



Qatar, Singapore discuss cooperation

Minister of Municipality H E Abdullah bin Hamad bin Abdullah Al-Attiyah met yesterday at his office with the Ambassador of the Republic of Singapore to the State of Qatar H E Bong Kok Tian. During the meeting, they discussed ways to enhance cooperation between the two countries in areas of mutual interest, particularly with regard to food security.

Katara Art Centre launches new season with two art exhibitions in September

DOHA: Katara Art Centre announced the launch of its new season with two art exhibitions on September 2, which will continue until October 7 at the headquarters of the Cultural Village Foundation (Katara).

The new season includes two exhibitions: the first is a group exhibition titled “Fractures of the Future,” featuring four artists: Samah Azzam, Ahmed Al Jufairi, Moza Al Kuwari, and Fatima Mohammed. The second is a solo exhibition by artist Hessa Al Kuwari, titled “The Lounge: What Can a Room Remember.” The group exhibition explores the participating artists’ reflections on the possibilities of the future, alongside their responses to current challenges, with their works presenting a discussion centred on reimagining the

The new season includes two exhibitions: the first is a group exhibition titled “Fractures of the Future,” featuring four artists: Samah Azzam, Ahmed Al Jufairi, Moza Al Kuwari, and Fatima Mohammed.

future from multiple and contrasting perspectives.

The exhibition reflects the different strategies employed by the artists to reimagine the future, ranging from science fiction and systems thinking to oral history and material experimentation.

These strategies are not limited to anticipating the future, but go beyond that to

understand the present moment by responding to pressing social, economic, and environmental issues. Challenges such as the climate crisis and land exploitation, among others, drive the artists to imagine a better future and, through their works, call for radical changes. The other exhibition, which is the first exhibition by visual artist Hessa Al Kuwari, reflects through the participating works on the importance of the living room within the details of everyday life.

Through painting, photography, and installation works, it observes the importance of the patterns, objects, pieces of furniture, clothing, and rituals that inhabit these spaces, which at first appear ordinary and familiar. — QNA

BilAraby initiative concludes three-city regional tour

THE PENINSULA

DOHA: BilAraby, a Qatar Foundation initiative, has concluded its regional “BilAraby in...” series. Organised by local partners in Damascus, Amman, and Djerba, from August 4–9, 2026, the events featured speakers from Syria, Jordan, and Tunisia who shared ideas in Arabic deeply rooted in their personal experiences and community realities.

The three-city tour drew a remarkable turnout of nearly 1,000 attendees and 14 speakers, backed by 10 strategic partners instrumental in the events’ success. In Syria, six speakers addressed a crowd of 400; in Jordan, three speakers spoke to an audience of 400; and in Tunisia, five speakers engaged with 200 attendees.

The “BilAraby in...” series revolves around a simple yet

profound concept: bringing ideas directly to people in their own cities to spark dialogues that resonate with their local environments. Consequently, each stop reflected the distinct character of its host city, highlighting youth experiences in Damascus, celebrating knowledge and perseverance in Amman, and bridging heritage with the present in Djerba.

The regional tour kicked off in Damascus, Syria, on August 4 at the historic Khan As’ad Pasha Al-Azem. Under the theme Youth Experiences and Shared Spaces, the Youth Affairs Foundation organised the event in collaboration with BilAraby and the Masahat media initiative. Six young speakers discussed ambition, hope, art, heritage, freedom, and the role of knowledge in serving society, topics united by a shared drive for positive social impact.

The series then moved to Amman, Jordan, on August 6 for BilAraby in Amman: The Pulse of Letters and the Spirit of Achievement. Organized by Al-Taj for Media and Artistic Production, the event was held at the Conference Palace of the Applied Science Private University. It took place under the patronage of former Jordanian Prime Minister Dr. Abdul Raouf Al-Rawabdeh.

The regional tour concluded in Djerba, Tunisia, on August 9, with an event organised by the Carthage Debate Association and the Unique Djerba Association. Set on an island whose distinct settlement patterns earned it a spot on the Unesco World Heritage List in 2023, discussions centered on preserving cultural memory and reimagining it through education, art, tourism, and content creation.



CEO of QMC meets Ambassador of Turkmenistan

Chief Executive Officer of the Qatar Media Corporation H E Sheikh Khalid bin Abdulaziz bin Jassim Al Thani met with Ambassador of Turkmenistan to the State of Qatar H E Murad Mamedov (pictured) and discussed ways to enhance media cooperation between the two countries. Sheikh Khalid also met with Undersecretary of the Kuwaiti Ministry of Information Dr. Nasser Ahmed Al-Muhaisen and discussed ways to enhance joint cooperation and exchange expertise in various media fields between the two countries.

Government centres complete over 42,000 services in July

JOEL JOHNSON
THE PENINSULA

DOHA: Qatar’s Government Service Centers achieved a major performance milestone in July 2026, delivering a total of 42,227 services to citizens and residents, noted the Civil Service and Government Development Bureau (CGB) on X platform, yesterday.

The achievements, tracked and monitored by CGB through its interactive ‘Sharek’ platform, underscore Qatar’s ongoing commitment to enhancing public sector efficiency and driving performance in line with the ambitious objectives of the Third National Development Strategy.

According to monthly operational data released by the Bureau, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs topped the nation’s public entities by completing 18,757 services while

gathering 1,903 customer feedback surveys. The Ministry of Justice ranked second with 8,730 services processed and 1,127 surveys collected, while the Ministry of Labour finished third with 6,659 completed services and 499 surveys.

Additional high-volume public entities included the Ministry of Commerce and Industry with 4,280 services and 540 surveys, and CGB with 1,031 services and 159 surveys.

Lower-volume specialised entities such as the General Retirement and Social Insurance Authority and the Supreme Judicial Council also logged dozens of completed tasks, with overall user evaluations serving as a primary reference point for refining workflows across every branch.

In recognition of these efforts, the Bureau formally extended its congratulations to outstanding civil

service employees who delivered exceptional performance at government service centers during the month.

