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Amir, Lebanese President discuss bilateral relations

DOHA: Amir H H Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani and President of the Republic of Lebanon General H E Joseph Aoun discussed bilateral relations between the countries and ways to support and cement them.

This came during a phone call H H the Amir received from H E the President of the Republic of Lebanon.

During the call, the President of the Republic of Lebanon commended the State of Qatar's supportive stances toward Lebanon and its efforts to support its

security and stability. He also voiced his appreciation to H H the Amir for the State of Qatar's continued support for Lebanon and its people.

In turn, H H the Amir stressed the State of Qatar's support for the Republic of Lebanon and its solidarity with the Lebanese people, voicing his hope that diplomatic efforts would contribute to strengthening security and stability in Lebanon and the region. The two sides also exchanged views on a number of issues of common interest. — *QNA*



MoL strengthens Labour Dispute Committees' capabilities

THE PENINSULA

DOHA: The Ministry of Labour (MoL) has concluded its first qualification programme for candidates to serve as secretaries of the Labour Dispute Committees, strengthening the committees' administrative capabilities and supporting more efficient and standardised procedures for resolving labour disputes.

Organised by the Ministry's Labour Disputes Department, the programme was designed to equip personnel with the legal knowledge and procedural skills required to perform the duties of committee secretariats effectively. The closing ceremony was attended by Hamad Faraj Dalmouk, Assistant Undersecretary for Migrant Labour Affairs, and the Director of the Labour Disputes Department.

The programme focused on developing candidates' understanding of the legal and procedural frameworks governing labour disputes, while strengthening their ability to carry out the administrative and organisational responsibilities associated with the committees' work.

The initiative also seeks to standardise procedures followed by Labour Dispute Committee secretariats and improve operational efficiency, helping ensure that cases are handled through clear and consistent processes. ➔ **P3**

Students return as schools open for new academic year

SANAULLAH ATAULLAH
THE PENINSULA

DOHA: Students across Qatar returned to their schools on Sunday, marking the start of the 2026-2027 academic year, as teachers and administrative staff welcomed them back to classrooms and school campuses in a positive and enthusiastic atmosphere.

The first day brought together students and their classmates after the summer break, with schools providing a welcoming environment to help children and young people settle into their new academic routines. Teachers and school staff were on hand to receive students, guide them through the opening-day arrangements and support a smooth transition into the new school year.

The return to school marked

The first day brought together students and their classmates after the summer break, with schools providing a welcoming environment to help children and young people settle into their new academic routines.



a new beginning for students as they reunited with classmates, met their teachers and began preparing for a year focused on

learning, skills development, personal growth and achievement.

Undersecretary of the Ministry of Education and Higher Education Dr Ibrahim bin Saleh Al Nuaimi welcomed students, teachers and administrative staff on the occasion, describing the start of the academic year as a "new beginning and renewed ambitions."

In a message on the X, he encouraged students to approach the new school year with enthusiasm and determination, urging them to make every day an opportunity to learn and develop. "Start your new academic year with passion and ambition, and make every day an opportunity to learn a skill or gain experience," Al Nuaimi told students.

He stressed that education

extends beyond classroom lessons, noting that students can discover and develop their abilities through activities and programmes both inside and outside the classroom. Al Nuaimi expressed the Ministry's confidence in students and their ability to achieve their ambitions, encouraging them to work hard to build their own futures while contributing to the future of Qatar.

The smooth opening of the academic year follows extensive preparations by the Ministry of Education and Higher Education to ensure that schools were ready to receive students. As part of these preparations, six new government schools were opened, strengthening the capacity of the public education system and providing additional educational facilities to meet growing demand.

The expansion of government schools is part of ongoing efforts to provide high-quality learning environments while keeping pace with population growth and Qatar's evolving educational needs. It also supports the human development objectives of Qatar National Vision 2030 through continued investment in education and national capabilities.

Schools across the country cater to students from diverse nationalities and offer a range of curricula, giving families different educational options while maintaining a focus on providing safe and supportive learning environments.

Schools have also put in place arrangements for the opening week to help students and staff gradually adapt to the new academic routine. ➔ **P3**

Awqaf Ministry launches 'Meshka' app offering over 50 digital services

THE PENINSULA

DOHA: The Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs has launched the "Meshka" digital services application, a unified platform providing the public with access to more than 50 electronic services covering mosques, religious guidance, Hajj and Umrah, and Quranic competitions.

The launch forms part of the ministry's efforts to accelerate digital transformation and improve the services provided to beneficiaries, in line with its strategic plan and the objectives of Qatar National Vision 2030 to develop a more efficient, innovative and digitally enabled government sector.

Designed as an interactive and user-friendly platform, Meshka allows users to access ministry services around the clock, simplifying procedures and reducing the time and effort required to obtain services. The application supports both Arabic and English, making its services accessible to a wider range of users in Qatar.

The ministry said the app brings its digital services together on a single platform, helping users identify available services, understand procedures and access relevant information more easily. It also aims to increase public awareness of the ministry's digital services and promote a wider culture of digital service use.

Among the application's features are mosque services supported by interactive maps, allowing users to search for mosques accurately and access information about each facility, including available amenities and related services.

The feature is designed to help users locate nearby mosques more easily while providing information that enhances their experience of the services available at places of worship.

Meshka also provides digital services related to Quranic competitions, allowing students to participate and train through a virtual environment designed to simulate actual examinations. ➔ **P7**

Amir receives written message from Somali President

Amir H H Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani has received a written message from President of the Federal Republic of Somalia H E Hassan Sheikh Mohamud concerning bilateral ties and ways to further deepen and expand them. Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs H E Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim Al-Thani received the message at his meeting yesterday with Prime Minister of the Federal Republic of Somalia H E Hamza Abdi Barre, during his visit to the State of Qatar.



Boeing reinforces strategic commitment to Qatar's aviation future and sustainability goals

JOEL JOHNSON
THE PENINSULA

DOHA: The strategic partnership between Boeing and Qatar has reached new heights as both entities align on a comprehensive roadmap for sustainable growth and technological advancement, said an official.

Boeing's Managing Director of Commercial Marketing for the Middle East and Africa, Shahab Matin, emphasised that the aerospace manufacturer remains deeply committed to supporting Qatar's National Vision 2030 by delivering high-quality airplanes and services that prioritise operational efficiency.

Boeing's Managing Director of Commercial Marketing for the Middle East and Africa, Shahab Matin, emphasised that the aerospace manufacturer remains deeply committed to supporting Qatar's National Vision 2030 by delivering high-quality airplanes and services that prioritise operational efficiency.

Speaking to *The Peninsula*, he said, "This collaboration is rooted in a multi-faceted strategy designed to enable responsible industry growth while magnifying Boeing's contributions to Qatar's economic diversification and global competitiveness."

Matin noted that central to this mission is an aggressive

approach to environmental sustainability through fleet renewal and the adoption of modern technology.

He said that replacing older aircraft with more efficient variants is the most immediate way for Qatar Airways to improve its environmental footprint.

The 787 Dreamliner currently offers approximately 25 percent

lower fuel use and emissions than the models it replaces, and the upcoming 777-9 is designed to provide a further 20 percent reduction in consumption.

Beyond hardware, the national airline is leveraging Boeing's digital tools to optimise flight routes, a move that can reduce fuel use and emissions by an estimated 10 percent.

The pursuit of cleaner skies also involves a shared commitment to the scaling of Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF).

As members of the World Economic Forum's Clean Skies for Tomorrow coalition, Boeing and Qatar Airways are working to establish a viable pathway for SAF adoption, which can reduce

lifecycle CO2 emissions by up to 80 percent compared to traditional petroleum jet fuel.

"This effort is complemented by a decade-long research partnership with the Qatar Computing Research Institute (QCRI) at Hamad Bin Khalifa University," Matin said. "Together, they have pioneered machine learning and computer vision technologies that support safer landings by enhancing the early detection of small objects on the airfield."

He stressed that, "Innovation and talent development remain at the heart of Boeing's long-term presence in Doha."

The recent Machine Learning and Data Analytics Symposium

(MLDAS), held on February 8-9, 2026, showcased this commitment by convening a global community of AI researchers from the UK, US, Canada, and across the Middle East.

"By focusing on safe and sustainable artificial intelligence, Boeing and its Qatari partners are not only improving maintenance procedures through tools like the Airplane Health Management system but also fostering a local ecosystem of technical expertise," Matin added.

As Qatar continues to thrive as a leading international aviation hub, Boeing intends to remain a primary partner in ensuring that growth is both safe and sustainable.

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جبنة ميمما المثلثة ١٢ جم ٨ حبة ٤ عبوة
Mima Triangles Cheese 120 gm x 8 pcs x 4 pkt



كيري الجرة ٤٤٠ جم ١ حبة
Kiri Al Jarra 440 gm x 1 pc



موهيتو شراب ليمون بالنعناع ٣٣٠ مل ٤ حبة ١ مجموعة
Mojito Lemon Mint Drink 330 ml x 4 pcs x 1 Set



امريكانا ناجتس دجاج ٤٠٠ جم ٢ حبة
Americana Chicken Nuggets 400 gm x 2 pcs



برديكس دجاج شواية ١١٠٠ جم ١ حبة
Perdix Chicken Griller 1100 gm x 1 pc



توبليرون حليب ٥٠ جم ٦ حبة ١ عبوة
Toblerone Milk 50 gm x 6 pcs x pkt



ميلكا كراميل/ ميلكا فراولة شوكولاتة ٩٠ جم ٤ حبة
Milka Caramel/ Milka Strawberry Chocolate 90 gm x 4 pcs



كورن فليكس كيلوجز ٧٥٠ جم ١ حبة
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زيت دوار الشمس ١.٥ لتر ٢ حبة
Qalbi Pure Sunflower Oil 1.5 Ltr x 2 pcs



قهوة هينتز سريعة التحضير ١٠٠ جم ١ حبة
Hintz Instant Coffee 100 gm x 1 pc



لوز سادة كبير (٢٢/٢٠) ٨٠٠ جم
Almond Plain Bia (20/22) 800 gm



جوز صيني ٨٠٠ جم
Walnut China 800 gm



حبل ثين مجفف باكستاني ا كجم
Dry Fig Rope Pakistan 1 kg



لوكس صابون ١٢٠ جم ٦ حبة
Lux Soap 120 gm Asrtd. x 6 pcs



دوف شامبو ٤٠٠ مل ٢ حبة
Dove Shampoo 400 ml Asrtd. x 2 pcs



كريم اولاي ناتشورال اورا النهار ٥٠ جم + كريم ليلي ٥٠ جم + غسول للوجه ١٠٠ جم
Olay Natural Aura Day Cream 50 gm + Night Cream 50 gm + Face Wash 100 gm



معجون أسنان كولجيت بالاعشاب ١٠٠ مل ٤ حبة
Colgate Toothpaste Herbal 100 ml x 4 pcs



معجون أسنان سنسوداين جل ٧٥ مل ٢ حبة
Sensodyne Deep Clean Gel Tooth Paste 75 ml x 2 pcs



فاين ماكسي رول ٣٢٥ متر ٢ حبة
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Always Sanitary Pad Aloe 60 Pad/Night Dream XI 48



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سائل غسيل الصحون لوكس صن لايت براحة الليمون ٧٢٥ مل ٢ حبة
Lux Sunlight Dishwash Lemon 725 ml x 2 pcs



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Shine Max Clothes Dryer 18Mtr



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Xi advances a shared future with China's neighbours



This aerial photo taken on Nov. 7, 2023 shows trucks entering the Irkeshtam port in northwest China's Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region. (Xinhua/Ding Lei)



Chinese President Xi Jinping chairs the 25th Meeting of the Council of Heads of State of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) in Tianjin, north China, Sept. 1, 2025. (Xinhua/Ding Haitao)

XINHUA

P icked fresh in Kyrgyz villages in the morning, cherries and melons can now travel hundreds of kilometers and reach markets in Kashgar, an oasis city in the southwestern corner of China's Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, by evening.

The journey is made possible by the China-Kyrgyzstan-Uzbekistan highway, which winds through the rugged mountains of Central Asia, a project under the Belt and Road Initiative proposed by Chinese President Xi Jinping. Shipment will be expedited as the three countries are also seeing the construction of another major cross-border project -- the China-Kyrgyzstan-Uzbekistan railway -- aimed at improving the well-being of people along the route.

The expanding connectivity across Central Asia offers a glimpse into a broader vision Xi has championed over the years: to pursue friendships and partnerships with China's neighbours and foster an amicable, secure and prosperous neighbourhood.

Xi arrived in Bishkek on Sunday for a state visit to Kyrgyzstan, China's neighbor to the west, and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) summit, a major move of his neighbourhood diplomacy.

