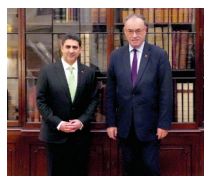
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Amir performs Istisqa prayer

Amir H H Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani performed the Istisqa prayer along with many of worshipers at the Lusail prayer ground yesterday, reviving the Prophetic Sunnah of seeking rainfall from Allah the Almighty. Personal Representative of H H the Amir H H Sheikh Jassim bin Hamad Al-Thani, H H Sheikh Abdullah bin Khalifa Al-Thani, H H Sheikh Mohammed bin Khalifa Al-Thani, and H E Sheikh Jassim bin Khalifa Al-Thani joined the Istisqa prayer. Speaker of the Shura Council H E Hassan bin Abdullah Al Ghanim, along with a number of Their Excellencies Sheikhs and Ministers, members of the Shura Council, dignitaries and senior officials, also performed the prayer. In a sermon following the prayer, Sheikh Dr. Yahya Batti Al Nuaimi urged worshipers to turn to Allah with humility and repentance, noting that the delay in rainfall should remind people of their dependence on Allah and encourage them to seek forgiveness, increase charitable giving and engage in righteous deeds. He also called on worshipers to be grateful for the blessing of water, conserve it and avoid waste.



Amir issues decision reconstituting QatarEnergy Board

DOHA: Amir H H Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani issued yesterday Amiri Decision No. 42 of 2026, reconstituting the Board of Directors of QatarEnergy.

The decision stipulates that the QatarEnergy Board of Directors shall be reconstituted with H H Sheikh Abdullah bin Hamad Al-Thani as Chairman and HE Eng. Saad bin Sherida Al Kaabi as Vice Chairman and Managing Director.

The Board shall also comprise H E Ali bin Ahmed Al Kuwari, H E Sheikh Mohammed bin Hamad bin Qassim Al-Thani, H E Sheikh Khalid bin Khalifa bin Jassim Al-Thani, Nasser Khalil Al Jaidah, Ahmed Saif Al Sulaiti, Abdulaziz Jassim Al Muftah, and Abdulrahman Ahmed Al Shaibi as members. — *QNA* ➔P2

PM discusses maritime security with UAE, Iran FMs

DOHA: Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs H E Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim Al-Thani held separate phone calls with his counterparts in the United Arab Emirates and Iran, discussing bilateral relations and diplomatic efforts to de-escalate regional tensions, ensure freedom of maritime navigation and achieve lasting peace in the region.

During a call with Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the UAE H H Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan and the Prime Minister discussed the cooperation relations between the two countries and ways to support and strengthen them. It also covered the latest regional developments, particularly the diplomatic efforts and joint coordination aimed at de-escalating tensions and enhancing security and stability in the region.

The Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs stressed the State of Qatar's support for all diplomatic efforts and initiatives aimed at reaching a solution that ensures freedom of maritime navigation and paves the way for a comprehensive agreement that achieves sustainable peace in the region.

In a separate phone call between the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran H E Abbas Araghchi focused on cooperation between Qatar and Iran and explored ways to further strengthen ties, while exchanging views on diplomatic efforts and joint coordination to reduce tensions and restore security and stability in the region.

H E Sheikh Mohammed stressed the State of Qatar's support for all initiatives seeking to secure the freedom of maritime navigation and streamline a comprehensive agreement that helps deliver lasting peace in the region.

Qatar has consistently called for dialogue and diplomatic solutions to regional disputes, emphasising the importance of coordinated international efforts to prevent further escalation. — *QNA*

MoPH commences transfer of food safety mandates to new authority

THE PENINSULA

DOHA: The Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) has announced the commencement of procedures to transfer food safety mandates, functions and responsibilities to the General Authority for Food Safety, following the issuance of Amiri Decision No. (41) of 2026 establishing the Authority. This step underscores the State's commitment to advancing a comprehensive national food safety system, enhancing regulatory effectiveness and operational efficiency, and ensuring the uninterrupted delivery of services to the public during the transition phase.

On this occasion, Minister of Public Health H E Mansoor bin Ebrahim Al Mahmoud expressed his profound appreciation and gratitude to Amir H H Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, for His Highness's continued patronage and unwavering support for the development of the nation's public health system, the protection of community health, and the advancement of food safety standards, in line with Qatar's vision for a healthier and safer future.

The Ministry of Public Health affirmed that the establishment of the General Authority for Food Safety marks a significant milestone in the continued development of the State's food safety system. The Authority will serve as a unified institutional body for food safety governance, enhance integration across mandates and responsibilities, and strengthen regulatory and oversight efforts, thereby supporting the protection of consumer health and reinforcing public confidence in the safety of food available in the State.