Highlighting top individual contributors, Fatima Hamid Al-Maamari of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs led service output with 1,924 completed transactions, while her colleague Ferial Hazzaa Al-Mubarak gathered 175 customer surveys.

Aisha Ahmed Al-Kandari from the Ministry of Labour completed 1,158 services, Maryam Ali Abdullah of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry delivered 753 services, Fatima Khalifa Abdullah Al-Zaraa of the Ministry of Justice performed 363 services, and Haila Maikal Hamoud Al-Dosari from the Civil Service Bureau handled 199 services.

The Bureau emphasised that honoring top staff reinforces quality standards and supports overall

administrative capability.

Geographic analytics from the Sharek platform highlighted a strong distribution of service delivery across Qatar’s municipalities.

The Al Hilal Government Service Center registered the highest activity, completing 18,877 services and collecting 1,870 user surveys.

Al Rayyan followed as another major hub with 11,519 completed services and 1,188 surveys. Significant volumes were also managed at Al Wakra with 4,217 services, The Pearl with 3,985 services, Rawdat Al Hamama with 2,292 services, Al Khor with 1,281 services, and Al Shamal recording 56 services.

CGB affirmed that monitoring these service statistics and encouraging ongoing public feedback through Sharek.gov.qa remain essential to elevating service quality to meet international standards.

HIA underscores readiness to ensure comfortable experience for Doha’s inbound passengers

DOHA: Hamad International Airport (HIA) affirmed yesterday its full readiness and commitment to providing passengers with a smooth and comfortable arrival experience.

The move comes as Doha sees growing numbers of passengers arriving on inbound flights this August following the summer holiday season, as students prepare for the new academic year.

In a statement, the airport highlighted a set of guidelines aimed at facilitating arrival procedures and fostering passengers’ comfort, stressing that its staff is committed to providing passengers and their families with support and assistance around the clock.

It further noted that the guidelines cover families travelling with young children, picking up arriving passengers, transportation from the airport using ride-hailing services, taxis, buses and the Doha Metro, car rentals, as well as baggage collection. — QNA

HBKU welcomes 891 new students, reinforces research focus

HBKU’s programmes are developed to contribute to Qatar’s employment and innovation systems, while its alumni continue to serve as ambassadors for the university. More than 2,700 graduates have completed their studies and are contributing to the labour market in Qatar and internationally.

FROM PAGE 1

It also offers programmes through the College of Law, College of Public Policy, School of Economics and Management and School of Education. Held at the Minarete in Education City, yesterday’s orientation activities focused on undergraduate students, while the orientation for graduate students will be held on Thursday. Addressing students yesterday, Provost Prabhat Hajela described HBKU as “a very distinctive university” that is deeply rooted in Qatar while maintaining a global reach.

“As you join us, you become part of a university that thrives on intellectual curiosity, purposeful discovery and a shared commitment to making an impact,” he told students. Hajela encouraged students to embrace interdisciplinary



Staff and new students during HBKU’s Hayakom Student Orientation 2026-2027 held at the Minarete in Education City. PIC: SALIM MATRAMKOT/THE PENINSULA

learning, noting that challenges in fields including energy, sustainability, artificial intelligence, health and infrastructure rarely fit within a single discipline.

“Learning to collaborate, think creatively and connect ideas across fields will be an important part of your education,” he said, urging students to use opportunities to work with people and institutions addressing real-world challenges.

Spokesperson for Student Affairs Rashid Adiba said the orientation was designed to introduce students to HBKU’s academic and student-support

ecosystem, including its facilities, programmes and a resource fair showcasing services available to students.

Speaking to *The Peninsula* he said that HBKU’s programmes are developed to contribute to Qatar’s employment and innovation systems, while its alumni continue to serve as ambassadors for the university. More than 2,700 graduates have completed their studies and are contributing to the labour market in Qatar and internationally. At the College of Public Policy, Dr Logan Cochrane said demand for the college’s programmes remains strong. Its offerings include master’s

degrees in Public Policy, Social Policy and Programme Evaluation, and Global Health Policy, alongside a new one-year Public Policy certificate taught in Arabic. “Our focus is on the quality of education, ensuring that we give our students the skills and knowledge they need to become leaders in the future,” Cochrane said.

He added that evening classes enable working professionals to pursue graduate education while continuing their careers, supporting Qatar’s national development goals by building capabilities within the public sector and other key fields.

Qatar Rail strengthens health and safety culture through proactive programme

THE PENINSULA

DOHA: Qatar Railways Company (Qatar Rail) is strengthening its commitment to employee well-being and operational safety through its internal Health and Safety Programme, aimed at promoting awareness, accountability and a proactive safety culture across its workforce.

The programme, highlighted by Qatar Rail in a recent social media update, uses measurable performance indicators to encourage positive behaviour and place greater emphasis on prevention rather than responding to incidents after they occur.

Leadership engagement, regular inspections, systematic reporting and interactive initiatives are among the key components of the programme, helping to embed health and safety practices in daily operations across the Doha Metro and Lusail Tram networks.

At the heart of the initiative are 10 key performance indicators designed to support continuous improvement. They cover leadership tours, health and safety inspections, task briefings, welfare and house-keeping standards, emergency arrangements, near-miss reporting, reward and consequence mechanisms, incident

investigations, bonus points, and the monitoring of accidents and incidents. By tracking these indicators, Qatar Rail seeks to maintain unified benchmarking standards across its rail network while continuously reviewing practices to strengthen safety performance.

“Safety is more than a number; it is a culture and mindset we strengthen year after year,” Qatar Rail said.

The programme also encourages open communication and the reporting of potential hazards, while recognising strong safety performance through structured incentives. This approach is intended to strengthen employees’ sense of shared responsibility for maintaining a safe working environment.

The initiative supports Qatar Rail’s wider objective of providing reliable, attractive and safe public transport services. The company manages, operates and maintains the Doha Metro’s Red, Green and Gold lines as well as the Lusail Tram network, where safety protocols form an integral part of daily operations.

Qatar Rail has also received international recognition for its health and safety practices, reflecting its efforts to maintain high standards for employees and passengers.