"Wish our neighbours well"

Xi's upcoming trip to Kyrgyzstan will be his third visit to the country as Chinese president, following previous visits in 2013 and 2019. Over the years, stronger connectivity has led to expanded economic ties. In 2025, trade in goods between China and Kyrgyzstan reached 27.2 billion U.S. dollars, up 20 percent year-on-year.

Last year, Xi and Kyrgyz President Sadyr Japarov signed a joint statement on deepening the China-Kyrgyzstan comprehensive strategic partnership for a new era, with the two sides pledging to deepen infrastructure cooperation while tapping new potential in clean energy, green minerals and artificial intelligence.

The growing partnership has also been reflected in the Kyrgyz leader's words. He told Xi that Kyrgyzstan's most valuable advantage is having China as its neighbour.

For Xi, relations with neighbouring countries have long occupied a prominent place in China's diplomacy. In 2013, not long after assuming the Chinese presidency, Xi put forward the principle of amity, sincerity, mutual benefit and inclusiveness in China's relations with its neighbours. A year later, he formally proposed building a community with a shared future with neighbouring countries at a central conference on work related to foreign

The expanding connectivity across Central Asia offers a glimpse into a broader vision Xi has championed over the years: to pursue friendships and partnerships with China's neighbours and foster an amicable, secure and prosperous neighbourhood.

affairs in Beijing.

"Close neighbours are better than distant relatives. This is a simple truth that Chinese people got to know in ancient times," Xi once said in explaining China's approach to its neighbourhood. "We always wish our neighbours well."

Harboring that wish, Xi has maintained frequent exchanges with leaders across China's neighbourhood.

In 2025, all of Xi's overseas trips

In addition to bilateral efforts, Xi has attached great importance to regional cooperation to build an amicable, secure and prosperous neighbourhood.

The SCO is a case in point. "China has always prioritized the SCO in its neighbourhood diplomacy," Xi once said. Since 2013, he has attended every SCO summit, either in person or via video link, promoting closer cooperation among member states on



Chinese President Xi Jinping greets the welcoming crowd in Astana, Kazakhstan, June 16, 2025. (Xinhua/Yin Bogu)

took him to neighbouring countries, including Kazakhstan, Russia and South Korea.

Such diplomatic exchanges have remained intensive in 2026. In June, Xi made his first overseas trip this year, traveling to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, China's neighbour to the northeast. So far this year, Xi has hosted leaders from more than 10 neighbouring countries across Asia, including Thailand, Pakistan and Tajikistan.

When meeting with Bangladeshi Prime Minister Tarique Rahman in June, Xi reiterated China's commitment to the policy of good-neighbourliness and friendship. China, Xi said, will continue to provide neighbouring countries with new opportunities and fresh dynamism as the country grows.

Good-neighbourliness in regional cooperation

security, development and cultural exchanges.

Founded in Shanghai in 2001 by China and its neighbouring countries, the SCO has had good-neighbourliness at the heart of its mission from the outset. "We were the first to conclude a treaty on long-term good-neighbourliness, friendship and cooperation, proclaiming our commitment to forge lasting friendship and refrain from hostilities," Xi said while hosting last year's SCO summit in the northern Chinese port city of Tianjin.

Over the past 25 years, the SCO has grown into the world's largest comprehensive regional organization in terms of geographical coverage and population, while expanding cooperation across an ever-widening range of fields.

At the Tianjin summit, Xi announced three China-SCO

cooperation platforms for energy, green industry and the digital economy, along with three cooperation centers for scientific and technological innovation, higher education, and vocational and technical education. Open to all SCO countries, these initiatives seek to share the opportunities created by China's development while fostering sustainable development across the region.

The SCO is part of a broader network of multilateral cooperation across China's neighbourhood. Under Xi's leadership, China has worked with neighbouring countries through mechanisms ranging from Lancang-Mekong Cooperation to ASEAN-centered East Asian cooperation and APEC, promoting greater connectivity, deeper economic integration and closer people-to-people bonds.

In Central Asia, that approach has also been advanced through a new cooperation mechanism initiated by Xi. In 2023, he launched the China-Central Asia Summit in the Chinese city of Xi'an, bringing together China and Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.

Two years later, Xi traveled to Kazakhstan, China's neighbour to the northwest, for the second China-Central Asia Summit. There, the leaders of the six countries signed a treaty on eternal good-neighbourliness, friendship and cooperation, enshrining the principle of everlasting friendship in legal form. Xi said the treaty is "a pioneering initiative in China's diplomatic engagement with its neighbours."

At the summit, host Kazakh President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev highlighted China's role in advancing regional cooperation.

"We have forged an unprecedented model of cooperation based on good-neighbourliness, friendship and mutual support," Tokayev said. "It is fair to say that China, under the leadership of the great statesman President Xi Jinping, has played a leading role."

A shared future

"Asia is our common home," Xi wrote in a signed article published by Vietnam's Nhan Dan newspaper in 2023 ahead of a visit to the country. "Building a community with a shared future for humanity should start from Asia."

That vision has found concrete expression in China's neighbourhood diplomacy. In April last year, Xi convened a central conference on work related to neighbouring countries in Beijing, where building a community with a shared future with neighbouring countries was identified as a priority.

To advance that goal, the conference underscored the need for China to work with its neighbours to consolidate strategic mutual trust, support regional countries in pursuing

development paths suited to their respective conditions, and properly manage differences.

Days later, Xi embarked on a tour of Southeast Asia that took him to Vietnam, Malaysia and Cambodia, during which he elaborated on how China seeks to put that vision into practice. During the visit, China and the three countries signed a record 108 cooperation agreements, covering traditional infrastructure, connectivity and emerging sectors such as the digital economy.

China, Xi said, would "extend the benefits of Chinese modernization to its neighbours, promote the building of a community with a shared future with neighbouring countries, and work together to advance modernization in Asia."

Over the years, the vision has been translated into an expanding web of bilateral and regional cooperation. China has reached common understandings on building communities with a shared future with 17 neighbouring countries. At the subregional level, China and the five Mekong countries have agreed to build a Lancang-Mekong community with a shared future, while China and the five Central Asian nations have committed to building a China-Central Asia community with a shared future.

Improved connectivity has laid a solid foundation for closer ties. "If the Belt and Road are likened to the two wings of a soaring Asia, then connectivity represents its arteries and veins," Xi once said. China has signed Belt and Road cooperation documents with 25 neighbouring states across Asia, while a connectivity network encompassing "six corridors, six routes, and multiple countries and ports" is now largely in place. Roads, railways, ports and trade routes are bringing markets and communities closer together.

Xi's vision of a shared future goes beyond regional connectivity; it envisions countries of different sizes and with different national conditions coexisting, cooperating and pursuing shared development on the basis of equality and mutual benefit.

China's own modernization has enabled its neighbours to achieve technological advances and industrial upgrading through collaboration, said Wirun Phichaiwongphakdee, director of the Thailand-China Research Center of the Belt and Road Initiative.

Xi's neighbourhood vision is being translated into reality through concrete projects, helping make Asia a platform for cooperation and shared prosperity, he added.

As Xi once put it metaphorically, "Countries across Asia are like individual lamps. Only when they are connected can they illuminate the night sky of Asia in all its brilliance."



Chinese President Xi Jinping, also general secretary of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, and General Secretary of the Communist Party of Vietnam Central Committee To Lam jointly witness the launching ceremony of the China-Vietnam railway cooperation mechanism at the International Convention Center in Hanoi, capital of Vietnam, April 15, 2025. (Xinhua/Yin Bogu)



An aerial drone photo taken on May 22, 2025 shows the entrance of the Sihanoukville Special Economy Zone in Sihanoukville, Cambodia, a flagship project under the Belt and Road Initiative. (Photo by Nitola/Xinhua)

UDST celebrates graduation of Uzbek trainees as certified vocational trainers

THE PENINSULA

DOHA: The University of Doha for Science and Technology (UDST) celebrated the successful completion of a 10-month vocational training programme for 15 young professionals from the Namangan region of Uzbekistan, marking an important milestone in the pioneering collaboration between Qatar and Uzbekistan to strengthen vocational education and workforce development.

The programme forms part of a pioneering effort jointly advanced by the Center for Progressive Reforms (CPR) and the Embassy of the Republic of Uzbekistan in the State of Qatar, in close partnership with UDST.

The collaboration builds on the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed between CPR and UDST, which established a framework for trainer development and support for an internationally accredited training center in Uzbekistan.

At UDST, the Uzbek professionals received intensive training and instructor development in four high-demand trades such as Electrical, Welding, Plumbing, and Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning (HVAC). The 10-month programme combined classroom instruction, extensive hands-on practice, and instructor preparation, equipping the participants to transfer their newly acquired knowledge, skills, and teaching methodologies to future trainees in Uzbekistan.

Training was delivered through UDST's Professional Skills Center with the involvement of the University's faculty, master instructors, and technical specialists. Participants were also exposed to internationally recognised training and assessment practices, including those aligned with the National Center for Construction Education and Research (NCCER).



UDST President Dr. Salem Al-Naemi with officials, professors and young professionals from Uzbekistan during the completion of a 10-month vocational training programme.

Once fully operational and expanded to its planned capacity, the Center is expected to train more than 1,000 skilled professionals annually, supporting Uzbekistan's workforce development priorities and creating stronger pathways to employment both at home and in international labour markets.

Commenting on the graduates' achievement, UDST

President Dr. Salem Al-Naemi, said: "We are proud to celebrate our graduates as they complete this important training journey and prepare to carry their knowledge and expertise back to Uzbekistan. At UDST, we believe applied education is the future: it equips people with the practical capabilities required by evolving industries and creates

direct value for communities and economies. This collaboration demonstrates how education can serve national priorities locally while contributing to skills development globally. We congratulate our graduates and look forward to the contribution they will make through the Uzbek-Qatari Vocational Skills Centre." CEO and Co-Founder of the

Center for Progressive Reforms, Mirshohid Aslanov, said: "The graduation of these 15 professionals represents much more than the completion of a training programme. They are the first generation of instructors who will carry the knowledge, standards, and practical experience gained at UDST back to Uzbekistan and help us build a new model of internationally aligned vocational education.

"Our ambition is to create a sustainable system that equips young people in Uzbekistan with high-quality technical skills, internationally recognised competencies, and real pathways to employment at home and in global labour markets. We are deeply grateful to the University of Doha for Science and Technology, its leadership, faculty, and instructors, as well as the Embassy of Uzbekistan in Qatar, for their commitment to this pioneering partnership."

Fire Station to host panel on creative development in Qatar

THE PENINSULA

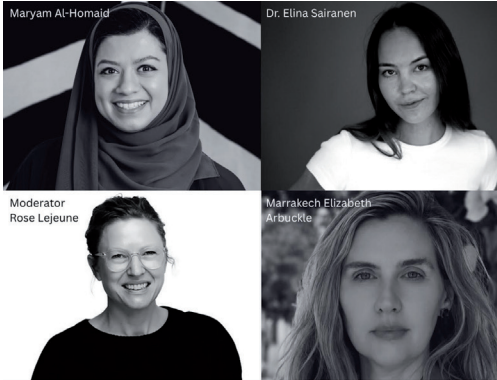
DOHA: Fire Station, in partnership with Qatar Creates Talks, will host Creative Infrastructures: Spaces for Experimentation on September 1, a public panel discussion considering how creative development programmes can support artists, designers and other practitioners as they build sustainable creative careers in Qatar.

Taking place from 6pm to 7:30pm at the Fire Station Auditorium, the discussion will look at how creative development programmes support artists and designers beyond the production of finished work, from providing mentorship and peer learning to creating opportunities for research, experimentation and collaboration across disciplines.

The talk is part of Qatar Museums' Fall/Winter 2026 season which features a programme of exhibitions, talks and cultural events across its museums and creative hubs.

Head of Academic and Community Programmes at Fire Station Rose Lejeune said: "While Artists Intensive Study Programme (AISP) is the starting point for this conversation, the bigger question is what artists and creatives actually need around them to experiment and grow. I'm looking forward to hearing from others working across education and the creative sector here in Doha, and thinking together about how these different spaces can support artists in ever better ways."

The panel features Museologist at Katara Art Centre Dr. Elina Sairanen; Acting Head of Public Programmes Section at M7 Marrakech Elizabeth Arbuckle; and Maryam Al-Homaid, Artist and Associate Professor at VCUarts Qatar, with Head of



Panelists for the upcoming "Creative Infrastructure Spaces for Experimentation" discussion.

Academic and Community Programmes at Fire Station Rose Lejeune, moderating the discussion.

Held during the open call for Fire Station's AISP, which closes on 5 September, the panel considers the broader significance of creative development initiatives within Qatar's evolving cultural landscape.