The Authority will be responsible for ensuring the safety and suitability of food for human consumption across all stages of the food chain. ➔P2



Education vouchers policy extended to standalone kindergartens, new schools

THE PENINSULA

DOHA: The Ministry of Education and Higher Education has launched an education voucher policy for Qatari students enrolled in private kindergartens and schools across all educational levels, including students with disabilities, in a move aimed at expanding educational choices and easing the financial burden on families.

The policy also extends education vouchers for the first time to standalone private kindergartens and newly established schools from the start of their operations, subject to quality standards.

The policy seeks to promote equal educational opportunities, improve the quality of education and strengthen partnerships with the private education sector, while ensuring inclusive and equitable access to quality learning opportunities for all students.

The announcement was made during a press conference held at the ministry's permanent headquarters, attended by representatives of local media, owners and directors of private schools and kindergartens.

The policy seeks to promote equal educational opportunities, improve the quality of education and strengthen partnerships with the private education sector, while ensuring inclusive and equitable access to quality learning opportunities for all students.

Speaking at the conference, Assistant Undersecretary for Private Education Affairs Omar Abdulaziz Al-Naama said investing in children's education was an investment in the country's future, emphasising that providing educational opportunities was a shared responsibility requiring cooperation among all stakeholders.

He said the education voucher policy reflected the ministry's commitment to supporting learning opportunities and expanding educational choices, while promoting fairness and equal opportunities among students and enabling them to enrol in participating private schools. ➔P2

Doha solidifies status as global tech hub with return of MWC26

JOEL JOHNSON
THE PENINSULA

DOHA: Qatar continues to cement its position as an international epicenter for high-level dialogue, technological innovation, and the future of the global digital economy. The second edition of Mobile World Congress (MWC) returns to Doha next week, bringing together global technology leaders, key policymakers, cross-border investors, and prominent industry experts.

The Ministry of Communications and Information Technology (MCIT) on X said that the event will foster international cooperation, forge strategic partnerships, and unlock new investment avenues in alignment with the goals of Qatar's Digital Agenda 2030.

Qatar's journey toward becoming a global digital powerhouse gained significant momentum in March 2025, when MCIT established a landmark five-year strategic partnership with the GSMA to host MWC in Doha.

The Ministry of Communications and Information Technology (MCIT) on X said that the event will foster international cooperation, forge strategic partnerships, and unlock new investment avenues in alignment with the goals of Qatar's Digital Agenda 2030.

Following this agreement, the inaugural MWC Doha took place in November 2025 as an exceptional launchpad, bringing together top-tier speakers, leading domestic and international tech enterprises, and participants from across the globe.

The Ministry stated that it aims to seamlessly connect global tech policy discussions with rapid technological advancement and practical implementation requirements.

MCIT expounded that MWC in Doha serves as a multi-dimensional platform designed to address critical industry needs while empowering the domestic market. On an international level, it convenes technology leaders and policy architects to shape future digital policy frameworks while opening dynamic avenues for strategic partnerships and investments between local businesses and global enterprises.

The initiative also drives national empowerment by directly connecting Qatari companies, local talent, and skilled professionals with international expertise and global markets.

MCIT further noted that the event's impressive global reach and influence are clearly reflected in its growing participation metrics.

International attendees accounted for 41 percent of overall participation, with global companies and institutions occupying 62 percent of the event's total exhibition space.

Leadership representation was equally strong, as decision-makers made up 47 percent of attendees, including 20 percent occupying C-suite and senior executive positions.

Featuring 111 expert speakers, 34 media partners, and the announcement of more than 30 strategic agreements and collaborative partnerships, the platform continues to demonstrate its vital role in driving digital transformation.

The Ministry added that MWC Doha positions the country's leadership in shaping global tech policies, driving investment, and powering the digital economy forward.

Qatar condemns Houthis' attempt to target Madinah

DOHA: The State of Qatar strongly condemned an attempt by Yemen's Houthi group to target Madinah, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, with a ballistic missile, calling it a blatant provocation of Muslims, a reckless disregard for civilian lives, a violation of Saudi sovereignty and a breach of international law.

In a statement yesterday, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs reaffirmed Qatar's full solidarity with Saudi Arabia and support for all legitimate measures taken by the Kingdom to safeguard its sovereignty, security, territorial integrity and interests.