Al Muraikhi receives credentials of Sweden’s Ambassador
Minister of State for Foreign Affairs H E Sultan bin Saad Al Muraikhi received yesterday a copy of the credentials of Ambassador of the Kingdom of Sweden to the State of Qatar H E Josefin Simonsson Broden. The Minister of State wished the Ambassador success in carrying out her duties, assuring her of full support to advance bilateral relations to foster closer cooperation across various fields.

Qatar Centre for the Blind organises lecture on psychological burnout

DOHA: The Qatar Social and Cultural Centre for the Blind (QSCCB) organised a lecture on psychological burnout, presented by Advisor to the Qatar Society for Rehabilitation of Special Needs (QSRN), Dr. Tarek Al Aisawi, with the aim of raising awareness of the concept of burnout, its most prominent causes, symptoms, ways to deal with it, and how to prevent it.

The lecture addressed the concept of burnout as a state of physical, emotional, and mental exhaustion resulting from continuous exposure to stress and tension for long periods without sufficient rest. It was further explained that burnout is not limited to the psychological aspect, but may also affect the body. Among its most prominent signs are, constant exhaustion and depletion, headaches, rapid heartbeat, sleep disturbances, lack of energy, and a decline in the ability to concentrate and achieve.

Dr. Al Aisawi addressed the signs that may point to burnout, including waking up feeling fatigue, losing interest in everyday activities, feeling that the effort made is worthless, craving isolation and withdrawal, postponing the simplest tasks, in addition to feelings of failure and guilt, and a decrease in efficiency and ability to perform daily tasks.

The lecture also addressed the difference between normal fatigue, burnout, anxiety, and depression, explaining that burnout is often linked to accumulated depletion as a result of continuous stress, while emphasising the importance of paying attention to the persistence of symptoms and their impact on daily life, and seeking specialised help when needed.

The lecture also introduced solutions, as in ways to deal with burnout, which begin with acknowledging the problem and the feeling of exhaustion, paying attention to sleep, movement and nutrition, reducing stimulants, setting clear boundaries in dealing with others and tasks, and not feeling the need to be available all the time. — **QNA**

Ministry of Awqaf launches seventh edition of ‘Waqf and Photography’ competition

THE PENINSULA

DOHA: The General Directorate of Endowments at the Ministry of Endowments and Islamic Affairs has announced the launch of the seventh edition of the “Waqf and Photography” competition, organised under the Waqf Fund for Scientific and Cultural Development.

The initiative continues the directorate’s efforts to use photography as a powerful universal language to promote the message and values of waqf, or Islamic endowment, and highlight its humanitarian and developmental impact while strengthening awareness of the culture of endowment within society.

The announcement was made during a press conference held at the General Directorate of Endowments yesterday where officials outlined the new edition’s themes and invited photographers and creative professionals from Qatar and around the world to participate. The deadline for submitting entries and uploading competition files is December 3, 2026.

The competition aims to use art and photography to highlight the role of waqf and its contribution to serving people and communities. It also encourages photographers to produce creative works reflecting the values of giving, sustainability and shared responsibility, thereby contributing to greater awareness of waqf and supporting the Sustainable Development Goals through themes such as resource conservation, community and environmental service, and preserving benefits for future generations.

Speaking at the press conference, Director General of the General Directorate of Endowments Hassan bin Abdullah Al Marzouqi (pictured) said the “Waqf and Photography” competition has continued to evolve since its launch in 2018, both in terms of its themes and the scope of participation.

The initiative continues the directorate’s efforts to use photography as a powerful universal language to promote the message and values of waqf, or Islamic endowment, and highlight its humanitarian impact.

including the Holy Quran, mosques, healthcare, volunteer work, nature and the environment, and science. According to Al Marzouqi, this diversity reflects the broad range of areas in which waqf can contribute to society while providing photographers with different opportunities to translate these values into compelling visual works.

The growing international profile of the competition was particularly evident in its participation figures. The fifth edition attracted 694 photographers from 49 countries, demonstrating the competition’s expanding reach and its ability to communicate its message to audiences both inside and outside Qatar.

This momentum continued during the sixth edition, which focused on “Science and its institutions.” A total of 655 photographers from 21 countries participated, with 30 contestants winning prizes across the local and international categories. The total cash prize pool reached QR203,000, further reflecting the competition’s continued development and growing impact.

Al Marzouqi said the seventh edition builds on this progression, with sustainability selected as the theme for the international category, while the local competition will focus on sustainability and teamwork. He said the two themes are closely connected to the mission of waqf, which is based on sustaining charitable giving, serving society, and promoting cooperation and shared responsibility.

Photography highlights Qatar’s sporting renaissance locally and internationally

DOHA: The world will celebrate today the creativity of photographers on World Photography Day, observed annually on August 19.

The occasion recognises photographers’ efforts and their role in highlighting humanitarian and social issues, portraying values of solidarity and coexistence, and using the aesthetics and art of photography to reflect people’s lives and their efforts to develop the planet and preserve its resources and living beings.

In this context, the importance of sports photography stands out since photographers play an important role in documenting and capturing the features of Qatar’s comprehensive sporting development across various fields, highlighting the role of institutions in promoting a culture of sports, and raising awareness of the importance of physical activity and its contribution to improving quality of life.

On this occasion, the Director of the Qatar Photography Center at the Ministry of Culture Jassim Ahmed Al Buainain said, in a statement to QNA, that the Qatar Photography Center has continued, since its establishment, to fulfill its mission of supporting the photography movement in Qatar and reinforcing the status of the image as a visual language that documents achievements, reflects the country’s cultural and civilizational identity, and contributes to developing a generation of photographers capable of competing and creating across various fields of photography.

On World Photography Day, the Qatar Photography Center affirms that photography will remain one of the most important means of documentation, expression, and communication. Its mission will continue to focus on supporting creative talent, developing their skills, and strengthening the presence of Qatari photography locally and internationally in a way that reflects Qatar’s achievements and preserves its visual memory for future generations.

Al Buainain emphasised that the Center has devoted particular attention to sports photography, based on its belief that sports photos are no longer merely a record of a moment, but have become a means of showcasing success stories, conveying the emotions of competition and achievement, and highlighting Qatar’s sporting renaissance at both the local and international levels.