The panel will also address how continued investment in people, knowledge and creative exchange can contribute to a more connected, resilient and sustainable cultural ecosystem, while creating stronger opportunities for artists and practitioners to develop their work over the long term.

Creative Infrastructures: Spaces for Experimentation will be held in English and is open to audiences aged 18 and above. Interested attendees can register free of charge via Qatar Creates website. This panel is presented in partnership with Qatar Creates Talks.

CGB organises virtual workshop on knowledge transfer

THE PENINSULA

DOHA: The Institute of Public Administration at the Civil Service and Government Development Bureau (CGB) organised a virtual workshop titled "Knowledge Transfer Programme: From Learning to Application, and From Knowledge to Impact."

The workshop was held within a collaborative framework with the Institute of Public Administration in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and brought together a number of candidates from Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries, according to a post on CGB social media account.

During the session, organisers presented Qatar's experience in the Knowledge Transfer Programme. The initiative enables promising government employees to spend six months gaining professional experience in leading private-sector companies and Qatari institutions. The aim is to acquire advanced expertise and best practices and then apply them effectively in the government workplace.

The Knowledge Transfer Programme forms part of the CGB's broader efforts to build national capacity and strengthen

institutional performance across the public sector. It offers selected employees structured exposure to real-world projects, mentoring by specialists, and practical skills in areas such as financial management, technology and innovation, and strategic planning and public policy.

By placing participants in dynamic private-sector environments, the programme bridges the gap between theoretical learning and workplace application. Graduates return to their government entities equipped with new competencies, professional networks and insights that support continuous improvement in public services.

The virtual workshop highlighted how the Qatari model moves participants from acquiring knowledge to translating it into measurable impact. It also underscored the value of regional cooperation in sharing successful approaches to human capital development.

The event aligns with Qatar National Vision 2030, which places the development of a highly skilled national workforce at the centre of sustainable progress. Through initiatives like the Knowledge Transfer Programme, the Civil Service and

Government Development Bureau continues to invest in talent that can drive innovation, improve service delivery and adapt to evolving economic and technological demands.

Participants from across the GCC gained first-hand insights into the design, implementation and outcomes of Qatar's programme. Discussions focused on practical lessons that can be adapted to different national contexts while reinforcing the collective ambition of Gulf states to raise standards of public administration.

The workshop concluded with a reaffirmation of the importance of knowledge sharing as a tool for regional advancement. By combining local experience with collaborative learning, the Institute of Public Administration and its Saudi counterpart demonstrated how targeted professional development can produce lasting institutional benefits.

The Civil Service and Government Development Bureau remains committed to expanding such programmes and strengthening partnerships that enhance the capabilities of government employees across Qatar and the wider Gulf region.

Qatar Academy Sidra welcomes students to new campus with focus on innovation and wellbeing

THE PENINSULA

DOHA: Qatar Academy Sidra, part of Qatar Foundation's Pre-University Education, has welcomed students to its new building as the academic year begins, providing an integrated learning environment designed to support learning, innovation, and student wellbeing.

The new building can accommodate up to 1,800 students. It features 60 classrooms, a library, science laboratories, STEM and innovation spaces, art and design studios, music rooms, and an auditorium. It also includes a range of sports facilities, including a swimming pool, sports hall, and outdoor sports fields.

President of QF's Pre-University Education, Abeer Al Khalifa said: "The opening of QAS's new campus marks a significant milestone not only in the

school's journey, but also in QF PUE's vision for the future of learning."

"More than a new building, this campus represents our commitment to creating learning environments that inspire curiosity, nurture wellbeing, and equip students with the skills and mindsets needed to thrive in a rapidly changing world."

Highlighting how the new campus has been designed around the needs of students and educators, Al-Khalifa said: "Every aspect of the new campus has been thoughtfully designed to support innovative teaching and learning. Its modern, student-centred spaces provide greater opportunities for collaboration, creativity, exploration, and personalised learning, while fostering a strong sense of community and belonging."

"The campus reflects our



The new building accommodates up to 1,800 students, with advanced facilities for learning, sports, arts, and innovation

belief that the physical environment plays a vital role in enriching the educational experience and empowering students to reach their full potential."

For students, the new campus

provides greater opportunities to learn, explore, and engage both inside and beyond the classroom. Al Khalifa explained: "This new campus will transform the learning journey by providing

access to dynamic spaces that encourage inquiry, critical thinking, creativity, and engagement. It creates new possibilities for academic excellence, personal growth, and holistic development, ensuring that every learner is supported to succeed and flourish."

Reflecting on what the new campus represents for the wider PUE community, she concluded: "As we begin this exciting new chapter, we celebrate the dedication, perseverance, and shared vision that brought this project to life. We are proud of what this campus represents for the QAS community and for PUE as a whole,"

"It stands as a symbol of our ambition to continually reimagine education and create exceptional learning experiences that will benefit generations of students in Qatar and beyond."

Sustainability and resource efficiency have been embedded into the design of the new building, in alignment with the Global Sustainability Assessment System (GSAS). The building incorporates solutions aimed at reducing energy and water consumption and enhancing operational efficiency, supporting the Academy's commitment to creating a more sustainable and environmentally responsible learning environment.

Natural light also plays an important role in the building's design, with classrooms and facilities designed to maximise daylight and create a comfortable and healthy environment for students and teachers. This reflects a broader focus on how the physical learning environment can support student wellbeing, concentration, and engagement throughout the school day.

Run the Dome concludes first edition on high note

THE PENINSULA

DOHA: Aspire Zone Foundation successfully concluded the first edition of Run the Dome 2026, held on August 28 and 29 at Aspire Dome, with strong participation from community members of different ages and nationalities. The two-day sporting event brought together participants in an energetic atmosphere filled with excitement, challenge, fun, and a strong spirit of competition.

The event featured four main categories: Open Women, Open Men, Qatari Women, and Qatari Men. Each group consisted of 20 participants who competed over a 4.8-kilometre course covering five laps inside Aspire Dome. Each race lasted 30 minutes, followed by a 10-minute break between groups preparing participants for the next race.

The races continued throughout the day until 8pm, with winners in each category determined based on the fastest

recorded times. The event was designed as an inclusive community sporting experience, welcoming participants of different fitness levels and providing them with a unique opportunity to take on a sporting challenge inside one of the world's leading indoor sports facilities.

The Run the Dome event witnessed the notable presence of a number of prominent figures and sponsors, including Chairman of Qatar Tourism H E Saad bin Ali Al Kharji; Acting Director General of Aspetar Khalid Al Mawlawi; Deputy Director General of Aspire Academy Ali Salem Afifa; Acting Director General of Aspire Logistics Nasser Abdullah Al Hajri; CEO of Visit Qatar Abdulaziz Ali Al Mawlawi; CEO of Qatar Primary Materials Company Abdulaziz Ibrahim Al Tamimi; President of the Qatar Cycling and Triathlon Federation Eng. Abdulaziz Al Tamimi; Chief Corporate Services Officer at Aspire Academy Ali Sultan Fakhroo; Executive

Director of the Qatar Sports for All Federation Abdullah Al Dosari; Founder and CEO of Qomunication Dr. Nora AbuHleqa; Chief of Education & Students Affairs Officer Jassim Mohammed Al Jaber; Director of Communications and Public Relations at Qatar Rail Abdullah Ali Al Mawlawi; and Secretary-General of the Qatar Cycling and Triathlon Federation Abdullah Shaheen Al Kaabi.

Success was not limited to securing a podium finish, as completing the race and crossing the finish line was an achievement in itself. All participants who completed the race received commemorative medals in recognition of their participation in the inaugural edition of the event.

A total of QR60,000 in prizes was awarded across the four categories. The winner in each category received QR7,000, while the second-place finisher received QR5,000 and the third-place finisher received QR3,000.



Participants during the event.

Nicole McIlvany clinched the Open Women's title, finishing ahead of Jawaher Araki, who secured second place, while Malak Shadi Mohammed completed the podium in third position.

In the Open Men's category, Muhannad Khamis emerged as the champion, with Shaker Afli taking second place. Mohammed Amin Qasmi finished third after an impressive performance.

Nora Yousef Al-Mutawa claimed top honours in the Qatari Women's category, while Amina Al-Maarefi secured second place. Amal Khalifa Al-Harbi completed the top three with a third-place finish.

Meanwhile, Tamim Al-Kuwari was crowned champion in the Qatari Men's category. Abdullah Mohammed Al-Minhali finished second, while Khalid Faraj Al-Ali secured third place.



Men’s attire in Qatari traditions and culture

IN Qatar, men wear the thobe, a tailored, long-sleeved garment with a collar and buttons at the chest.

On their heads, they wear a white skullcap (taqiyah), covered by a headscarf that drapes over the head, ears, and back of the neck, known as the ghutra. Atop the ghutra, they place a circular cord made of black wool called the agal.

The colour of the thobe changes according to the seasons: in summer, it is white, whereas in winter, Qataris wear darker colours.

Among the most significant

Among the most significant traditional garments for Qatari men is the bisht. It is a loose, flowing cloak woven from wool that covers the shoulders and the body. It is open at the front and adorned with gold embroidery.

traditional garments for Qatari men is the bisht. It is a loose, flowing cloak woven from wool that covers the shoulders and

the body. It is open at the front and adorned with gold embroidery.

It is important to note that in Islam, men are strictly commanded to cover their 'awrah (the area of legal nudity between the navel and the knee) under all circumstances.

They are also expected to observe modesty and decency in their dress, adhere to local customs, and refrain from wearing clothing specific to women, as well as avoiding garments that carry provocative or suggestive connotations.



Mercy to the worlds (part 10): Trade and marriage

His work in trade (peace be upon him)

In Makkah, there was a Qurayshi noblewoman renowned for her chastity and purity: Lady Khadijah bint Khuwaylid (may Allah be pleased with her).

She was a widow merchant of great wealth and children. She used to send men with her capital to trade in exchange for a specific percentage of the profits.

Having heard of the Prophet's (peace be upon him) outstanding reputation and how he was called Al-Sadiq Al-Amin (the truthful, the trustworthy), she requested a meeting with him to offer him her capital to trade in the Levant, accompanied by her servant, Maysarah.

The Prophet (peace be upon him) set out and reached the Levant, where he bought and sold goods. He returned with an exceptionally large and unprecedented profit.

Her servant, Maysarah, recounted to her what he had witnessed of the Prophet's sublime character, excellent conduct, trustworthiness,

Over the following fifteen years, the Prophet (peace be upon him) was blessed with his sons: Al-Qasim, from whom he took his byname Abu al-Qasim, Abdullah, who was nicknamed Al-Tayyib (the good) and Al-Tahir (the pure). He was also blessed with four daughters, who in order of age were: Zainab, Ruqayyah, Umm Kulthum, and Fatima.

and honesty, having accompanied him closely throughout the entire journey.

Maysarah had witnessed a level of moral excellence and perfection he had never seen before, alongside his superb dealings with people.

Consequently, Lady Khadijah (may Allah be pleased with her) considered marrying him and reached out to the Prophet (peace be upon him) regarding this matter.

He discussed the proposal with his uncle, Abu Talib. Subsequently, Abu Talib, Hamzah, and his other uncles, along with Khadijah's uncle, the Banu Hashim, and Banu Asad ibn Abd al-Uzza ibn Abd Manaf (Khadijah's clan), gathered for the occasion.

The Prophet (peace be upon him) presented a dower of twenty camels.

The marriage contract was completed. Marriage contracts amongst Arab were based on acceptance of closest adult, dowry from groom having occasion. It was inherited from Abrahamic nontheistic faith and regulations.

Building the family

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age were: Zainab, Ruqayyah, Umm Kulthum, and Fatima.

Khadijah owned an Arab slave named Zayd ibn Harithah who was an atabian child abducted during his childhood and sold as a slave. Later, one of Lady Khadijah's (may Allah be pleased with her) relatives purchased him and presented him to her, who then gifted him to the Prophet (peace be upon him).

When Zayd's family eventually located him in Makkah and requested his return, the Prophet (peace be upon him) granted Zayd a free choice.

Deeply moved by the profound kindness he had experienced, Zayd chose to remain with the Prophet (peace be upon him) rather than return to his biological family.

Reassured of his son's bright future, Zayd's father left in peace after the Prophet (peace be upon him) stood in the Sacred Sanctuary and publicly adopted Zayd, integrating him into his lineage as Zayd ibn Muhammad.

The events will continue in the next episode.

Cultivating piety: The impact of raising children on mindfulness of Allah and moral discipline

The essence of Islamic upbringing (tarbiyah)

Instilling mindfulness of Allah, the Almighty, in children is the cornerstone of building moral discipline and a living conscience.

Islam aims to awaken an internal restraint that accompanies the child wherever they go, enabling them to practice uprightness (istiqamah) and virtue out of self-motivation and a deeply rooted creed ('aqidah) that remains unshaken by temptations and desires.