It stressed that Saudi Arabia's security is integral to Qatar's security and the collective security of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states. — *QNA*

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EDITORIAL

Doha: A global technology hub

QATAR'S growing stature as a global hub for technology, innovation and digital transformation is set to receive another significant boost with the return of Mobile World Congress (MWC26) to Doha next week. The prestigious gathering underscores the country's determination to play an increasingly influential role in shaping the future of the global digital economy.

The second edition of MWC Doha represents more than another major international event. It reflects the success of Qatar's long-term strategy to establish itself as a destination where technological innovation, international cooperation and investment opportunities converge.

The country has consistently demonstrated that its ambitions extend beyond adopting advanced technologies to becoming an active contributor to global digital transformation. Through sustained investment in digital infrastructure, innovation ecosystems and human capital, Qatar is laying the foundations for a competitive, knowledge-based economy.

A major milestone in this journey was the five-year strategic partnership established between the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology (MCIT) and the GSMA in March 2025. The agreement paved the way for hosting MWC in Doha and strengthened Qatar's position on the international technology events calendar.

The inaugural edition in November 2025 provided compelling evidence of the country's ability to attract influential technology leaders, investors, policymakers and industry specialists from across the world.

The participation figures speak volumes about the event's international appeal. Overseas attendees accounted for 41 percent of total participation, while international companies and institutions occupied 62 percent of exhibition space. Significantly, decision-makers represented 47 percent of attendees, including 20 percent holding C-suite and senior executive positions. With 111 expert speakers, 34 media partners and more than 30 strategic agreements and partnerships announced, the inaugural event demonstrated its potential to translate international dialogue into tangible business opportunities and technological collaboration.

Building on this momentum, the upcoming MWC26 Doha assumes added significance as it coincides with the International Telecommunication Union Plenipotentiary Conference (ITU PP-26). Bringing these two major gatherings together creates a valuable opportunity to bridge global digital policymaking with technological innovation and practical implementation.

This convergence is particularly important at a time when artificial intelligence, advanced connectivity, cybersecurity and emerging digital technologies are rapidly transforming economies and societies. By providing a platform for policymakers and industry leaders to engage directly, Doha can contribute to discussions on developing inclusive, secure and sustainable digital ecosystems.

Equally important is the event's contribution to Qatar's domestic technology sector. Connecting Qatari enterprises, entrepreneurs and skilled professionals with international companies and investors can accelerate knowledge transfer, strengthen local capabilities and open doors to global markets.

Such opportunities align closely with Qatar's Digital Agenda 2030 and the broader objectives of Qatar National Vision 2030, particularly economic diversification, innovation-driven growth and the development of national talent.







Amir performs Istisqa Prayer

Amir H H Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani performed the Istisqa (rain-seeking) prayer along with many worshipers at the Lusail prayer ground yesterday. Personal Representative of H H the Amir, H H Sheikh Jassim bin Hamad Al Thani, and a number of Their Highnesses and Excellencies the sheikhs, ministers, and senior officials also performed the prayer.

GCC meeting explores strategic storage facilities for food, medicines and essential supplies

THE PENINSULA

DOHA: Minister of Municipality H E Abdullah bin Hamad bin Abdullah Al Attiyah headed Qatar's delegation participating in the extraordinary joint meeting of ministerial committees tasked with studying the establishment of GCC strategic storage zones for food, medicines and other essential needs.

The meeting was held via video conference yesterday, with the participation of ministers and representatives of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries.

During the meeting, participants discussed the agenda items. The Minister presented a number of views and proposals that contributed to shaping the final recommendations, strengthening GCC integration and coordination in food security and strategic storage, and supporting the readiness of member states and the sustainability of supply chains to address future challenges. The recommendations will subsequently be submitted to the GCC Supreme Council

Interior Minister meets former director of FBI

THE PENINSULA

DOHA: Minister of Interior and Commander of the Internal Security Force (Lekhwiya), H E Sheikh Khalifa bin Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani received former FBI director, Christopher Wray. They discussed matters of mutual interest and explored ways to strengthen cooperation and exchange expertise in security and policing.



Qatar, Greece to launch annual strategic dialogue

DOHA: The State of Qatar and the Hellenic Republic held their first policy dialogue, at the conclusion of which they announced plans to launch an annual strategic dialogue as a framework for deepening bilateral cooperation and advancing shared priorities.

The Qatari side was co-chaired by Director of the Policy Planning Department Dr. Khalid bin Fahad Al Khater, and Director of the European Affairs Department Fahad bin Mohammed Kafoud, at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The Greek side was headed by Director of the A6 Directorate for Arab Countries and the Middle East at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Hellenic Republic Ioannis Foivos Georgakakis.