He pointed out that the Qatar Photography Center has launched specialised programmes and initiatives that have attracted many amateurs and talented photographers, providing them with opportunities to discover their abilities and hone their skills. As a result, a number of them have become active photographers who participate in covering sports events and tournaments and have established a notable presence in this field. — **QNA**

Ehsan Centre concludes summer programme in youth centres

DOHA: The Empowerment and Elderly Care Centre “Ehsan,” one of the centres of Qatar Foundation for Social Work, concluded its summer programme, organised by the Council of Elders in cooperation with several youth centres.

The programme aimed to strengthen intergenerational communication, benefit from the experiences of older people, and promote their active role in society.

It featured a variety of cultural, social, awareness, and recreational activities that brought older people and younger generations together, facilitating the exchange of knowledge, experiences, values, and social heritage.

The programme aimed to strengthen intergenerational communication, benefit from the experiences of older people, and promote their active role in society.

The centre highlighted the importance of such initiatives in empowering older people and strengthening their community participation, while praising its cooperation with youth centres in expanding community initiatives and creating new opportunities for joint programmes. — **QNA**

QNL to host Book Chat

THE PENINSULA

DOHA: Qatar National Library (QNL) will host a Book Chat with author Ruby Kapoor on Saturday, August 29, featuring her book *Let’s Talk About Life*, a handbook and journal focused on reflection, peace and positive thinking.

The interactive session will include a conversation with Kapoor and guided journaling activities exploring personal growth, mindfulness, gratitude and positivity. Participants will also have an opportunity to learn about the inspiration behind the book and practical approaches to more intentional living.

Qatar Endowments administration receives QR300,000 endowment in honour of donor’s mother

THE PENINSULA

DOHA: The General Directorate of Endowments at the Ministry of Endowments and Islamic Affairs has received a new cash endowment worth QR300,000, donated by a benefactor under the directorate’s supervision.

The endowment falls under the Endowment Fund for Righteousness and Piety, with the donor stipulating that its proceeds be dedicated to the reward of his mother.

According to the General Directorate of Endowments’ records, the donation is the benefactor’s first registered endowment. The directorate said the contribution reflects the impact of ongoing efforts to promote a culture of endowment giving and highlight its role in sustainable development and social solidarity.

The endowment also combines two important Islamic values: honouring one’s parents and establishing ongoing charity. By creating an endowment whose principal remains in place and whose proceeds continue to generate benefits, the donor seeks to create a lasting source of good in accordance with his stated conditions.

Assistant Director of the Endowment Funds Department at the General Directorate of Endowments Ali Hamad Al-Muhanna Al-Marri said establishing an endowment on behalf of one’s parents is considered a significant form of piety because it combines kindness toward parents with continuing reward.

He noted that Islamic teachings encourage Muslims to honour and show kindness to their parents, while also encouraging ongoing charity whose benefits endure.

Endowments bring these two values together in a single initiative, allowing donors to earn the reward associated with the endowment while dedicating its proceeds to those they intend to benefit, in accordance with the donor’s conditions.

The General Directorate of Endowments oversees six principal endowment funds: the Endowment Fund for Righteousness and Piety; the Endowment Fund for Serving the Qur’an and Sunnah; the Endowment Fund for Serving Mosques; the Endowment Fund for Scientific and Cultural Development; the Endowment Fund for Family and Childhood Care; and the Endowment Fund for Healthcare.

These funds were established to address diverse community needs and enable donors to direct their endowments toward areas they wish to support, while ensuring that their conditions are fully respected.

Al-Marri said the diversity of the endowment funds reflects the broad social mission of endowments and strengthens the directorate’s ability to direct proceeds toward various charitable causes in accordance with Islamic principles, while promoting efficiency and sustainability in endowment management.

The endowment also combines two important Islamic values, honouring one’s parents and establishing ongoing charity.

Northwestern Provost Erik Luijten to deliver Convocation 2026 address at NU-Q

THE PENINSULA

DOHA: Returning to Northwestern University in Qatar after attending the University’s 2026 Graduation ceremony as provost-elect, Northwestern Provost Erik Luijten will deliver the keynote address at Convocation 2026, officially welcoming the Class of 2030 to the Northwestern community in his inaugural visit to the Qatar campus in his capacity as the University’s chief academic officer.

The annual Convocation marks the official start of the academic year, bringing together students, families, faculty, staff, alumni, and distinguished guests to welcome the University’s newest cohort as they begin their Northwestern journey.

As provost, Luijten leads Northwestern’s academic enterprise, working closely with the University’s schools, faculty, and leadership to advance excellence in teaching, research, and student success. He assumed the role in July 2026 after serving in a series of academic leadership positions at Northwestern. A distinguished scholar in materials science and engineering, he has long championed interdisciplinary collaboration and the pursuit of innovative research across the sciences, humanities, and the arts.

“It is especially meaningful to welcome Provost Erik Luijten back to Northwestern Qatar as he begins his tenure as the University’s chief academic officer,” said dean and CEO Marwan M. Kraidy. “His presence at both Graduation and Convocation reflects the close connection between our Qatar campus and the broader Northwestern University community. As our newest students begin their academic journey, they will hear directly from the University’s academic leader about the values of excellence, intellectual curiosity, and global engagement that define a Northwestern education.”

“I am honoured to return to Northwestern University in Qatar and welcome the Class of 2030,” said Luijten. “Having celebrated the achievements of this year’s graduates just a few months ago, it is especially meaningful to now greet the University’s newest students as they begin their own Northwestern journey. A Northwestern education is about more than acquiring knowledge—it is about cultivating curiosity, embracing new perspectives, and learning from one another across cultures and disciplines. I look forward to meeting our newest students and encouraging them to make the most of every opportunity during their time at NU-Q.”

The Class of 2030 brings together almost 170 incoming first-year and transfer students, reflecting Northwestern University in Qatar’s continued commitment to academic excellence and global engagement. Nearly two-thirds of the incoming class are women, while more than one-quarter are international students.