The pillars of mindfulness in the two revelations

The Noble Qur'an outlines an exquisite methodology in the commandments of Luqman to his son: "O my son, indeed if it should be the weight of a mustard seed and should be

within a rock or [anywhere] in the heavens or in the earth, Allah will bring it forth. Indeed, Allah is Subtle and Acquainted." (Luqman: 16).

This is designed to cultivate within the child a perpetual sense of bashfulness (haya') arising from Allah's all-encompassing knowledge of his innermost secrets.

Likewise, the Prophet (PBUH) instilled this concept in the hearts of young minds, as demonstrated in his advice to Ibn Abbas (may Allah be pleased with them both): "Be mindful of Allah, and He will protect you," as well as his guidance toward the supreme rank of Ihsan (spiritual excellence): "To worship Allah as though you see Him, and if you cannot see Him, then indeed He sees you."



Inspiring models from Islamic heritage

This upbringing was vividly

manifested in the stances of the righteous predecessors (Al-Salaf). An example of this is the

story of Abdullah ibn Umar (may Allah be pleased with them both) when he wished to test the honesty of a shepherd. He asked him to sell him a sheep and claim that a wolf had eaten it. The shepherd replied with a soul-stirring conviction: "Where, then, is Allah?!" Upon hearing this, Ibn Umar wept and bought the shepherd's freedom as a reward for his mindfulness of his Lord.

Similarly, the story of the milk seller's daughter during the caliphate of Umar ibn al-Khattab (may Allah be pleased with him), who refused to dilute milk with water, saying: "If Umar does not see us, the Lord of Umar sees us!" She thus embodied the highest forms of

self-monitoring and moral integrity.

Contemporary practical pathways to instil mindfulness

To implement this methodology practically in our contemporary homes, parents should follow three main pathways:

1. Providing a righteous role model (al-Qudwah al-Salihah) through the parents' own commitment to truthfulness and worship in both secret and public, allowing children to absorb these values naturally.
2. Employing purposeful storytelling and discussing scenarios of trustworthiness and reverence (khashyah), such as the story of the shepherd, to bring spiritual meanings closer to their minds.
3. Capitalising on daily life situations—particularly reminding children of mindfulness of Allah while using the internet and in classrooms—thereby building a robust self-immunity (hasanah dhathiyah) that protects them from digital and behavioural deviations.

Conclusion

Ultimately, instilling mindfulness of Allah in the hearts of children is the true safety valve for protecting them in this current era of technological openness, and for building a society governed by integrity and compassion.

COLLECT ALPHABETS and WIN

1- Collect the two letters every week.

2- Last letters will be published in the last edition of every month. A word will be created by combining all the letters.

3- Scan QR code and type the created word as a password to enter.

4- Answer the question to join the draw.

5- The winner will be announced in the first edition of each month.

The Signing Exchange of C icial Memorandum on Air Service Agreement Between The State of Qatar and Japan



Qatar, Japan sign agreement to amend air routes schedule

THE PENINSULA

DOHA: The State of Qatar and Japan have signed an exchange of notes regarding the amendment of the air services agreement, with the aim of introducing an annex to amend the air routes schedule.

The exchange of notes was signed by the officer in charge of managing the affairs of the General Civil Aviation

Authority, Mohammed bin Falah Al-Hajri and the Ambassador of Japan to Qatar, H E Naoto Hisajima.

This signing comes within the framework of strengthening bilateral cooperation frameworks in the field of civil aviation, and developing air services and connectivity between the State of Qatar and Japan, thereby contributing to supporting and enhancing bilateral relations between the two countries.

Awqaf Ministry launches ‘Meshka’ app offering over 50 digital services

FROM PAGE 1

The platform supports the ministry’s efforts to encourage Quran memorisation among children and young people while expanding access to Quranic initiatives through modern digital tools. The application provides access to services in the fields of religious preaching and guidance, including religious messages, information on licensed Islamic healers and Sharia-related inquiries.

These services are intended to facilitate access to reliable religious guidance and useful Islamic content while strengthening the ministry’s communication with the public through modern digital channels.

For Hajj and Umrah services, Meshka helps users with registration and application tracking, while also providing organisational instructions and relevant health and preventive guidance. The unified platform is intended to make it easier for prospective pilgrims to obtain the information and guidance they need and

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prepare for the performance of the religious rites.

The application operates through an integrated technical infrastructure linking various ministry systems, enabling accurate data flow and real-time information updates.

It also provides secure user accounts and high levels of protection for personal data, strengthening public confidence in the ministry’s digital services. The ministry said its digital transformation efforts focus not only on making services available online but also on improving user experience, data reliability, privacy and security. Meshka is designed as an expandable digital platform that can evolve according to users’ needs and technological developments. Future plans include greater integration with relevant government platforms and the use of artificial intelligence to enhance the user experience and provide more personalised and effective services.

The ministry said the launch reflects its commitment to developing a more accessible and reliable digital service ecosystem, improving public access to its services and supporting Qatar’s broader digital transformation agenda under Qatar National Vision 2030.

Safari launches 10, 20, 30 promotion from today

THE PENINSULA

DOHA: Safari, the leading hypermarket chain in Doha, has launched its highly popular 10, 20, 30 promotion which starts from August 31. This promotion is one of Safari’s most widely acclaimed and customer’s favorite.

Safari brings this 10, 20, 30 promotion to the public featuring a wide range of daily essential items, including fruits, vegetables, fish, meat, bakery items, hot food, cosmetics, household items, readymade garments, footwear, electronics, computer accessories, food grains, and textiles. In addition to thousands of products priced at QR10, QR20, and QR30, numerous items are also



available for QR15 and QR25.

Key highlights of the promotion include Lux Soap (120g x 6 pcs) for just QR10, Color House Dinner Set (12 pcs) for just QR20, and Lenovo Airpods for just QR30.

As part of the promotion, a vast array of delicious dishes are available in the Safari Bakery and Hot Food section. Along with South Indian, North

Indian, Western, Arabic, and Chinese flavors, exciting combo offers are also available.

Featured items include Chicken Biryani, Chicken Machboos, and Pizza, while the Fresh Food Deli section offers Roumy Cheese, Butter Block, Awafi Pizza Cheese, and Cheddar Cheese.

Furthermore, the Frozen section features a wide range of

juices, soft drinks, ice creams, chicken parts, chicken nuggets, milk, and dairy products for 10, 20, and QR30. The Grocery section is fully stocked with grains, snacks, and other essential food items.

In the Household section, a variety of multipurpose items are available. The Cosmetics department features top brands such as Enchanter, Dove,

Sebamed, Pantene, Lux, and Olay, alongside perfumes, body sprays, makeup sets, soaps, face washes, body lotions, and various health and beauty care products.

The Stationery section offers a vast selection of school and office items, including Faber-Castell and Mapped school kits, as well as various stationery sets. Beyond expectations, the Toys and Sports sections also showcase an impressive range of products available at QR10, QR20, and QR30.

The Garments and Readymade section presents a large, high-quality collection available for just QR10, QR20, and QR30, including menswear, ladies’ churidars, churidar materials, ladies’ denim jackets, kidswear,

footwear, ladies’ bags, and newborn baby items.

The Electronics category features an exciting variety of devices at heavily discounted prices, including emergency lights, trimmers, flashlights, headsets, smartwatches, and much more.

To mark the opening of Safari Hypermarket’s new outlets, the ‘Visit & Win’ promotion was launched and it is receiving good response. The promotion gives visitors to the Logistics Village and Al Sheehaniya outlets a chance to win one of two Chevrolet Captiva cars, with no purchase required.

The first draw of the promotion will be held on September 17 at the Safari outlet in Logistics Village.

Arab Book Award draws 835 nominations from 44 countries in fourth edition

DOHA: The Arab Book Award said it had received 835 nominations across the award’s two categories for its fourth edition in 2026, demonstrating the broadening scope of participation and the diversity of advanced Arab scholarly and intellectual output submitted for the award.

Launched by the State of Qatar in March 2023, the award is dedicated to books authored in Arabic and honors researchers, publishing houses, and institutions that contribute to and advance the Arab book industry.

Statistics for this year’s awards cycle show that the single-book category accounted for the largest share of all nominations, with 682, while the achievement category received 153. The latter included 94 individuals and 59 institutions, reflecting the breadth and diversity of participants in the category.

Linguistic, literary, and critical studies led all fields of



study, accounting for 33 percent of total nominations, followed by historical studies at 27 percent and Islamic studies and Sharia sciences at 19 percent. Social and philosophical studies accounted for 15 percent, while dictionaries, encyclopedias, and textual scholarship ranked last at 6 percent.

Executive Director of the Arab Book Award Dr. Naji Al Sharif said the outcomes of the fourth edition offer consequential indicators of the nature of Arab knowledge production and research interests, reflecting a growing presence of authors and researchers.

He affirmed that the

registration of 835 nominations underscores the mushrooming scope of engagement with the award and its growing presence as a platform that pays tribute to the Arabic book, as well as the scientific and intellectual efforts associated with it.

He underscored the award’s growing reach across countries worldwide, noting that it received submissions from 44 countries this year, up from last year. Egypt led by far with 145 submissions, followed by Morocco with 92, Saudi Arabia with 76, Qatar with 50, Algeria with 37, and Jordan with 32.

Professor Dr. Hanan Al Fayyad (pictured), Media Advisor for the Arab Book Award, said the significance of this year’s submissions lies not merely in their volume, but in their ability to provide a picture of trends in authorship and research across the Arab world.

She explained that the award’s growing body of submissions is an outgrowth of its



successive editions and helps track transformations in Arab knowledge production, while identifying works and scholarly efforts that could have a lasting impact on the advancement of Arab culture and scientific research.

Al Fayyad said the figures recorded in the current edition reflect the award’s expanding reach and the diversity of Arab scholarly output submitted for competition, noting that the breadth of submissions across different fields of knowledge

underscores the richness of Arab scientific production and the range of its research interests.

She said the award doesn’t merely seek to honor winning works but strives to enrich the Arab cultural and intellectual landscape with leading works that demonstrate their scholarly value after undergoing objective, rigorous, and comprehensive evaluation. This gives them an added distinction alongside their academic value and helps consolidate their presence in the cultural and intellectual sphere, she highlighted.

Al Fayyad affirmed that the award also seeks to enable scientific and academic institutions to capitalize on the body of nominated works and draw on the expertise of thinkers and scholars in the humanities and other fields of knowledge for cross-border Arab scientific and research projects that reflect the spirit and intellectual heritage of the Arab nation. — QNA

Qatar Philatelic Centre wins five medals at Asian Stamp Exhibition in Indonesia

DOHA: The Qatar Philatelic and Numismatic Center of the Ministry of Culture won several medals at the Asian Stamp Exhibition currently held in Bandung, Indonesia, under the umbrella of the Inter-Asia Philatelic Federation (FIAP), with participation from 32 countries.

Following evaluations by an elite panel of international jurors, the center achieved outstanding results across several exhibition categories. The entry “The First Regular Stamps of Qatar” won a gold medal (G), while “The Postal History of Kuwait” received a large gold medal (LV).

The entries “The Postal History of Oman,” “The History of Aden Stamps,” and “Detained Mail During World War II (USA and Switzerland)” also received gold medals (V). — QNA

Students urged to follow safety guidelines

THE PENINSULA

DOHA: The General Directorate of Traffic at the Ministry of Interior (MoI) has urged students and their families to follow essential safety guidelines while travelling to and from school, stressing that ensuring students’ safety is a shared responsibility.

The ministry’s reminder comes as students across Qatar return to classrooms for the 2026–2027 academic year, with increased movement of school buses and vehicles on roads during morning and afternoon peak hours.

The MoI called on students to remain seated in their designated seats throughout their journey and to wear seat belts whenever available. Students using school buses were also advised to wait until the bus comes to a complete stop before boarding or getting off.

VCUarts Qatar welcomes record student enrolment for new academic year

THE PENINSULA

DOHA: Virginia Commonwealth University School of the Arts in Qatar (VCUarts Qatar), a Qatar Foundation partner university, has welcomed new and returning students to campus for the start of the 2026–27 academic year, with record enrollment across several measures.

VCUarts Qatar has enrolled 376 undergraduate and graduate degree-seeking students this fall—the largest student body in the school’s history and an 8.35% increase over fall 2025. An additional 33 students from other Education City universities are taking courses at VCUarts Qatar through the cross-registration programme, bringing the total number of students studying at the university this fall to 409.

The university also welcomed a record 105 new students, a 7% increase over fall 2025.

