure sports environments, and provide equal opportunities and accountability.

On behalf of this core group, she reaffirmed the continued support and promotion of the rights of women and girls, as well as their empowerment through sport, noting that she looks forward to the outcomes and recommendations that this panel will produce.

During the 59th session, the UNHRC unanimously adopted the aforementioned resolution, tabled by the State of Qatar on behalf of the core group, which received broad support within the Council, with 71 nations from various geographical groups co-sponsoring the resolution. — QNA

Six-month extension granted for compliance with Water Law No. 23

DOHA: Minister of State for Energy Affairs H E Eng. Saad bin Sherida Al Kaabi issued Decision No. (07) of 2026, providing for the extension of the compliance period for those subject to the provisions of Law No. (23) of 2025 on water for an additional six months, effective June 19, 2026.

In a post on its account on the X platform yesterday, Qatar General Electricity and Water Corporation (Kahramaa) said the decision comes as part of completing the legislative framework governing the water sector in the country and supports efforts for the sustainable management of water resources in accordance with

the approved legal framework.

In essence, Law No. (23) of 2025 on water is a strategic step to reinforce water security and achieve sustainability in water resources management for future generations through pursuing a combined approach to manage wide-ranging water sources and operationalize oversight programmes.

The law sets an overall framework to chart water policies in support of sustainable economic development, regulating groundwater utilization through specified regulations and criteria for digging wells and reducing depletion of water stockpiles. — QNA

QGIRCO named 'Most Innovative Motor Insurance Company in Qatar 2026'

THE PENINSULA

DOHA: Qatar General Insurance & Reinsurance Company (QGIRCO) has been awarded the title of 'Most Innovative Motor Insurance Company in Qatar 2026' by the internationally recognised publication, Global Business Outlook.

The award honours QGIRCO's continued investment in digital transformation, making online motor insurance one of the fastest and most affordable options in the Qatari market.

QGIRCO has reimagined the insurance journey by launching a fully digital platform that allows customers to get quotes and issue policies within minutes. By integrating advanced OCR (Optical Character Recognition) technology and eData, an integrated database that provides all essential vehicle data, including its estimated value, the platform automatically extracts data from uploaded vehicle documents. This automated workflow eliminates manual paperwork, slashes processing times, and delivers a seamless customer experience.

Commenting on the

achievement, Aimen Azara, Group CEO of QGIRCO, said, "This recognition is a testament to our commitment to making insurance simpler, faster, and more accessible in Qatar. Our motor platform combines OCR and eData to transform a traditionally time-consuming task into a fast, intuitive experience completed in minutes. We are proud that our digital capabilities



ities allow us to maintain top-tier service standards, reinforcing our vision to be a digitally advanced, customer-centric insurer in the region."

The accolade reflects QGIRCO's broader strategy to modernise operations across underwriting, claims, and customer service. As market expectations evolve, QGIRCO remains dedicated to developing innovative solutions that simplify insurance and deliver greater value to policyholders across Qatar.

مؤسسة قطر
Qatar Foundation

INVITATION TO TENDER

Tender Reference	Description	Tender Fee (QAR)	Tender Bond Value (QAR)	Bid Closing Date
QF-RFQ-1349	Universal Skills Passport Competency-Tracking System and Co-Curricular Transcript with Digital Badging	1,000.00	100,000.00	July 29, 2026, 2:00 PM
QF-RFQ-1350	Exhibition Booth for Web Summit 2027	500.00	N/A	July 22, 2026, 2:00 PM
QNL-RFQ-62	Monitoring-as-a-Service solution for Hybrid Monitoring (On-prem & Azure) for QNL	500.00	N/A	July 29, 2026, 2:00 PM
QNL-RFQ-63	Security Information and Event Management (SIEM) Solution for QNL	500.00	N/A	July 29, 2026, 2:00 PM
CO-RFQ-504	Interior Wood & Marble Polishing and Restoration at Al Shaqab Arena	500.00	N/A	July 21, 2026, 2:00 PM