Provost Erik Luijten



Al Hammadi bids farewell to Libyan envoy

Secretary-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs H E Dr. Ahmed bin Hassan Al Hammadi met yesterday with Ambassador of the State of Libya to the State of Qatar H E Mohammed Mustafa Al Saghir Al Lafi on the occasion of the end of his tenure. The Secretary-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs extended thanks to the Ambassador for his efforts in supporting and strengthening bilateral relations, wishing him success in his new duties.

Qatar attends GCC meeting of Zakat Authorities specialists

THE PENINSULA

DOHA: The Zakat Affairs Department at the Ministry of Endowments and Islamic Affairs participated via video conference in the 18th meeting of the Committee of Specialists from Zakat Authorities in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries.

The meeting was held as part of efforts to strengthen cooperation and coordination among zakat institutions across the GCC, exchange institutional experiences and best practices, and explore joint initiatives aimed at developing zakat services. Discussions also focused on keeping pace with digital transformation and improving the quality of services provided to zakat payers and beneficiaries.

Representing the Zakat Affairs Department was Head of the Zakat Services Section Ahmed Jaber Al Jarbouei (pictured). Participants discussed several items on the meeting's agenda, particularly projects aimed at creating a shared knowledge

environment among GCC zakat authorities, facilitating the exchange of expertise and successful practices, and supporting institutional development and innovation.

The initiatives are intended to enhance operational efficiency and further develop the zakat system across GCC countries.

The meeting also addressed joint Gulf initiatives aimed at coordinating media and awareness efforts among zakat authorities. These initiatives include implementing synchronized programs and activities to raise awareness of the obligation of zakat, highlight its religious objectives and developmental and social impact, and promote a culture of social responsibility.

Al Jarbouei said the Zakat Affairs



Department's participation in meetings of the committee of specialists from GCC zakat authorities reflects its commitment to actively contributing to joint Gulf initiatives and strengthening cooperation with zakat institutions across the region.

He said the department is keen to keep pace with rapid developments in digital transformation and institutional excellence.

Al Jarbouei also emphasized the importance the Zakat Affairs Department places on participating in specialized Gulf committees and meetings, noting that joint efforts are a fundamental pillar for improving zakat services, exchanging expertise and anticipating future initiatives.

Kahramaa advises public to check wiring before adding electrical loads

THE PENINSULA

DOHA: Qatar General Electricity and Water Corporation (Kahramaa) has urged residents and businesses to assess their existing electrical systems before installing high-consumption appliances or adding new electrical loads.

In a public awareness message, the corporation stressed the importance of ensuring that current wiring and installations can safely handle any additional demand. Early evaluation helps prevent electrical faults and ensures the continued safe operation of services, Kahramaa said.

The advisory forms part of the corporation's ongoing efforts to promote responsible electricity use and enhance safety across homes and workplaces in Qatar. High-consumption devices, such as air-conditioning units and other power-intensive

equipment, can place significant strain on electrical networks if the infrastructure is not adequately prepared. Kahramaa noted that a prior technical assessment allows for the identification of potential limitations in the existing setup. This proactive step reduces the risk of overloads, interruptions and safety hazards, contributing to more reliable and efficient electricity supply.

The corporation continues to encourage customers to prioritise safety when upgrading or expanding their electrical systems. By taking these precautions, residents and commercial establishments can help maintain the integrity of the national grid while protecting their properties and occupants.

Residents are advised to consult qualified professionals for assessments when planning any significant additions to their electrical loads.

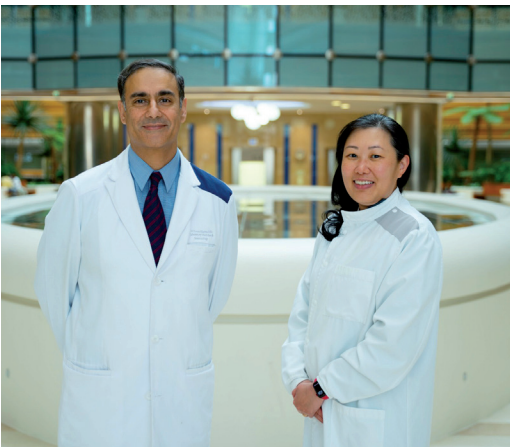
Sidra Medicine to host RAPID 2026 conference in September

THE PENINSULA

DOHA: Sidra Medicine, a member of Qatar Foundation, hosts the Recent Advances in Primary Immunodysregulation Disorders (RAPID 2026) conference from September 25 to 27, 2026, bringing together international experts, clinicians, researchers, and healthcare professionals to discuss the latest advances in the diagnosis, management, and research of primary and genetic immune dysregulation disorders.

Held under the theme "Frontiers in Diagnostics for Primary Immunodysregulation Disorders", the in-person conference will feature scientific presentations, multidisciplinary discussions, and an IBB Master Class on Inborn Errors of Immunity.

Organised in collaboration with The Isil Berat Barlan Academy (IBB) and the Universal Scientific Education and



Dr. Mohammed Yousuf Karim and Dr. Bernice Lo

Research Network (USERN), and aims to strengthen regional and international collaboration while advancing precision diagnostics and patient care.

Principal Investigator from the Laboratory of Immunoregulation and Conference Co-Chair, Dr. Bernice Lo said, "RAPID 2026 reflects Sidra Medicine's commitment to

advancing research and improving outcomes for patients with rare and complex immune disorders.

"We have a strong line-up of international and regional experts, including Prof. Talal Chatila, a leading expert in translational immunology presenting as a keynote speaker this year. By bringing together global experts from multiple disciplines, we aim to accelerate knowledge exchange, strengthen international collaboration, and promote earlier diagnosis and more personalised approaches to care."

Division Chief of Hematology and Sidra Conference

Co-Chair, Dr. Mohammed Yousuf Karim added, "The field of immune dysregulation is evolving rapidly, driven by advances in genomics, diagnostics, and translational research. RAPID 2026 will be an important platform for clinicians and scientists to share emerging evidence, discuss complex clinical cases, and shape future standards of care for patients across the region and beyond."