“We are delighted to welcome our new and returning



VCUarts Qatar has enrolled 376 undergraduate and graduate degree-seeking students this fall—the largest student body in the school’s history and an 8.35% increase over fall 2025.

students to VCUarts Qatar,” said Dean Amir Berbić. “These record enrolment numbers reflect the growing interest in the distinctive education we offer and, more broadly, in the role that artists, designers and scholars can play in shaping the future of Qatar and the region. More importantly, they represent hundreds of individual

students bringing their own ideas, perspectives and ambitions to our community. We look forward to seeing where their creativity and hard work will lead.”

New students began their university experience with an orientation programme designed to introduce them to VCUarts Qatar’s academic

programmes, creative facilities, student services and wider campus community. The programme culminated in New Student Convocation, formally welcoming the incoming Class of 2030. The new academic year will bring opportunities for students to learn across disciplines, take part in research and creative practice, connect with

visiting artists, designers and scholars, and engage with VCUarts Qatar’s growing network of partners in Qatar and internationally. It will also mark an important milestone for the university, as the inaugural cohort of students in the BFA in Kinetic Imaging prepares to graduate in spring 2027.

VCUarts Qatar offers undergraduate programmes in Art History, Graphic Design, Interior Design, Kinetic Imaging, and Painting & Printmaking, as well as an MFA in Design. Through Education City’s cross-registration programme, students from partner universities can also enroll in selected courses at VCUarts Qatar, contributing to an active exchange of knowledge and perspectives across the multi-university community.

Hour and Hour concludes Back-to-School activities

THE PENINSULA

DOHA: The “Hour and Hour “ program concluded its “Back to School” activities, organised in collaboration with the Qatari National Commission for Education, Culture and Science at West Walk, under the slogan “With Knowledge and Work, We Build the Nation,” after four days packed with educational, cultural, sports, and recreational activities, amid large public attendance and active participation from a number of ministries, institutions, and educational, health, cultural, social, and sports entities.

Since its launch, the event witnessed distinguished official and public attendance, with the participation of a number of officials, directors, heads of sports federations, and representatives of participating entities and institutions, alongside families and students, reflecting the importance of the initiative and its success in attracting various segments of society.

The event was organized to celebrate the return of male and

Over four days, “Back to School” offered a diverse program targeting children, students, and families, including educational and creative workshops, cultural competitions, interactive activities, and artistic, sports, and entertainment performances.

female students to their school desks and to prepare them for the new academic year in an atmosphere combining benefit and enjoyment, reinforcing the values of knowledge, learning, work, and ambition through an integrated, interactive community experience.

The activities kicked off with an official opening ceremony on the main stage, attended by a number of senior officials, guests, partners, heads of sports federations, along with participating families and students.

The opening ceremony included a variety of segments

that reflected the event’s objectives and message, amid great interaction from children and families.

Over four days, “Back to School” offered a diverse program targeting children, students, and families, including educational and creative workshops, cultural competitions, interactive activities, and artistic, sports, and entertainment performances.

The event also dedicated a number of educational and awareness corners in cooperation with several official bodies and participating institutions, covering topics related to health, culture, education, sports, and society, offering visitors the opportunity to learn about the services and initiatives of participating entities in an interactive manner suitable for children and families.

The event also witnessed the participation of several sports federations through various sports displays and activities, contributing to promoting a culture of sports and physical activity among children and youth, and adding an



Officials attending a back-to school activity as part of the programme.

atmosphere of excitement and interaction throughout the event days.

CEO of the “Hour and Hour “ program Tamani Al-Yafei, affirmed that the “Back to School” event stemmed from the program’s belief in the importance of supporting students and families and celebrating the start of the academic

year in a unique way that combines education, entertainment, and community participation.

She stated that the event’s slogan, “With Knowledge and Work, We Build the Nation,” expresses the core message the program aims to convey to new generations, that knowledge, learning, and diligent work are fundamental pillars for building

the individual, society, and shaping the future.

Al-Yafei added: “We were delighted by the large attendance at the event, and by the participation of officials, directors, heads of sports federations, and various entities and institutions, alongside families and our sons and daughters.”

Sidra Medicine, Pearl International Hospital sign agreement

THE PENINSULA

DOHA: Sidra Medicine, a member of Qatar Foundation, and The Pearl International Hospital have signed an agreement to provide expectant parents with access to Sidra Medicine’s cord blood banking services.

The agreement will provide expectant parents the choice to store their baby’s umbilical cord blood with Sidra Medicine, as part of their maternity care journey with The Pearl International Hospital. Sidra Medicine will collect, process and store the samples at its specialised GMP facility, which houses Qatar’s only Cord Blood Bank.

Chief Research Officer at Sidra Medicine, Prof. Khalid Fakhro said, “This agreement expands access to an important innovative and specialized service for expectant parents in Qatar. By making clinical-grade cord blood and tissue banking services available to families receiving maternity



Chief Medical Officer at The Pearl International Hospital Dr. Cem Emir Guldogan and Chief Research Officer at Sidra Medicine, Prof. Khalid Fakhro at agreement signing event.

care at The Pearl International Hospital, we are providing them with the information and support they need to make informed decisions about preserving these valuable biological resources. It also reflects Sidra Medicine’s continued commitment to advancing specialised healthcare services for as many patients and families across the country.”

Chief Medical Officer at The Pearl International Hospital Dr. Cem Emir Guldogan expressed the hospital’s pride

in this significant achievement, highlighting the hospital’s role in providing advanced medical care to the community and reaffirming its continued commitment to enhancing high-quality healthcare services.

Dr. Guldogan said, “This agreement represents an important milestone in our journey to elevate healthcare standards in the State of Qatar. The Pearl International Hospital has been developed to offer

world-class medical expertise, innovative technologies, and an environment that promotes holistic well-being. Our commitment is to provide high-quality, compassionate care that aligns with international best practices while respecting the values of our community.”

The collection of the cord blood is painless and risk-free for both mother and baby and is performed after the cord is clamped and cut. It is a one-time collection opportunity, and not possible to harvest later in life.

Cord blood contains stem cells which are used in the treatment of a range of blood, immune, and genetic disorders with ongoing research to explore their potential in regenerative medicine for diseases like cerebral palsy, autism and type 1 diabetes. Registered families of the service can access the stem cells for the future treatment of certain diseases and conditions for their child as well as for extended family members.

Qatar Philharmonic Orchestra to kick off 2026-2027 season on September 6

DOHA: The Qatar Philharmonic Orchestra (QPO) will open its 2026-2027 season on September 6 with an exceptional concert featuring a distinguished performance of Antonin Dvorak’s Symphony No. 9 “From the New World”.

The composition will be conducted by maestro Elias Grandy and will feature acclaimed international pianist Joseph Moog, with the concert taking place at the Qatar National Convention Centre (QNCC).

The season-opening program features two masterpieces of the Romantic era.

The evening will begin with a performance of Johannes Brahms’ Piano Concerto No. 2, one of the most celebrated works in the classical piano repertoire, before concluding with Dvorak’s Symphony No. 9, one of the most cherished symphonic works, which was inspired by the composer’s experiences during his stay in the United States.

The opening concert heralds a new and eventful season that reflects QPO’s commitment to artistic excellence, the promotion of cultural dialogue, and the presentation of world-class musical experiences.

Throughout the season, audiences

will be treated to an awe-inspiring program featuring some of the world’s most renowned conductors and international soloists, alongside performances of major orchestral masterpieces and special concerts celebrating Qatar’s cultural partnerships with several countries, including Mexico and Canada.

QPO Executive Director Kurt Meister said the new season embodies its ongoing mission to bring exceptional music to audiences in Qatar while promoting cultural exchange and unlocking new artistic prospects. QPO is excited to welcome audiences back for a season that brings together timeless masterpieces, unique cultural celebrations, and unforgettable performances, Meister added.

Highlights of the season include a performance of Tchaikovsky’s Piano Concerto No. 1 and special concerts held as part of the Qatar-Mexico Year of Culture and Qatar-Canada Year of Culture, alongside the Qatar premiere of George Gershwin’s An American in Paris and a diverse selection of orchestral masterpieces by leading composers such as Brahms, Shostakovich, Stravinsky and Gershwin, among others. — **QNA**

QU College of Nursing welcomes new students at Fall 2026

THE PENINSULA

DOHA: Qatar University (QU) College of Nursing organised an orientation session for new students admitted in the Fall 2026 semester, with the aim of welcoming first-year students and congratulating them on beginning their academic journey, and introducing them to the academic requirements, services, and opportunities available to them, which contributed to facilitating their transition to university life and strengthening their integration into the College community.



Dr. Magda Al-Banna

ening their integration into the College community.

The session was attended by 56 new students admitted for Fall 2026, who learned about the College of Nursing and the Bachelor of Science in Nursing program, the study plan, and the requirements for transitioning from the General Nursing track to the Nursing specialisation, in addition to key academic policies, academic advising services, and the services provided by Student Affairs to support their university journey.

Dr. Magda Al-Banna, Dean of the College of Nursing at Qatar University, said: “The

joining of our new students to the College of Nursing marks the beginning of an important stage in their academic and professional journey. Nursing is a profession that combines science, clinical excellence, ethics, and compassion, and plays an essential role in advancing the health of individuals and communities. We are committed to supporting our students and equipping them with the knowledge, skills, and professional values that enable them to contribute effectively to the future of healthcare in the State of Qatar.”

Dr. Ghada Saif Al-Kuwari, Associate Dean for Student Affairs at the College of Nursing, said: “At the College of Nursing, we believe that student success begins with their first steps at the College. Therefore, we are committed to providing a supportive and integrated academic environment that helps them adapt to university life and equips them with the tools and skills needed for academic and professional success.

“We also work to strengthen their sense of belonging to the College and introduce them to the opportunities and services available, contributing to preparing nursing professionals capable of meeting the needs of the healthcare sector in the State of Qatar and supporting the human development goals of Qatar National Vision 2030.”

During the session, a College of Nursing student shared her academic and clinical experiences with the new students, along with key lessons and advice gained throughout her time at the College.

Killing of Palestinian children and teens by Israel surges in West Bank

RAMALLAH: Alia Al-Hallaq’s son Mohammed was nine when he was killed by an Israeli army bullet last October, but the Palestinian homemaker still speaks of herself as a mother of five, not four.

“I still haven’t accepted the idea of the loss. I often sit in the courtyard of the house and look at Mohammed’s grave below, and I cry while making sure that my children don’t see me,” she told *AFP*. She said Mohammed was killed after running away from soldiers patrolling their village of Al-Rihya, in the south of the occupied West Bank.

Hallaq’s uncle, also named Mohammed Hallaqa, told *AFP* that his nephew was killed by a stray bullet during a confrontation between the army patrol and a group of older youths.

The bullet travelled through Mohammed’s abdomen, according to emergency services.



Fahd Abou Haikal (left), a Palestinian man along with family members carrying the body of his seven-month-old baby Sam Fahd Abou Haikal, on a stretcher at a hospital in Hebron, in the Israeli-occupied West Bank, on June 6, 2026. (AFP)

“Mohammed’s killing was the end,” his mother said.

The Israeli military, contacted by *AFP* for comment on Mohammed’s death, said at the time that soldiers opened fire during an altercation while deployed in Al-Rihaya.

“Soldiers responded with fire toward the suspects in the rock-hurling. Hits were identified,” it said, using language it generally employs to say troops shot and hit someone. The killing of Palestinian children and teenagers by Israel has become increasingly common since the start of the war in Gaza.

B’Tselem, an Israeli rights group, reported 235 children and teenagers killed by Israeli forces in the West Bank since October 7, 2023 — when Hamas launched a massive attack on Israel from the Gaza Strip — through June 2026, including five killed by Israeli settlers.

The Palestinian Authority’s

Colonisation and Wall Resistance Commission, a Palestinian government institution, reported 250 such deaths over the same time period.

In the 17 years between 2005 and 2021, an average of roughly one Palestinian child or teenager was killed by Israeli forces every month, according to B’Tselem, a frequent but much lower rate. For the period since the October 7 attack, the average using B’Tselem figures is around seven killed per month. *AFP* spoke to 12 women who lost children since October 7, 2023. Although the details of each case differ, all spoke of family life stopped in its tracks and a lack of accountability.

Last year, of the 54 Palestinian children or teenagers killed according to B’Tselem, the youngest was just two years old, while the majority were aged between 14 and 17.

Teenagers are often killed when Israeli forces engage with Palestinian youths throwing rocks, whom they routinely label terrorists, and shoot them.

The Israeli military commander for the West Bank, Major General Avi Bluth, said in early 2026 that the army had killed 42 Palestinians for throwing stones in 2025, not specifying how many were minors.

In several other cases, usually involving younger children such as Mohammed, witnesses said the army had fired indiscriminately at Palestinians and killed children who were present.