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

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

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

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

Tender Fee Payment Dates: Payment of Tender Fee online will be from 24th to 30th June 2026
- All bidders, who are registered and have paid the required tender fees online to QF, will then be granted access to download the Tender Document.
- Technical and commercial bids need to be submitted and attached online in QF Supplier Portal as per instructions provided in the "Supplier Portal" work instruction.
 - The commercial bid must be valid for **180 days** from Bid Closing Date.
 - The commercial bid must be accompanied by a bank guarantee (tender bond) issued by a local bank in Qatar and should be valid for **180 days** from the bid closing date (where applicable as per the Tender documents).
 - The successful tenderer will be required to submit a performance bond as prescribed in each of the above tender documents.
 - Qatar Foundation special qualifications, terms and conditions shall apply as stipulated in the tender document.

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

Announcement of Deregister

The owners of (RUBECT L.L.C (QFC) have decided on June 9th, 2026, to cease the activities of the company in the State of Qatar (Q.F.C) and to deregister (QFC No. 02353).

Accordingly, all persons and entities having an interest or any claims in (RUBECT L.L.C (QFC) should notify Adib Al Chaa & Co. P.O. Box: 17048 – Doha – Qatar.

During the period of one month from the date of this advertisement.

Announcement of Deregister

The owners of (SMARTZI L.L.C (QFC) have decided on June 8th, 2026, to cease the activities of the company in the State of Qatar (Q.F.C) and to deregister (QFC No. 02342).

Accordingly, all persons and entities having an interest or any claims in (SMARTZI L.L.C (QFC) should notify Adib Al Chaa & Co. P.O. Box: 17048 – Doha – Qatar.

During the period of one month from the date of this advertisement.



Al Hammadi meets Finland's Political State Secretary to Foreign Minister and Defence Minister

Secretary-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs H E Dr. Ahmed bin Hassan Al Hammadi met yesterday with Political State Secretary to Foreign Minister and Defence Minister in the Republic of Finland H E Pasi Rajala, who is visiting Qatar. During the meeting, they discussed cooperation between the two countries and ways to support and strengthen it, in addition to a number of topics of common interest.

Advisor to PM meets Italian parliament members



Advisor to the Prime Minister and Official Spokesperson for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Dr. Majed bin Mohammed Al Ansari met Tuesday with Their Excellencies Members of the Italian Parliament Salvatore Caiata, Beatrice Colombo, Mariangela Matera, Augusta Montaruli, Fabrizio Comba, Cinzia Pellegrino, and Andrea Di Giuseppe. During the meeting, they discussed cooperation relations between the two countries and ways to support and strengthen them, in addition to the latest regional developments, particularly diplomatic efforts aimed at advancing peace initiatives and enhancing security and stability in the region following the signing of the memorandum of understanding between the United States of America and the Islamic Republic of Iran. Al Ansari also met yesterday in Rome with HE Riccardo Guariglia, Secretary General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Italian Republic. The meeting focused on bilateral relations between the State of Qatar and the Italian Republic and explored ways to strengthen cooperation across areas of mutual interest.

Korean Medical Center celebrates its second anniversary as first gateway to Korean healthcare in Qatar and region

THE PENINSULA

DOHA: The Korean Medical Center (KMC) has celebrated its second anniversary in Qatar, highlighting two years of growth, innovation, and partnership in support of the country's long-term healthcare vision.

The anniversary event brought together representatives from the Embassy of the Republic of Korea, healthcare leaders, partners, members of the Korean community, and media, reflecting KMC's expanding role in Qatar's health ecosystem.

Since opening its doors in Lusail, KMC has delivered more than 100,000 services, including consultations, procedures, and diagnostic tests. These services span advanced diagnostics, including comprehensive executive health screening and early disease detection; spine and joint care, including sports-related medicine; fertility, including a dedicated IVF center; plastic surgery, dermatology and aesthetics; dentistry; and Korean medicine, all under one roof and in partnership with leading Korean healthcare providers such as Asan Medical Center, JK Plastic Surgery Center, EHL Biotechnology Institute, and GC Genome.

This model is rooted in the Korean philosophy of balance, prevention, and enhancing long-term quality of life.



FROM LEFT: CEO of Apex Health in Qatar Dr. Fatih Gul, Hospital Director of KMC Alex Jakuloski and Chief Medical Officer of KMC Dr. Youngwoong Back.