The conference is designed for physicians, researchers, nurses, pharmacists, allied health professionals, and scientists involved in the care and study of patients with inborn errors of immunity and related immune disorders.

Participants will gain insights into the latest clinical and scientific developments and contribute to discussions that support improved diagnosis, treatment, and research collaboration across the MENA region and internationally.

Panasonic and Ghamdan Trading Company sign MOU to strengthen long-term commitment to the Qatari market

Leadership of both companies meet in Doha and formalise a Memorandum of Understanding to deepen their distribution partnership and outline the next phase of growth

Panasonic and Ghamdan Trading Company (GTC) today reaffirmed their shared commitment to serving customers across Qatar with the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), following a high-level meeting between the chief executives of both organizations. The agreement builds on a partnership under which Ghamdan Trading Company has held responsibility for the distribution of Panasonic products in Qatar since assuming the role in 2024.

The MOU establishes a framework for strategic collaboration between GTC and Panasonic Middle East & Africa. Following the successful consolidation of Panasonic's business operations with GTC in the Qatar market, both parties intend to combine their respective strengths to enhance brand visibility, expand market share, and deliver premium product experiences to consumers for Panasonic branded products.

Under the MOU, the two companies intend to explore cooperation across three key areas: strategic alignment, market expansion, and local visibility.

The discussions centred on deepening collaboration in the Qatari market, expanding product availability, and enhancing the after-sales service experience for customers nationwide. Both companies used the meeting to align on joint plans for the period ahead, spanning retail expansion, service excellence, and continued investment in the local market.

"This partnership reflects our long-term confidence in the Qatari market and in Ghamdan Trading Company as the right partner to represent Panasonic here. Our meeting reaffirmed a shared ambition to deliver world-class products and service to customers across Qatar," said John Hardy, Chief Executive Officer, Panasonic Middle East & Africa.

"We are proud to serve as Panasonic's distribution partner in Qatar. Building on the strong foundation established since 2023, we are committed to strengthening the brand's presence and ensuring every customer receives an exceptional experience — from purchase through after-sales support. Ghamdan has consistently

invested in creating a complete customer experience—not only through premium products, but also through technical expertise, installation capabilities and long-term customer support", said Sheikh Nasser Hamad K. A. Al Thani, Chairman of Ghamdan Trading Company.

Both leaders expressed optimism about the road ahead and confirmed that the two companies will continue to invest jointly in the Qatari market, with a shared focus on customer satisfaction, product innovation, and service quality.

Since taking on distribution responsibilities for Qatar, Ghamdan Trading Company has built a strong presence across the country's key retail channels, supported by multiple showrooms and a growing eCommerce platform. As Panasonic's dedicated sales and service partner, Ghamdan has worked to bring the brand's consumer electronics, home appliance portfolio and business solutions closer to Qatari households, businesses and government organizations across Qatar.

About Panasonic: Panasonic Middle East & Africa is a subsidiary of Japan-based Panasonic Holdings Corporation, licensed by the Jebel Ali Free Zone Authority in the UAE for trading across the MEA region.

With extensive local market experience, the company delivers innovative and reliable products and solutions across professional imaging, security and surveillance, visual systems, energy and living appliances to meet the evolving needs of customers throughout the region, guided by the brand mission to Create Today. Enrich Tomorrow.

About Ghamdan Trading Company (GTC): Ghamdan Trading Company (GTC) is a Qatari owned distribution house, and a Subsidiary of HBK Holdings dealing in premium technology and electronics brands, with a presence across the country, leading retail channels, dedicated showrooms, and an eCommerce platform. GTC serves as Panasonic's sales and service partner in Qatar, responsible for the distribution and after-sales support of Panasonic's consumer electronics and home appliance range. The company is headquartered on Salwa Road, Doha.



Panasonic Deepens Qatar Strategy with Ghamdan Partnership MOU



Explore Panasonic products online at

 www.electroneyat.qa 

Trump says no talks taking place or planned with Iran

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump said yesterday that no talks with Tehran are under way or planned and insisted the blockade of Iran's ports remains in force.

"There are no talks or conversations going on, or scheduled, with the Islamic Republic of Iran. The Naval Blockade remains in full force and effect," Trump wrote on his Truth Social network.

"The Hormuz Strait is open and operating. All water mines have been removed or detonated." Earlier yesterday, Trump posted a map on Truth Social showing the Strait of Hormuz as "New US Territory," pressing his threat to claim sovereignty over the vital waterway.

Iran has effectively shut down the chokepoint, through which a fifth of the world's oil transits, in retaliation for the war Trump started along with Israel in late February.

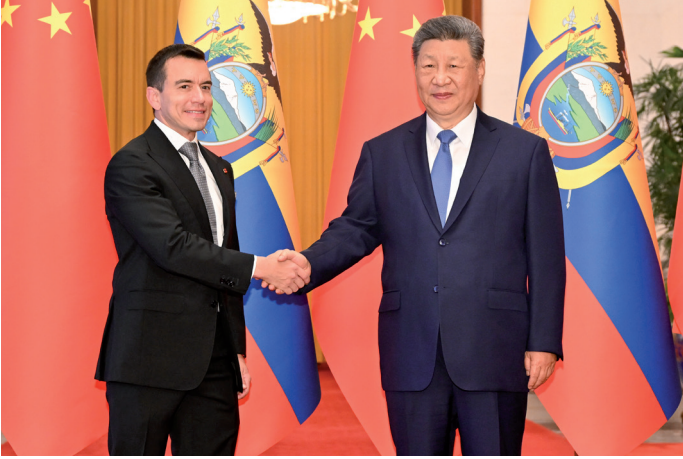
The US leader revisited the idea again Monday in comments to reporters in the Oval Office, suggesting it would be a good idea. — **AFP**

China's Xi says supports Latin America in 'upholding independence'

BEIJING: China's President Xi Jinping expressed support yesterday for Latin American countries' "independence and self-reliance" as he met with his Ecuadoran counterpart Daniel Noboa in Beijing, state media reported.