One such casualty was seven-month-old Sam Abu Haikal, shot in the face by Israeli troops in the West Bank city of Hebron in June 2026. — **AFP**

Two Palestinians, including child, killed in Israeli strike in Gaza

JERUSALEM/GAZA: An Israeli airstrike killed at least two Palestinians, including a child, in Deir Al-Balah in central Gaza yesterday, Palestinian media reported, while Israel’s military said the attack targeted a Hamas fighter.

In a statement, the military identified the man as Hassam Osama Hussein Nasir, whom it said belonged to Hamas’ armed wing and had been planning attacks against Israeli troops. It did not comment on the reported death of the child.

Meanwhile, a senior official of the Palestinian National Liberation Movement (Fatah) urged the international community to take practical steps to halt Israeli violations in the Gaza Strip. Munzer al-Hayek, Fatah spokesman in Gaza, told Voice of Palestine radio that the spread of diseases, coupled with shortages of medicines and medical treatment, has turned daily life into a continuous struggle for residents in the strip.

He also urged the international community to take Israel to international courts and support accountability efforts for alleged violations and crimes against the Palestinian people.

According to Gaza’s health authorities, 1,318 Palestinians have been killed and 4,375 others injured in the Gaza Strip since the ceasefire between Israel and Hamas took effect in October 2025. — **XINHUA**

Missing toll from Nepal, China flood tops 3,000

BIDUR: Rescuers in Nepal and China battled through leg-sucking mud, as well as the threat of rising rivers and a newly formed lake, yesterday to search for thousands missing after a deadly wall of water and debris swept through the Himalayas, engulfing entire villages.

Latest figures from both countries put the number of missing at 3,048, including hundreds of foreigners. There were 797 confirmed deaths, with reports of some bodies possibly swept downstream as far away as India.

Nepal said it had begun the grim task of burying some of the hundreds of bodies yesterday, after first taking DNA samples so that families could later reclaim them and perform traditional funeral rites once they had been identified.

The disaster, which struck the China-Nepal border Wednesday morning, was caused by a glacial collapse, sending a wall of water and debris downstream, the US Geological Survey said.

Nepali army troops and engineers also drilled through debris yesterday towards hydropower workers believed trapped in a tunnel at the Trishuli 3A hydroelectric site in the Himalayan river valley after

Latest figures from both countries put the number of missing at 3,048, including hundreds of foreigners. There were 797 confirmed deaths, with reports of some bodies possibly swept downstream as far away as India.

they successfully inserted a pipe into the passage.

They have “started sending air through the small opening”, Nepali Home Minister Sudan Gurung said in a statement.

Overnight rain and rising river waters hampered efforts earlier yesterday, filling the excavation area with water before conditions eased, the Nepal army said.

Nepal’s disaster authority listed 933 hydropower workers among the missing in an area home to vast energy infrastructure projects.

Chinese rescuers near the Tibet border port that was hit by a deadly mudslide were “moved to a safe location” yesterday after a new lake was formed by a landslide, state media reported.

China’s state news agency

Xinhua reported yesterday that experts had said “a glacier on the southern slope of Lirung Peak in Nepal” fractured, triggering an ice-rock avalanche.

The torrent plummeted rapidly, forming a massive debris flow that travelled more than 20 kilometres (12 miles) before crashing into Gyirong Port.

“The sudden glacial collapse and flash flood is a devastating reminder of how fragile these mountain environments can be,” UN climate chief Simon Stiell said in a statement.

Survivors face an agonising wait to learn the fate of missing relatives and the prospect of rebuilding their lives from nothing. “All the settlements near the river were swept away,” resident Buddhi Ram Dangol told *AFP* in Nepal’s Nuwakot district.

“There is nothing left.”

Worried relatives crowded around lists of rescued people pasted on a wall at an army base serving as a rescue hub in the district capital Bidur.

Nepal’s disaster authority said yesterday 592 foreigners, including trekkers and Hindu pilgrims to Tibet’s sacred Mount Kailash, were among the missing. The Isha Foundation, led by Indian guru Sadhguru,



Army personnel prepare to conduct a search and rescue operation for flood victims along the Narayani river at Bharatpur in Nepal’s Chitwan district yesterday. (AFP)

said in an Instagram post on Saturday that 80 members had been on a group trip in the area.

“At this time, there seems to be no encouraging indications of survivors at the immigration office area,” it said.

The United States and Canada said they would provide \$3.6m each in humanitarian aid to Nepal. The UK has offered \$6.8m, while the UN released \$2.5m in emergency funding, and aid pledges were made by the European Union, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and others.

Nepal’s economy is already under pressure, with limited

resources to respond to a disaster of this scale. Foreign Minister Shisir Khanal said the reconstruction bill could run into “billions of dollars”.

He appealed for specialised assistance, including heavy-lift drones and technology to help locate people who are trapped.

Malaysia said it would send search-and-rescue specialists to assist. Khanal also called for forensic testing kits to identify corpses and freezer units to store them, saying bodies that have been in water could decompose at a faster rate.

The deluge of ice and mud caused huge lakes, and one of those formations has become a

risk for further floods.

The Chinese and Nepali foreign ministers spoke on Saturday and discussed sharing satellite and hydrological data, both sides said.

In Tibet, where Chinese authorities are the only source of information, rescue operations were paused at the hardest-hit area of Gyirong because of the risk of more flooding from a newly formed lake. However, state broadcaster CCTV said late on Saturday that the lake was “discharging naturally” and had been “essentially drained”, citing China’s ministry of water resources. — *AFP*

Palestinians protest in Gaza to seek information on fate of missing persons

GAZA: Dozens of Palestinians held a protest in Gaza City yesterday to demand information about the fate of people who have been missing since the outbreak of the conflict between Hamas and Israel on Oct. 7, 2023.

The protest, organized by the Palestinian NGO Network outside the International Committee of the Red Cross headquarters in western Gaza City, coincided with the International Day of the Disappeared on Aug. 30. Participants held photos of missing people and banners

reading, “The Missing Stories Awaiting the Truth.”

Mohammed Saleh, director of the network, said the issue of missing persons was “not merely a matter of statistics,” but involved the names, dreams and stories of families seeking truth and justice.

Speaking at the protest, Saleh said the network had documented more than 11,200 registered missing persons, adding the actual number was believed to be higher.

He called for the establishment of an independent and

transparent mechanism to search for missing persons, a unified national database, and greater support for forensic medicine and specialized laboratories to identify human remains.

Separately, Palestinian groups yesterday condemned Israeli National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir’s visit to the women’s section of Damon Prison, during which he filmed female Palestinian prisoners and posted a video of the visit on his X account.

The Palestinian Prisoners’

Club, a non-governmental organization, said in a statement that Ben-Gvir’s visit and filming of prisoners reflect a systematic policy of targeting Palestinian detainees and exploiting their suffering for political propaganda.

In the 1-minute-44-second video, an unidentified Palestinian female prisoner described detention conditions, saying they had gone three days without showers, lacked medical treatment, and wore unclean clothes. Ben-Gvir responded through a translator, saying, “The

good conditions that used to exist in the prisons are over.”

The Islamic Jihad Movement said in a statement that the Israeli government bore full responsibility for the safety of the female prisoners, urging international institutions to act to end violations against them.

Hamas, in a separate statement, warned against turning prisons into arenas for “violations, humiliation, threats, torture, and murder,” and called for effective action to support Palestinian prisoners. — *XINHUA*

120 settlers storm into Al-Aqsa Mosque under occupation police protection

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM: Palestinian sources stated yesterday that 120 settlers marched into the Al-Aqsa Mosque compound while flanked by Israeli occupation police.

The sources added that they entered through the Dung Gate and provocatively conducted rounds and Talmudic rituals across the compound.

This comes in the wake of heightened Israeli security measures aimed at precluding worshipers from accessing the compound, especially on Fridays and during religious holidays.

The occupation forces are extensively mustered on the streets of Jerusalem, as well as around the perimeter of the Old City and the Al-Aqsa Mosque. The mosque continues to come under repeated raids by settlers under the protection of Israeli occupation forces, amid persistent abuses against Palestinians and their holy sites. — *QNA*

Nigeria seizes 47,000 captagon pills

LAGOS: Nigeria’s anti-drug agency said yesterday it had intercepted a shipment of captagon, a stimulant dubbed the “jihadi drug”, bound for the country’s insurgency-hit north, where jihadist violence has raged for more than 17 years.

A suspect, Akinbile Kazeem Aikins, brought in 47,200 captagon pills and “millions of opioids” concealed in soap from Ghana, National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) spokesman Femi Babafemi said in a statement.

“After his arrest, Akinbile claimed he was meant to deliver the consignment in the North,” Babafemi said. — *AFP*



World in brief

Zambia’s opposition leader charged with treason

LUSAKA: Zambia’s detained opposition leader Brian Mundubile has been charged with treason, his lawyer said yesterday, deepening concerns over the government’s treatment of political dissent. Mundubile, who finished second to President Hakainde Hichilema in the August 13 election, was taken into custody on Thursday after more than two weeks in hiding.

Police accuse him of posing a national security threat after security forces raided his home a day after the vote and said they found rifles and other military equipment. — *AFP*

Iraq sentences US-sanctioned oil official to prison

BAGHDAD: Iraq sentenced a US-sanctioned oil official to seven years in prison after he was arrested as part of a government-led anti-corruption campaign, the country’s anti-graft body said yesterday.

Deputy oil minister for distribution affairs Ali al-Bahadli is among dozens of officials who were detained in June during anti-graft raids that took place in several areas, mostly in Baghdad’s fortified Green Zone.

The Commission of Integrity said in a statement that an anti-corruption court sentenced Bahadli to seven years in prison for “illicit gains”. The ruling requires Bahadli to return to the state an amount equivalent to more than \$20m in ill-gotten gains, in addition to paying a fine of the same amount. — *AFP*

North Korea defence minister dismissed

SEOUL: North Korea’s defence minister has been dismissed as part of a reshuffle of the country’s military leadership, state media reported yesterday. The “structural reorganization plans” were decided during a meeting on Saturday led by Kim Jong Un, the Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) said.

No Kwang Chol was not only dismissed as defence minister but also demoted in the ruling party leadership to “first vice-director of the Munitions Industry Department,” KCNA said.

Kim Song Gi, director of the General Military Bureau of the Korean People’s Army, was named as the new defence minister. — *AFP*

Niamey back to normal after soldier mutiny

ABIDJAN: Life returned to normal in Niger’s capital Niamey yesterday, after the military regime and its Russian paramilitary partners put down a mutiny by soldiers.

Intense fighting took place overnight from Friday to Saturday, with the army and its Russian Africa Corps allies managing to take back control late in the day.

Mutineers notably tried to storm the presidential compound. Several were killed, according to a security source, while others were arrested.

Television pictures showed soldiers surrendering. Niger has been led by General Abdourahmane Tiani since a coup in July 2023. He has moved the country closer to Russia and away from Western partners, notably former colonial power France. — *AFP*

Guinea-Bissau votes in referendum on giving president more powers

BISSAU: Voters in military-run Guinea-Bissau cast their ballots yesterday in a referendum that could give the president more powers ahead of a general election meant to restore civilian rule later this year.

Security was stepped up at strategic points in the capital, with members of the national guard and the police stationed at key locations.

Voting closes at 1700 GMT, with the first provisional results due from Tuesday.

The referendum came less than 10 months after a coup in which the military seized power in the impoverished

Portuguese-speaking west African country. Shopkeeper Halimatou Traore told AFP she hoped the new constitution would bring positive changes.

“The successive crises the country has gone through have had a very negative impact on my earnings. If everything goes well, Guinea-Bissau will set off on new paths,” she said as she waited to vote.

Braima Seidy, 76, a veteran of the war of independence against Portugal, emerged smiling from the polling booth.

“I truly believe that this new Constitution can bring stability to the country,” he told AFP.



A voter hands his voting card to an official from the National Electoral Commission (CNE) at a polling station during Guinea-Bissau’s constitutional referendum in Bissau, on August 30 2026. (AFP)

Libya’s rival groups sign UN-backed election agreement

TRIPOLI: Representatives of Libya’s rival political groups signed yesterday a UN-backed agreement that was presented as a step towards holding much-delayed national elections in the deeply divided country.

The two sides signed the text, a result of talks held in recent months in Rome and Tunis, in the capital Tripoli at the headquarters of the UN Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL), with its chief Hanna

Tetteh in attendance.

The agreement provides for legislative and presidential elections to be organised within 24 months -- though on the condition that they be held “under a single executive authority and unified national institutions”, which is not yet the case.

The African country has struggled to recover from the chaos that followed the 2011 NATO-backed uprising that toppled longtime ruler Muammar Gaddafi.