Alex Jankuloski, Hospital Director of the Korean Medical Center, commented: "Over the past two years, we have been privileged to serve patients in Qatar and the region, where healthcare is held to a very high standard. Backed by Korean expertise, our focus has always been on making a real difference in people's lives through care that patients can trust. As the first gateway to Korean healthcare in Qatar and the region, we are proud of what we have built so far and look forward to continuing this journey, closer to home."

KMC was established with a model that treats the person rather than the symptom, integrating medicine, beauty,

and wellness along a single continuum of care. Patients can move seamlessly between executive screening, joint and mobility care, Korean medicine, dental and aesthetic services, and family health within one coordinated plan, reflecting a broader shift towards proactive, preventive care in line with the country's focus on managing non-communicable diseases.

"From day one, our ambition was to build a healthcare institution that meets the highest international standards while being deeply rooted in Qatar's own vision for health and wellbeing," added Dr. Fatih Mehmet Gul, CEO of Apex Health in Qatar.



"Two years on, that commitment has not changed. We will continue to invest in clinical excellence, deepen our roots in Qatar, and work with national partners to support the country's priorities in prevention, early detection and long-term wellbeing. At the same time, we are building KMC into a destination for authentic Korean care across the wider region, giving patients throughout the GCC access to expertise and treatments that would otherwise require travelling Republic of Korea."

Over the past two years, a significant proportion of KMC's executive health screenings have resulted in clinical findings that patients were not

previously aware of, underscoring the importance of early detection as a contribution to public health.

The center has also introduced several services that were previously difficult to access locally for the wider public, including licensed stem cell therapy for joints, advanced Korean plastic surgery and aesthetics, and AI-driven dental solutions. Together, these offerings position KMC as a reference point for authentic Korean care in Qatar and a growing destination for patients across the GCC seeking specialised Korean treatments closer to home.

KMC's model is anchored by strategic partnerships with four Republic of Korea's leading institutions: Asan Medical Center, JK Plastic Surgery Center, EHL Biotechnology Institute, and GC Genome. These partnerships ensure that the standards, protocols and technologies in Lusail remain closely aligned with the latest developments in Seoul, while being adapted to the needs of patients in Qatar.

The Korean Medical Center operates under Apex Health, the fastest-growing health care company in the Middle East and North Africa region. Apex Health manages a network of leading healthcare institutions dedicated to delivering advanced medical services in line with the highest standards, with a strong focus on quality of care and patient experience in Qatar and across the region.



Officials cutting the cake during the celebrations to mark second anniversary.



Women's Religious Outreach Unit organises 'Sakan' programme to promote stable marriages

THE PENINSULA

DOHA: As part of the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs' efforts to strengthen family stability and promote social cohesion, the Women's Religious Outreach Unit of the Department of Da'wah and Religious Guidance organised the "Sakan" programme, a specialised awareness and training initiative designed to prepare individuals for marriage and equip them with the knowledge and skills needed to build successful family lives based on affection, mercy, mutual understanding, and shared responsibility.

Now in its fifth consecutive year, the programme has

continued to build on the success of previous editions, which have witnessed growing participation and strong community engagement. The sustained demand reflects the importance of such initiatives and the increasing need for family-oriented educational programmes amid evolving social dynamics.

The programme primarily targeted women preparing for marriage, while also offering a range of awareness and educational activities for married women and young women of marriageable age. The initiative aims to promote sound family values and encourage early preparation for married life.

Participants explored a

The programme primarily targeted women preparing for marriage, while also offering a range of awareness and educational activities for married women and young women of marriageable age.

variety of key topics related to family and marital life, including the philosophy and objectives of marriage in Islam, the rights and responsibilities of spouses, effective communication skills, conflict resolution and problem-solving strategies, understanding differences between partners, and Islamic rulings related to married life.

The programme also addressed ways to renew marital relationships and

strengthen harmony and affection between spouses.

Its content was delivered through a comprehensive approach that integrated religious, social, and psychological perspectives, alongside practical aspects of family life management. Interactive sessions, workshops, and real-life case studies enabled participants to translate theoretical concepts into practical skills that contribute to successful marriages.