Noboa, a staunch ally of US President Donald Trump, has travelled to China for a week-long visit which began on Sunday.

Trump, who is pushing for Latin American governments to crack down on organised crime and migration, has scored several diplomatic victories in the region since returning to the White House last year, with countries



Chinese President Xi Jinping with President of Ecuador Daniel Roy-Gilchrist Noboa Azin, at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing, yesterday. (Xinhua)

including Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica and Honduras having shifted to the right or consolidated conservative realignments.

In their meeting in the opulent Great Hall of the People, Xi told Noboa that "China supports Latin American countries in upholding independence and self-reliance, (and) conducting external cooperation based on their own national interests".

"China consistently maintains that the status of Latin America and the Caribbean as a zone of peace should not be undermined, the path of development and revitalisation for countries in the region should

not be interrupted," the official news agency Xinhua quoted Xi as saying.

"Their right to independently choose partners should not be interfered with," Xi added.

He called for China and Ecuador to "consolidate political mutual trust" and expand cooperation in energy, minerals, infrastructure and finance.

China has reinstated export access for eight Ecuadoran shrimp plants, Ecuador's National Chamber of Aquaculture said in a statement on Monday, calling it "a significant step forward following several months of negotiations and joint technical work". — **AFP**

Republic of Korea: DPRK-US talks to boost peace on Korean Peninsula

SEOUL: Republic of Korea's unification ministry said yesterday that if the talks between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) and the United States resumes, it is expected to contribute to peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula and to a shift toward inter-Korean reconciliation and cooperation.

Following US President Donald Trump's recent

dialogue overtures, an unnamed official from the unification ministry told domestic reporters that Seoul had stated multiple times that it would fully serve as a pacemaker to facilitate the resumption of the DPRK-US dialogue, including by dispatching a special peace envoy, according to Yonhap news agency.

The Republic of Korean response came after Trump

told reporters at the White House on Monday that top DPRK leader Kim Jong Un had responded to his request for dialogue, characterising the current stage of communication as very positive.

Republic of Korean President Lee Jae Myung reaffirmed yesterday that the government should follow its initial plan to regain wartime operational control of South Korean troops

from the United States during his tenure, which will end in 2030.

Presiding over a cabinet meeting at the presidential office Blue House, Lee said South Korea had sufficient conditions to achieve self-reliant national defence and emphasised the need for a comprehensive upgrade of operational capabilities to further strengthen national defence. — **XINHUA**

10 killed in Russian strike in Ukraine's Kharkiv region

UKRAINE: A Russian attack on a village in the Kharkiv region of northeast Ukraine killed 10 people, Kyiv said yesterday, vowing to respond.

The strike comes amid a surge in civilian deaths in the four-and-a-half-year war.

Russian forces "carried out a rocket strike on Pechenig", a village around 40 kilometres from the Russian border, Kharkiv regional governor Oleg Syneghubov said on social media.

"According to preliminary information, 10 people were killed," he added, with 18 people wounded.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said on social media that the strike hit a busy intersection, "a location with a post office and stores, surrounded only by residential buildings".

"We will definitely respond to this Russian strike. And it is equally important that our partners also complement our responses with their own actions to put pressure on Russia and support Ukraine," Zelensky said. — **AFP**



World in brief

India inks \$203m deal for remotely piloted aircraft

NEW DELHI: India said on Monday that it signed a contract worth \$203m with General Atomics Aeronautical Systems to lease two MQ-9B Sea Guardian High-Altitude Long Endurance Remotely Piloted Aircraft Systems for the Indian Navy for 30 months.

The two MQ-9B Sea Guardian drones, equipped with advanced systems, state-of-the-art sensors and sophisticated payloads, will significantly enhance the Indian Navy's Maritime Domain Awareness capabilities, a defence ministry statement said. — **XINHUA**

Pakistan launch Tree Plantation Campaign 2026

ISLAMABAD: Pakistani President Asif Ali Zardari said yesterday that the country would enhance tree plantation to build a greener and more climate-resilient Pakistan.

In his message on the launch of Monsoon Tree Plantation Campaign 2026, Zardari said forests are among Pakistan's most valuable natural assets, contributing to biodiversity conservation, improved air quality, prevention of land degradation and climate change mitigation and adaptation.

He said Pakistan remains committed to achieving the sustainable development goals and fulfilling its international commitments. — **XINHUA**

Venezuela earthquake death toll rises to 6,438

CARACAS: Twin earthquakes that struck Venezuela in June killed 6,438 people, according to the latest official death toll released Monday. Nearly two months since the disaster, relatives and rescuers continue searching for the missing amid the rubble.

The latest figure, announced by Parliament Speaker Jorge Rodriguez, brings the death toll up from last week's figure of 6,301. The 7.2 and 7.5 magnitude quakes knocked down at least 190 buildings when they struck near Venezuela's coast on June 24.

Authorities say that at least 60,000 homes were affected in some way, with 24,000 being left uninhabitable.

Thousands of Venezuelan residents remain in temporary camps, where conditions are precarious. In Caracas this weekend, heavy rain destroyed some of the tents housing victims.

Interim President Delcy Rodriguez's government has promised housing for those affected.

To date, 335 homes have been made available out of the 4,000 promised by the end of the year. — **AFP**

Kyiv air alert forces Ukraine, Belgium FM's into bomb shelter

KYIV: Ukrainian Foreign Minister Andriy Sybiga and his Belgian counterpart Maxime Prevot were yesterday forced to hold talks in an underground shelter as an air alert blared out in Kyiv.

"Due to Russian drones attacking our capital, we held our talks underground in the FA Ukraine bomb shelter a daily reality for millions of Ukrainians, shared by our Belgian guests today," Sybiga said.

He posted a picture of the two top diplomats sitting at a table in a windowless room and a video of the two delegations making their way through underground corridors.