Two governments are currently vying for power: the UN-recognised administration in Tripoli led by Prime Minister Abdulhamid Dbeibah, and a rival in the east backed by military commander Khalifa Haftar. Dbeibah described the agreement, which notably covers the restructuring of the High National Electoral Commission, as an “important step”.

Television channel al-Masara reported that Haftar welcomed progress “in addressing issues

that have remained unresolved for years and that have contributed to hindering the will of Libyans to move forward towards holding presidential and legislative elections”.

Tetteh also hailed the agreement while calling for it to be translated into concrete action. Presidential elections aiming to unify the fractured country were scheduled for late 2021, but were postponed indefinitely over disputes.

— *AFP*

Media Forum participants back regular global dialogue platform in address to Uzbek President

MOHAMMED OSMAN ALI
THE PENINSULA
IN TASHKENT, UZBEKISTAN

PARTICIPANTS of the International Media Forum, “Islamic Civilization: A New Perspective, New Discoveries,” have adopted an address to Uzbekistan President Shavkat Mirziyoyev, supporting closer international media cooperation and an initiative to make the forum a regular platform for dialogue among journalists and media organisations.

The address was adopted during the final session of the forum on Wednesday (August 26) in Tashkent, alongside other concluding documents of the event. The announcement was made at the formal closing ceremony of the forum’s main business programme at the Center for Islamic Civilization in Uzbekistan.

The text of the address was read by Uktam Usmonov, spokesperson for the Center for Islamic Civilization. Representing media leaders, journalists, experts and information-sector specialists from nearly 50 countries, the participants congratulated President Mirziyoyev and the people of Uzbekistan on the 35th anniversary of the country’s

The participants described the forum as an open and productive platform that had enabled media professionals from different countries to exchange views on changes in the global information landscape, emerging media technologies, artificial intelligence, reliable and objective reporting, journalistic responsibility and prospects for international cooperation.

independence and expressed appreciation for the hospitality extended to international delegates.

The participants described the forum as an open and productive platform that had enabled media professionals from different countries to exchange views on changes in the global information landscape, emerging media technologies, artificial intelligence, reliable and objective reporting, journalistic responsibility and prospects for international cooperation.

They said the discussions went beyond an exchange of ideas and helped establish new professional contacts and opportunities for practical collaboration.

A key proposal contained in the address was to develop the International Media Forum into a regular international platform bringing together journalists,

media organisations and experts. “We support initiatives aimed at developing the International Media Forum into a regular platform for dialogue and cooperation, expanding joint projects among journalists and media organisations, and promoting collaborative coverage of history, culture, science and contemporary development,” the participants said.

The address also stressed the growing responsibility of journalism as digital technologies, social networks and artificial intelligence reshape the international information environment.

The participants said objective, responsible and reliable journalism remained essential not only for informing the public but also for strengthening mutual understanding, supporting peace and stability, and promoting dialogue between

cultures and societies.

The forum’s location at the Center for Islamic Civilization was also highlighted in the address, with participants describing the institution as a platform for presenting the scientific, intellectual and cultural heritage of Uzbekistan and Central Asia to international audiences.

They pointed to the continuing relevance of scholars



and thinkers associated with the region, including Muhammad al-Khwarizmi, Abu Ali ibn Sina, Abu Rayhan al-Biruni, Imam al-Bukhari, Imam al-Tirmidhi and Mirzo Ulugbek, and emphasised the role of contemporary media in bringing their scientific and intellectual legacy to a wider global audience.

Regional cooperation was another theme of the address.



Spokesperson for the Center for Islamic Civilization Uktam Usmonov speaking to the audience during the closing ceremony of the event.

Participants welcomed Uzbekistan’s efforts to strengthen good-neighbourly relations and mutually beneficial cooperation among Central Asian countries, while emphasising the role of professional journalism and international media exchanges in building trust and understanding between nations.

The forum brought together around 300 representatives of the international media and expert community from nearly 50 countries. Its programme included plenary sessions, international discussions and presentations on historical and cultural heritage, modern media formats, documentary filmmaking, publishing, digital projects and the use of artificial intelligence.

Masterclasses and creative meetings were also organised at higher education institutions in Tashkent, bringing together students and local media professionals with representatives

of international broadcasters, news agencies, publishing houses and the film industry.

Representatives from international news agencies, publishing houses and other media organisations participated in the wider programme, alongside filmmakers, journalists and media experts from a range of countries. The forum also resulted in new joint projects and the signing of agreements, memorandums of understanding and other cooperation documents. In their concluding address, participants said the forum in Tashkent and Samarkand could provide a foundation for new professional relationships, joint media projects and long-term international cooperation.

They pledged to translate the ideas discussed during the event into practical initiatives and to strengthen cooperation between Uzbekistan and the international media community.

Iceland votes ‘No’ to resuming EU talks

REYKJAVIK: Iceland voted ‘No’ to resuming membership negotiations with the European Union, final referendum results showed yesterday, dealing a blow to Brussels which had been keen to welcome a new wealthy member.

In a vote held Saturday, 52.8 percent of Icelanders rejected the resumption of EU entry talks suspended 13 years ago, while 47.2 percent voted ‘Yes’, according to the official tally published by RUV, the public broadcaster.

Social Democratic Prime Minister Kristrun Frostadottir, (pictured) who favoured a ‘Yes,’ stressed that she didn’t “see this as a setback.” “I see this as a victory for democracy,” she told a press conference, pointing to a voter turnout of over 80 percent.

“I want to make it absolutely clear, this government is not going forward with the accession talks this term,” she stressed.

This means any discussions of Icelandic accession are frozen at least until 2028 an apparent disappointment to Brussels, which



had appeared willing to compromise on thorny issues to facilitate Iceland’s accession.

The country of just under 400,000 people applied to join the EU in the wake of a 2009 financial crisis that devastated its economy.

Membership talks were then suspended in 2013 when a eurosceptic government came to power. The island is already closely linked to the EU as a member of the EEA and the free-movement Schengen zone,

ties which will remain unchanged.

The referendum result was non-binding but the government had vowed to respect it.

Debates ahead of the vote had mainly revolved around domestic and economic issues, though the war in Ukraine and US President Donald Trump’s ambitions for neighbouring Greenland which he has mixed up with Iceland on several occasions also featured.

The campaign had “lifted discussions about the EU, about Iceland’s place in the world, about our general geopolitical situation and status, to a higher level”, Frostadottir said on Saturday after she cast her ballot.

Political analysts said it was unlikely the government would resign in the event of a ‘No’ victory, though it could emerge weakened by the rejection.

The campaign divided Iceland down the middle. According to RUV, voter turnout was 82.5 percent, the highest participation in any Icelandic vote since April 2009 parliamentary elections during its crippling financial crisis. — **AFP**

Russia says preparing ‘massive strikes’ on Ukraine’s energy sector

MOSCOW: Russia’s defence ministry yesterday said it was gearing up for large-scale attacks on Ukraine’s energy infrastructure in a tit-for-tat response to strikes by Kyiv.

“Russian forces have begun preparations for massive strikes against facilities in Ukraine’s energy sector in response to the ongoing attacks by the Kyiv regime on civilian infrastructure and on Russia’s oil and energy complex,” it said on Telegram.

Last winter, Moscow repeatedly hit Ukrainian power plants, devastating the country’s energy sector and plunging millions of people into cold and darkness in sub-zero temperatures. Both sides have for several months escalated long-range strikes,

targeting infrastructure such as warehouses, businesses, oil and port facilities, as well as ships, increasing civilian casualties.

Yesterday, the Russian army claimed to have struck a plant in Kyiv producing asbestos and cement whose warehouses, it said, were used to store explosives, as well as a manufacturer of drones and munitions.

On Saturday, a Russian strike on an ammunition depot in the suburbs of the Ukrainian capital triggered a huge explosion and killed at least 37 people.

Ukraine for its part attacked an oil refinery with drones in northwestern Russia, causing a fire, according to the local authorities. — **AFP**

Venezuela says retains ‘sovereignty’ in US oil deal

CARACAS: Interim leader Delcy Rodriguez assured the public Saturday that Venezuela retains control of its oil under a new agreement that allows the United States significant access to it.

“One thing must be absolutely clear: Venezuela retains ownership and sovereignty over its resources,” Rodriguez said in a speech broadcast on state television, nearly nine months after her predecessor Nicolas Maduro was ousted by the US military.

Caracas says the deal \$100 billion in private investment inspiring the activity in a country with the world’s proven largest OIL reserves. On Friday, President Donald Trump announced that the United States would have control over 65 billion barrels from Venezuela’s oil reserves, which he called “the largest oil deal in history.” — **AFP**

Manhunt in Switzerland after fatal shooting

GENEVA: One person was killed and five others were wounded, some of them seriously, in a shooting at a party in northern Switzerland, local police said on yesterday.

“The search for the perpetrators, whose identities are currently unknown, is under way,” they said on X, adding that the motives and exact circumstances were not yet known.

Police launched what they called a “large-scale response” to find the perpetrators after the incident in Aarau, north of Zurich.

An **AFP** journalist saw armed officers deployed on the highway up to 30 kilometres (18 miles) from the site of the shooting.

Some 3,500 people attended the annual techno party between 3.p.m on Saturday and 2.am yesterday.

Police spokeswoman Vanessa Rumpold was quoted

as telling the newspaper that the shooting happened at the racecourse where the event was held.

“Several shots were fired within a large group of people,” she added.

Witnesses told **Blick** that shots were fired at about 2.30am while the party was still going on and that many people took refuge in a nearby gymnasium. Partygoers at first thought the shots were fireworks.

One told the newspaper there was a “burst of gunfire”.

A local resident in Aarau posted a video on social media showing deserted streets and what sounded like several gunshots in the background.

Media reports said an army helicopter was deployed in the cantonal capital, Aargau, as well as numerous police officers, rescue workers and medical teams. — **AFP**



World in brief

Funeral of Norway’s late King Harald set for Sept 9

OSLO: The funeral for Norway’s late King Harald, who died aged 89 on August 28, will be held on September 9, the royal palace announced yesterday.

“The funeral ceremony for King Harald V will take place in Oslo Cathedral on Wednesday, September 9 at 1.p.m,” it said in a statement. — **AFP**

France’s ex-PM Edouard Philippe calls for new party

FRANCE: French presidential hopeful Edouard Philippe said yesterday he wanted to bring together the centre and the right and called for the creation of a new political party, as moderates seek to prevent opposition figurehead Marine Le Pen from coming to power.

Seeking to energise his supporters in the northern town of Tourcoing, Philippe, the former prime minister, said he wanted to create a new party or an alliance of parties ahead of parliamentary elections expected to follow next spring’s presidential vote.

With less than eight months until the April-May presidential election, Le Pen, 58, is the front-runner in the polls.

“It is about building the governing pact, or the new party, or the new confederation of parties, that will enable all those who want to unite their efforts in the service of the country to govern together,” said the leader of the Horizons party.

“This will involve fielding a single candidate in each constituency,” Philippe, 55, said. — **AFP**

Death toll from Russia strike on Ukraine arms depot rises to 38

KYIV: The death toll from a Russian strike on an arms depot near Kyiv has risen to 38, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said yesterday.

The strike on the Ukrainian military depot storing ammunition, drones and explosives triggered a huge explosion and fire, and secondary detonations that sent flames shooting into the surrounding area.

Emergency services in the town of Myla have managed to put out most of the fires and bomb disposal teams are working to clear the site, Zelensky wrote on Telegram.

He gave an updated toll of 38 dead, 20 injured, and four missing and said “the extent of contamination in the area is significant”.

The attack was the second to hit a munitions depot near Kyiv in less than two months. — **AFP**

Ecuador declares emergency over El Nino

QUITO: Ecuador became the latest Latin American country to declare an emergency over the El Nino climate phenomenon on Saturday, which could be strongest on record, officials said.

This year’s El Nino is already wreaking havoc in Central America, which is in the throes of a severe drought, and in Indonesia, where it is exacerbating wildfires.

Scientists predict the current occurrence will reach its peak by the end of the year and cause record global heat in 2027.

Ecuador’s Ministry of Risk Management “declared a red alert throughout the country in

response to the El Nino episode.” The alert activates emergency committees tasked with coordinating preventive evacuations and other measures.

El Nino causes surface temperatures in the central and eastern equatorial Pacific Ocean to rise, altering wind patterns, pressure, and precipitation, and disrupting fishing and bird migrations.