The programme was

delivered by a distinguished group of female preachers, marriage and family counsellors, educational consultants, and health specialists, ensuring balanced and comprehensive content that addressed the diverse needs of participants.

Organisers said the programme's training topics were carefully selected based on assessments of participants' needs, feedback from previous editions, and recommendations from religious and family experts, ensuring that the most relevant issues facing those preparing for marriage were addressed.

The initiative seeks to achieve several objectives,

including enhancing family awareness, improving readiness for married life, reinforcing sound Islamic concepts, and developing communication and conflict-management skills that contribute to building stable families capable of overcoming challenges.

This year's programme recorded a remarkable increase in participation, with the first package attracting more than 1,600 participants, compared to 638 participants during the same period last year. The significant rise highlights growing public awareness of the importance of family preparation before marriage.

Starmer vows 'orderly' transition as Labour MPs mull bid to be PM

LONDON: Outgoing UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer pledged yesterday to make the transition of power "as easy as possible", as two Labour lawmakers considered whether to challenge front-runner Andy Burnham amid concern about a coronation.

Starmer, who announced on Monday he was stepping down after losing the support of his own MPs, has authorised so-called access talks with prospective successors to begin "as soon as possible," Downing Street said.

The PM, in office for almost two years, told his senior ministerial team during their weekly meeting that he wanted an "orderly" handover and whoever replaces him "to succeed".

"The prime minister said he would seek to make the transition as easy as possible, giving his full support to whoever followed in his footsteps," a government readout of the meeting said.

Labour veteran Burnham, 56, is the overwhelming favourite to replace Starmer, despite only becoming eligible for the top job after winning a parliamentary by-election last Thursday.



Labour Party MP for Makerfield, Andy Burnham being sworn in after his win in the recent by-election, in the House of Commons in London on May 22, 2026. (AFP)

The ex-Manchester mayor was clapped and cheered as some 200 Labour MPs welcomed him back to parliament after a nine-year absence for his swearing in on Monday, hours after Starmer tendered his resignation.

Starmer's official spokesman told

reporters that meetings between Burnham's team and senior civil servants could begin before nominations to become Labour leader open on July 9.

Nominations close on July 16 and Burnham could be in 10 Downing Street by the following day if he is unchallenged.

Former armed forces minister Al Carns told an event yesterday that he wanted to hear Burnham's "vision" for the country before deciding whether or not to stand. "We'll see where we go from there," he added.

UK media reported that government minister Darren Jones was being encouraged to run by some MPs.

A person close to Jones told AFP that he was keeping his options open until Burnham lays out more detailed plans for government, particularly on the economy, but that he considered a run "very unlikely".

Burnham is due to begin setting out his policy platform next week with a speech on his economic plans.

Government minister Nick Thomas-Symonds echoed the views of many Labour lawmakers yesterday when he told Sky News that a "swift transition" was in "the best interests of the country".

A contest would last for several weeks and could be bitterly divisive, but some MPs insist forcing Burnham to win a contest would add legitimacy to his premiership since he would have

become prime minister without winning a general election.

The Labour party won a landslide victory at the July 2024 general election and is the biggest party in parliament, meaning its leader automatically has the right to be prime minister.

Labour MP John Slinger told BBC radio that the public would think "we'd slightly lost our minds if we didn't go through a process where we subject people who aspire to the highest office in the land to completely normal scrutiny".

Fellow backbencher Nadia Whittome also called for a contest, telling the BBC that "candidates setting out their stall transparently" would make Labour and the government "stronger".

Burnham's path to Number 10 looks clear after his nearest rival for the top job, Wes Streeting, announced on Monday he would not compete for the top job. Any challenger would likely find it difficult to secure the support of the 81 of Labour's 403 MPs needed to join a race. — AFP

UAE to launch first passenger train this month: Statement

DUBAI: The UAE will launch its first passenger train later this month, state media reported yesterday, after Abu Dhabi's crown prince inaugurated the city's station.

The passenger service will eventually connect four of the country's seven emirates, with an "introductory operational phase" between Abu Dhabi and Fujairah to begin on June 30, state news agency WAM said.