Air alerts ring out in war-torn Ukraine every day as Russia launches barrages of drones and



Ukraine's Foreign Minister Andrii Sybiha attends a meeting with Belgium's Foreign Minister Maxime Prevot in a bomb shelter during an air raid alert in Kyiv, yesterday. (AFP)

missiles at its neighbour, forcing people into shelters and killing civilians in the capital and across the country. During a visit to Kyiv

in July, European Union chief Ursula von der Leyen had to shelter briefly because of an drone threat in the city. — **AFP**

Sri Lanka plans criminal penalties for unauthorised foreign exchange transfers

COLOMBO: Sri Lanka is preparing to tighten its foreign exchange laws by introducing criminal liability for unauthorised transfers of money overseas, following approval from the cabinet yesterday.

One area covered by the planned amendment involves advance payments made abroad for the import of goods. If the goods linked to such a payment are not brought into Sri Lanka within a reasonable period, the remittance could be regarded as an unauthorised transfer of foreign exchange. — **XINHUA**

Germany opens new drone research centre

HECKLINGEN: Germany yesterday opened a new drone defence research centre, less than two weeks after an explosives-laden unmanned aerial vehicle was found at Leipzig airport, a key logistics hub for weapons sent to Ukraine.

"We are significantly strengthening our ability to respond to hostile drones," German Interior Minister Alexander Dobrindt said at the centre's opening.

The centre "will constitute a central element of the security architecture in the face of the hybrid threat posed by drones," he added at the site on a former commercial airport about 200 kilometres (125 miles) south of Berlin.

Berlin uses the term hybrid warfare to refer to hostile actions short of unambiguous military attacks, including espionage, arson and sabotage, by or on behalf of foreign powers.

Last year nearly 1,000 suspicious drones

flew over critical infrastructure in Germany, according to the Federal Criminal Police Office.

Speaking at a press conference, Dobrindt warned that the explosive found at Leipzig earlier this month was no "isolated case".

"Leipzig is part of a wider picture," he said. "The threat situation has become more acute." Berlin has so far refused to speculate on the motives or identity of those responsible for the incident at Leipzig.

Flights to the airport were diverted for several hours as police deployed a bomb-disposal robot to remove the explosives' detonator.

The airport in eastern Germany plays a key role in the transport of military goods by the German armed forces and NATO allies. It also serves as a base for Ukraine's Antonov Airlines. — **AFP**

Sri Lanka ex-minister arrested over theft of king's sacred stone

COLOMBO: A former Sri Lankan minister was arrested yesterday for allegedly aiding the theft of a centuries-old sacred rock from the palace of the island's last Sinhala king, an anti-corruption body said.

Keheliya Rambukwella was detained over the theft of the heavy carved circular granite rock known as a "moonstone" part of a symbolic stepping stone entrance to the palace of Veera Parakrama Narendrasinghe, the king who reigned until 1739.

The Commission to Investigate Allegations of Bribery or

Corruption (CIABOC) said he had conspired in the removal of the valuable historic object in December 2022, and had also obstructed police investigations at the time.

"He conspired, aided and abetted the theft at a time when he was a minister," CIABOC said.

It said Rambukwella had also been charged with the unrelated offence of using state funds to employ six people for his private business.

The arrest came amid a separate, ongoing court case against him over the purchase

of counterfeit medicines for state hospitals while he was health minister.

Police have told the court that he authorised the purchase of a life-saving cancer drug that turned out to be water.

Several other senior health ministry officials have also been indicted over the drug scam.

Rambukwella was health minister when Sri Lanka faced an acute shortage of medicines after defaulting on its \$46 billion foreign debt in April 2022, following its declaration of bankruptcy. — **AFP**



ISS hosts first spacewalk by a Frenchwoman

WASHINGTON: Sophie Adenot (pictured) became the first French female astronaut to venture outside the International Space Station for a spacewalk yesterday, accompanied by American astronaut Anil Menon.

During the six-and-a-half hour mission, the two astronauts were to replace an antenna that allows the ISS to communicate with mission control in Houston, according to NASA.

"I'm out," Adenot, 44, said after exiting the ISS, some 400 kilometers (250 miles) above the Earth. "I feel very good now." Adenot, 44, became the second European woman to conduct a spacewalk after Italian astronaut Samantha Cristoforetti's 2022 mission.

The two space travellers could be heard chatting and laughing in NASA footage of their adventure. — **AFP**

Firefighters in 'decisive' push to encircle Belgian wildfire

BELGIUM: Firefighters were locked in a potentially decisive push yesterday to encircle Belgium's largest wildfire in a century, despite rainclouds hampering air support operations over the High Fens nature reserve.

The blaze charring the expanse of peatland, pine trees and hiking trails grew over the weekend to half the size of Manhattan 3,000 hectares (7,500 acres) with hundreds of firefighters working night and day to wrestle it under control.

Much of the fire has now been contained but a hard-to-access front closest to the German border remains a concern, with gusty easterly winds bringing an added challenge.

"This day will likely be decisive

if firefighters succeed in their strategy of encircling the fire," said crisis cell spokesman Tony Hosmans.

"If that happens, the fire will be completely surrounded, and we can hope to stop its advance," he said.

On-site operations have been complicated by the fens' terrain a patchwork of heath, peat bogs and raised wooden boardwalks where heavy vehicles risk sinking into the ground, and firefighters struggle to tackle the fire at close range.

Teams worked through the night to close the gap and fully surround the fire, coming in from the east and north under very difficult conditions.

"We're talking about one or two kilometres, and we're on the verge of achieving it," regional government

spokesperson Nicolas Yernaux told AFP.

Visiting the site on Monday, Belgium's interior minister Bernard Quintin cautioned however it could take "weeks" of soaking and dousing to prevent the fire from reigniting even once brought under control.

Water-bombing aircraft from Norway, Germany, Sweden and the Netherlands have deployed on site, but they have been repeatedly grounded by low clouds.

Hosmans said the rain falling intermittently on the area since Monday was helping to slow the fire's spread by increasing humidity levels.

"But the drawback is that it brings low cloud cover, reducing the ability of aerial firefighting crews to



Smoke billows from a burned land near the Signal de Botrange during a wildfire at the Hautes Fagnes, Belgium, yesterday. (AFP)

operate," he explained. It was unclear given weather

conditions how much the aircraft would achieve yesterday. — **AFP**