Ecuador is also expecting droughts and wildfires in its Amazon region, in the east of the country. Panama, Honduras and El Salvador have already declared emergencies over El Nino. — **AFP**

Motorcyclists show support for residents of Ceuta

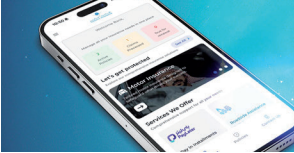
Motorcycle enthusiasts gathered in Ceuta yesterday, for a rally expressing solidarity with local residents amid continuing political and security tensions. Ceuta has remained a sensitive issue for Spain and its European Union partners following a major influx of migrants from Morocco in late July, 2026. (AFP)



Austria sees record number of heat-related deaths in June and July

VIENNA: Austria saw its highest-ever recorded number of heat-related deaths this June and July, the country’s health agency said yesterday, as Europe reels from a summer of brutal heatwaves.

The AGES agency said those two months saw 646 heat-related deaths, as compared to the previous high of 570 in June and July 2024. Austria, like much of the rest of the continent, has seen records tumble in this summer’s heatwaves and drought. — **AFP**



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 PRAYER TIMINGS	FAJR 3:54AM	ASR 3:05PM
	SUNRISE 5:14AM	MAGHRIB 5:56PM
	DHUHR 11:35AM	ISHA 7:26PM

WEATHER TODAY

26°C

47°C

MinimumMaximum

Hot to very hot daytime
with some clouds at times

“NASA’s Nancy Grace Roman telescope take about three months to reach its distant orbit, 1 million miles out from Earth in the direction of Mars. NASA hopes the first images could come at the beginning of 2027.”

NASA’s newest telescope blasts off to answer universe’s big questions

WASHINGTON: NASA’s Nancy Grace Roman telescope blasted off from near Cape Canaveral, Florida, yesterday, sending a \$4.3bn project into space with the hope of answering some of the most profound questions in the universe. It was NASA’s most ambitious telescope launch since the James Webb Space Telescope, which took off from Earth in 2021 after years of delays.

But in contrast to its predecessor, Roman ran relatively on budget and ahead of schedule, even after funding pressures and the pandemic threatened to throw a wrench in the project.

Named for NASA’s first chief astronomer, the Roman is a survey telescope, designed to look far and wide into cosmic time and the universe. Its field of view is big — about 100 times that of the Hubble Space Telescope. Among other observations, scientists hope it will help shed light on the unexplained force called dark energy that is responsible for the universe’s accelerating expansion and its ultimate fate.

At the launch, the major stages were all “nominal,” as NASA’s announcers put it — agency-speak for going as planned. Down at the Kennedy Space Center, scientists, engineers and other space enthusiasts gathered on a partly sunny morning to watch a SpaceX rocket rumble off the launchpad, carrying the telescope. It’ll take about three months to reach its distant orbit, 1 million miles out from Earth in the direction of Mars. (Hubble lives in a low Earth orbit about 350 miles up.) NASA hopes the first images could come at the beginning of 2027. Roman will look for a phenomenon called

The telescope will also hunt for traces of exoplanets, distant worlds that live outside our solar system.

cosmological redshift. As the universe expands, light wavelengths are stretched out as they travel long distances. (The same does not happen to objects with mass, like galaxies, because they’re being held together by gravity.) The longer the distance, the greater the stretching, which corresponds to the red and infrared end of the light spectrum.

Redshift carries important information when looking at distant cosmic objects. Light isn’t instantaneous; it has a finite speed, so the rays from a star in the sky visible today from Earth might have been emitted millions of years ago. When looking at the redshift of a galaxy or an exploding star even farther from Earth, Roman’s crisp infrared view should help scientists discern how far away it is — in effect dating how far back the telescope is peering in time.

“We will expect exquisite dark-energy measurements from Roman,” said Yun Wang, a researcher at the Infrared Processing and Analysis Center from the California Institute of Technology who worked on Roman and two of its predecessor projects. The telescope will also hunt for traces of exoplanets, distant worlds that live outside our solar system. There are only about 6,500 known exoplanets, according to NASA’s data. But Roman could help spot as many as



A SpaceX Falcon Heavy rocket carrying the Nancy Grace Roman space telescope lifts off from Launch Complex 39A at the Kennedy Space Center in Florida yesterday. (AFP)

100,000 new ones by picking up on faint signals, like a blip in a star’s brightness as a planet passes in front of it. Scientists hope its wide field of view will also pick up on a rare event called microlensing that they hope will indicate the existence of small planets like Earth — maybe even ones that are potentially habitable. — **THE WASHINGTON POST**

Anthropic launches new standard to link AI to scientific, industrial equipment

WASHINGTON: Anthropic, the AI lab behind Claude AI, has announced the launch of a research version of the Model Hardware Standard, which enables AI agents to communicate with scientific and industrial equipment.

The new standard is not limited to Claude and can be used with different AI models. Anthropic said that laboratories and companies using Claude have participated in its initial trials.

According to the company, the system can coordinate multiple devices simultaneously, including microscopes, liquid-handling equipment, lasers and robotic arms, to perform tasks ranging from drug-discovery experiments to the calibration of equipment used in quantum computing.

The new standard provides a unified way to inform an AI agent about each device’s capabilities, operating limits and executable commands. A device must have a programmable interface to be integrated into the system.

Anthropic hopes standard could pave the way for laboratories that operate for longer periods with greater levels of automation, allowing researchers to define the scientific objective while AI coordinates the equipment, monitors data and handles certain equipment failures. — **QNA**

AI as good as humans at predicting breast cancer outcomes: Studies

MELBOURNE: Artificial intelligence (AI) models are as good as human pathologists at a task that helps predict outcomes for patients with breast cancer, two Australian-led studies have found.

The studies, published in The Lancet Oncology, conclude that AI models that count tumour-infiltrating lymphocytes (TILs) in samples of breast tissue

should be more widely used “particularly where routine or widespread pathologist assessment is unavailable,” according to a recent statement by Australia’s Peter MacCallum Cancer Center (Peter Mac).

TILs are immune cells that can be counted, usually by a pathologist examining a microscope slide. Higher levels indicate a stronger immune

response against the tumour and have previously been associated with better outcomes in several types of breast cancer, said researchers who analysed data from more than 5,600 breast cancer patients.

The first study found that while AI and pathologist scores were not identical, both provided similar information about the patients’ prognosis. The second

study showed that AI could also analyse how immune cells were organized and highlight “hot-spots,” which provided additional prognostic information beyond simply counting TILs.

The researchers said the studies strengthen the case for TILs to be used as a practical biomarker in breast cancer, as well as showing that AI could enable their assessment at scale.

“AI may also allow us to extract information that the human eye cannot readily quantify, such as the spatial organization of immune cells within a tumor. Ultimately, combining pathologists and computational approaches may give us more information than either approach alone,” said Peter Mac’s Professor Sherene Loi. — **XINHUA**

Taipei Zoo celebrates 22nd birthday of giant panda from mainland

TAIPEI: Visitors gathered at Taipei Zoo yesterday to celebrate the 22nd birthday of Yuan Yuan, the female giant panda gifted by the Chinese mainland to Taiwan.

The zoo prepared a small train-themed “cake,” sugarcane “candles” shaped to make the number “22,” and bite-sized pieces of carrots and grapes as her birthday meal.

The meal was tailored to Yuan Yuan’s dietary preferences, with careful attention to ingredient combinations and behavioral enrichment to encourage her to forage, grab and chew her food independently, according to the zoo.

Yuan Yuan seemed to like the “candles” most.

Large numbers of visitors came to the zoo to wish Yuan Yuan a happy birthday, and the celebration was also shared

online.

At 22, Yuan Yuan is considered elderly for a giant panda. During her annual health checkup last November, the zoo found that the functions of her major organs, including her heart and digestive system, remained generally stable, but signs of aging had emerged in her eyes, kidneys and spine.

The zoo has since placed her under enhanced senior care and closer observation, incorporating age-related changes into her routine health-monitoring records.

Yuan Yuan and her male companion Tuan Tuan, both four years old at the time, arrived in Taipei as goodwill gifts from the mainland in 2008.

Since then, the zoo has worked closely with mainland conservation institutions on breeding, physiology and



Giant panda Yuan Yuan enjoys a special meal for her 22nd birthday at Taipei Zoo in Taipei yesterday. (Xinhua)

veterinary care, with experts and staff making continuous visits and exchanging technical expertise. The pair had two female offspring, Yuan Zai and

Yuan Bao, born in 2013 and 2020, respectively. Tuan Tuan died of illness in November 2022 at the age of 18. — **XINHUA**

Hong Kong launches artificial intelligence training for all

HONG KONG: The final instalment of the launch ceremonies for Hong Kong’s artificial intelligence (AI) training for all programme was held at the Hong Kong Productivity Council (HKPC) on Thursday.

The HKPC will help small- and medium-sized companies become more competitive with AI-powered digital transformation.

Noting that over 90 percent of Hong Kong’s companies are small- and medium-sized, Sun Dong, secretary for innovation, technology and industry of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) government, said in his speech that the HKPC will focus on equipping employees of these firms with AI skills tailored to

The government aims to hold over 200 events with a total attendance of over 50,000 by the end of next year.

real tasks. The event followed the launch of two other segments of the AI training for all program. Cyberport seeks to promote AI proficiency among younger students, parents, the elderly and vulnerable groups. The Hong Kong Science Park helps college students and professionals translate AI proficiency into workplace skills.

The HKSAR government aims to hold over 200 events with a total attendance of over 50,000 by the end of next year. — **XINHUA**

An aging population in China inspires a new industry: Adult children for hire

TIANJIN: In China, where a low fertility rate and a rapidly aging population are swelling the number of lonely elders, young men and women are hiring themselves out as “shared” or “outsourced” children.

These surrogates, mostly in their 20s and 30s, provide companionship rather than specialised medical care, visiting, chatting, helping clients set up smartphones or accompanying them to medical appointments. Advertisements abound on Chinese social media, where rates range from \$29 to \$88 for a three-hour session.

Sun Shuyang, 28, works for Happy Home, a start-up in the northern city of Tianjin. Most of

the company’s clients live alone while their adult children work in distant cities, he said, and struggle with feelings of isolation and fear of death.

“By talking to young people like us,” he said, “they can regain a sense of vitality and feel more energetic.” It’s not clear how widespread such services are. But the economist Bingqin Li, who teaches social policy at the University of New South Wales in Australia, said they “respond to a real social need.”

The number of people in China over 60 is set to increase to 402 million by 2040, the World Health Organization projects, growing to 28 percent of the country’s total population.

Under a government policy in effect from 1979 to 2015, many were limited to having one child. More than half were living in empty-nest households in 2021, the National Committee on Aging found, and by 2030, researchers project, China will face a shortfall of 5.5 million elder care nurses.

Aging in itself is not problematic if it means a healthier, longer life, the demographer and statistician Huang Wen-zheng said, but the low fertility rate is. “We don’t have that many young people,” he said.

By 2031, China will be a super-aged society, one in which 20 percent or more of the population is over 65, according

to Li Xunlei, chief economist at Zhongtai Financial International.

“A rapid increase in my country’s aging population rate is inevitable before 2050,” he wrote. “Even if the birth rate rebounds significantly, it would do little to slow the acceleration.” The US population is aging, too, and while elderly people may hire household helpers or companions, *The Washington Post* was unable to find any American business that marketed them as surrogate children.

Chinese authorities this year proposed mutual aid elder care services to cover 70 percent of regions by 2030. Tech

companies are racing to develop and train elder care robots to handle tasks ranging from giving massages to playing chess.

Those initiatives, however, will take time. For now, at least, the burden of care continues to fall on the so-called sandwich generation — middle-aged adults who are raising children and supporting aging parents at the same time.

Liu Cheng established Time Bank in Suzhou to hire out shared children. He drew inspiration from Papa, a US business that pairs companion workers with seniors for errands.

“We have both elderly parents and young children to

support,” Liu said. “A lot of the time, when we focus on taking care of the younger ones, we end up unable to look after the old.” Supporters say it fills a relevant social need, but critics have raised safety concerns.

“It is easy for ‘outsourced children’ to gain access to older people’s important documents including asset records, ID documents and property ownership certificates,” commentator He Yong wrote in the state-run Jing-shen Wenming Bao newspaper. Many providers lack professional medical training, he wrote, and may be unprepared to handle common health emergencies. — **THE WASHINGTON POST**

TRENDING IN
QATAR



On *The Peninsula* social media platforms

Over 80% of Gaza's water and drainage networks decimated

THE Gaza Strip could be plagued by an environmental disaster amid the devastation of over 80% of its water and drainage networks, an official said.

Nepal rescuers advance towards trapped workers

NEPALI rescuers drilled, dug and used explosives on Sunday in a bid to reach dozens of hydropower workers believed trapped in tunnels swamped by flood debris.

S Africa submits dossier to ICJ

SOUTH Africa has submitted a substantial dossier to ICJ over Israel’s non-compliance with the Court’s orders on provisional measures.

Mol reminds students of safety guidelines for school bus journeys

THE Mol has stressed that ensuring students’ safety is a shared responsibility.