Tickets between the two cities will cost 55 dirhams (\$15) for standard class and 120 dirhams (\$32) for premium.

The Dubai station will open on September 30, while the main station in the neighbouring emirate of Sharjah is set to be operational on March 30, 2027.

Authorities will launch feasibility studies for the expansion of the network to other emirates, WAM said.

The project reflects the UAE's vision for a fully integrated transport network, enhancing inter-emirate connectivity, supporting sustainable growth. The fleet comprises 13 trains, with a capacity of up to 400 passengers each. Customers were allowed to book tickets from yesterday. — AFP

Heatwave sparks health warnings across Europe

PARIS: Workers sweated in choking heat and pupils stayed home yesterday as an early-summer heatwave smothered much of Europe, sparking health warnings.

Schools and tourist sites closed early and railways cancelled journeys as several countries issued red alerts for much of their territory in the record-breaking heat.

France sweated through its hottest night ever recorded, the national weather agency said, and the government said 40 people had drowned in the past five days as citizens took to unsupervised water spots to cool off. Nearly all of Spain was under a heat alert, with parts of the south and north of the country on the highest warning level for "extraordinary danger", national weather agency AEMET said.

As in various countries, authorities there urged citizens to take extra care of vulnerable people, drink water and avoid exertion at the hottest hours.

Italy's health ministry declared a red heatwave alert in 15 cities including Milan and Rome. Blackouts struck Milan and Turin because of the spike in the use of air conditioning.

A massive front of hot air from North Africa was smothering western Europe, Sebastien Leas, a forecaster at France's weather service Meteo-France, told AFP.

A cold front off Portugal was "acting like a heat pump, drawing up warm air", he said.

"At altitude, high pressure systems exert pressure on this warm air mass, and when we compress a warm air mass, we actually make it even hotter."

In England, dozens of schools said they would close early yesterday and remain shut for two more days.

The UK's Met Office weather agency issued a rare red heat warning — for only the second time — for parts of

Belcher. The railway line connecting northeast England to London issued a "do not travel" advisory.

Speaking at a crisis meeting, France's Prime Minister Sebastien Lecornu warned of "a tragic scourge of drownings", saying 40 mostly young people had drowned since June 18.

In Germany on Monday police said five people had died in fatal swimming accidents over the weekend.

Austria, Poland, Hungary and Croatia each issued heat



A commuter uses a fan in an attempt to cool down as they exit a London Underground tube carriage, in London, yesterday. (AFP)

central and south England on Wednesday and Thursday.

Temperatures could soar to 40C, unprecedented for the time of the year — a "sobering" prospect, according to Met Office chief scientist Stephen

warnings for parts of their territory. Emergency services in Hungary and Slovenia reported elderly people seeking help.

Croatian firefighters said they had brought several wildfires under control. — AFP

Israel's 'deliberate targeting' of children part of ongoing Gaza 'genocide': UN investigation

GENEVA: Israel is deliberately targeting Palestinian children in what has become a key factor in an ongoing "genocide" in Gaza, United Nations investigators charged yesterday, in a report slammed by Israel.

The UN Independent International Commission of Inquiry said it had found evidence that "Palestinian children have been deliberately targeted and killed by Israeli security forces".

This, it said, was a key factor in establishing "the genocidal intent of the Israeli authorities and security forces to destroy the larger Palestinian group in Gaza".

The three-member investigative team, which does not speak for the UN itself, first determined in a report last September that Israel had committed "genocide" in the war in Gaza — a finding Israel flatly rejected.

In yesterday's follow-up report, they said the intense scale and systematic nature of Israeli military operations had continued, resulting in the "unprecedented" death, injury and trauma of Palestinian children. There were "reasonable grounds" to conclude that Israel's authorities

and security forces "have continued to commit the crime of genocide" in Gaza, they said.

The commission, which was established by the UN Human Rights Council in 2021, examined for its latest report crimes affecting Palestinian children, and how living conditions imposed by Israel in Gaza were "resulting in preventable mortality of children".

"Israeli authorities and security forces have deliberately targeted Palestinian children resulting in genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes in the Gaza Strip, and war crimes in the West Bank," the team said in a statement.

The commission said that severe physical and mental injuries, mass trauma, orphanhood, separation, disability, repeated displacements, starvation, and the collapse of education and healthcare had "erased childhood" in Gaza and would continue to affect the children throughout their lives.

"By targeting children, Israel is attacking the very capacity of the Palestinian people to exist and to determine their future," said Indian judge Srinivasan Muralidhar, who chairs the inquiry. — AFP



World in brief

Over 13 million acutely food insecure in Syria: UN

GENEVA: More than 13 million Syrians — over half the population — are facing acute food insecurity, the United Nations warned yesterday, calling for clearing explosive-littered fields to revitalise agriculture in the war-shattered country.

The UN's Food and Agriculture Organization said turning fields riddled with unexploded ordnance following the brutal civil war into productive land could help solve the food crisis in Syria.

"Syria's agriculture sector is at a pivotal moment," said Piro-Tomaso Perri, the FAO's acting representative in the country.

"After 14 years of conflict, recurrent droughts, economic hardship, damaged irrigation, weakened services, disrupted markets, and widespread explosive ordnance contamination, rural livelihoods remain under severe pressure." — AFP

Niger hands in formal request to quit ICC

ABIDJAN: Junta-ruled Niger has officially submitted its request to withdraw from the International Criminal Court (ICC), the Hague-based tribunal said yesterday, nine months after announcing the move alongside allies Mali and Burkina Faso.

In a statement sent to AFP yesterday, the ICC said it had received an "instrument of withdrawal" on June 18 from Niger, led by General Abdourahamane Tiani. The request will take effect on June 18, 2027, the court said — one year after notification. — AFP

Germany eyes longer working lives in reform plan

BERLIN: Germany will raise its retirement age gradually beyond 67, abolish early retirement and expand compulsory pension contributions under a set of new recommendations backed by Chancellor Friedrich Merz yesterday.

Germany, like many industrialised economies, is struggling with an ageing population and last year appointed an expert commission to come up with suggested reforms to its pension system. Presenting its findings yesterday, the commission said the retirement age should be linked to life expectancy and gradually raised beyond 67 now. It recommended abolishing a scheme that allows people to retire early at 63. — AFP

PENOMAG

CHANGE OF NAME

I, Jahirul Islam

جوهرول اسلام

Holder of Bangladesh Passport No. EF0905517

(Qatar ID No.28405023008)

hereby change my name to

JAHIURL ISLAM

جاهيرول اسلام

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

I, Ashok Vidhyadhar Alaria

اشوك اليريا

Holder of India Passport No. S3226270

(Qatar ID No.28335634522)

hereby change my name to

ASHOK ALARIA

اشوك اليريا

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

Sri Lanka troops to battle deadly dengue mosquitoes as cases rise

COLOMBO: Sri Lanka is deploying the military to contain the spread of mosquito-borne dengue fever, as health authorities warned yesterday that hospitals are being overwhelmed with more than 1,000 admissions daily.

President Anura Kumara Dissanayake's office said army, navy and air force officers would join a special unit to identify and destroy mosquito breeding sites. Nearly 50,000 cases have been reported this year, with 29 deaths, although that is still far below the 2017 peak, when 186,000 patients and 440 deaths were reported.

The Aedes mosquito that spreads dengue — identifiable by its black and white striped legs — breeds in stagnant pools. "Laws will also be strictly enforced against those allowing mosquito breeding on their premises, in addition to setting up the special military unit," the statement said. A nationwide campaign to clean up breeding sites will be launched today. — AFP

I, Hariharan Ramanathan Ramanathan H

Holder of India Passport No.C3345319

(Qatar ID No.27135629689)

hereby change my name to

HARIHARAN RAMANATHAN

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

I, Asia Ahmed

Holder of Pakistan Passport No.AK1893503

(Qatar ID No.29658600717)

hereby change my name to

ASIA BALOCH ABU BAKAR BALOCH

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

I, Angelle Beatrice Sarmiento

انجلي سرمينتوا

Holder of Philippines Passport No. P8993252B

(Qatar ID No.31360801662)

hereby change my name to

ANGELLE BEATRICE SARMIENTO MARTINEZ

انجلي بياترس سرمينتوا مارتينيز

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