Both sides affirmed that the strategic dialogue builds on the positive momentum generated by the visit of Amir H H Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani to Athens in April 2026, reflecting the strength of relations between the two friendly countries and their shared aspiration to develop a future partnership that delivers mutual benefits to their peoples.

They also underscored their partnership in promoting peace, security and stability through diplomacy and dialogue, as well as their shared interest in strengthening their roles as trusted partners contributing to consolidating stability at the regional and international levels.

They reaffirmed their commitment to international law, including the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, and to safeguarding freedom of navigation and maritime security, particularly in vital international shipping lanes.

The two sides also expressed their determination to translate shared priorities into practical cooperation and tangible outcomes by strengthening collaboration in the fields of trade, investment, defence, security, technology and innovation, public health, culture, sports and education. They noted that the annual strategic dialogue would open a new chapter in bilateral relations, providing a platform for constructive communication and mutually beneficial cooperation, while further developing the partnership between the two countries. — ***QNA***

Amir congratulates President of Bulgaria

DOHA: Amir H H Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani and Deputy Amir H H Sheikh Abdullah bin Hamad Al-Thani sent cables of congratulations to H E Iliana Iotova on the occasion of her victory in the presidential election in the Republic of Bulgaria, wishing her success in carrying out her duties and the relations between the two countries further progress and prosperity. — ***QNA***

Amir issues decision reconstituting QatarEnergy Board

FROM PAGE 1

The decision stipulates that the Board's term of membership shall be four years, renewable for one or more similar terms.

The decision shall take effect from the date of its issuance and shall be published in the Official Gazette.

MoPH commences transfer of food safety mandates to new authority

FROM PAGE 1

Its mandate includes strengthening the national food control system, mitigating food-related risks, and upholding the highest standards of consumer health protection.

The Ministry of Public Health will continue to work closely with the Authority and relevant stakeholders to complete the transfer of mandates, functions and responsibilities in accordance with the approved frameworks.

These efforts will ensure a smooth transition, maintain service continuity, and fulfil the objectives for which the Authority was established.

Education vouchers policy extended to standalone KGs, new schools

FROM PAGE 1

Al-Naama noted that the policy would contribute to improving educational quality by encouraging schools to develop their services and meet accreditation requirements and quality standards.

It would also strengthen transparency and accountability in the management of educational support.

He stressed that clearly defined roles and procedures would help standardise practices and enhance cooperation among the ministry, schools and parents, ensuring that the policy serves students' best interests.



MoEHE officials and school representatives at the event.

Director of Private Schools and Kindergartens Affairs and Acting Director of Private School Licensing Department Dr. Rania Mohammed presented the policy's regulatory framework, outlining its guiding principles of fairness, equality, transparency and sustainability.

She said its strategic objectives included empowering families, improving educational quality, strengthening accountability and raising public awareness, alongside facilitating access to specialised educational services and reducing the financial burden on households.

Dr Rania also explained the scope of the policy, general provisions, conditions for private schools to join the education voucher system, and the mechanisms for monitoring and evaluating its effectiveness. She outlined the respective responsibilities of families, schools and the ministry, as well as procedures for submitting grievances and the documents required to benefit from the scheme.

Among the key regulatory developments introduced under the policy is the provision of education vouchers for the first time to private kindergartens operating in separate buildings, as well as newly established schools from the commencement of their operations, subject to specific quality standards and requirements.

She also addressed eligibility arrangements in different circumstances, including cases involving students repeating an academic year, whether they had passed or failed, and the eligibility of children of retirees.

Director of the Special Education and Inclusive Education Department Amna Ali Mohammed Al Mulla outlined the categories of students with disabilities covered by the policy.

These include students with autism spectrum disorder, intellectual, hearing, visual, physical and multiple disabilities, specific learning difficulties, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), and speech and language disorders.

Engineer Abubakr Al Amin from the ministry's Information Technology Section demonstrated how eligible students with disabilities can access the education voucher service and explained the stages of processing applications electronically through the Maaref portal, the ministry's dedicated platform for public services.

Qatar participates in GCC Health Ministers Committee meeting

THE PENINSULA

DOHA: Qatar participated yesterday in the extraordinary meeting of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Health Ministers Committee, held via video conference. Minister of Public Health, H E Mansoor bin Ebrahim Al Mahmoud chaired Qatar's delegation to the meeting. The meeting discussed a study on establishing GCC strategic storage facilities for food, medicines and other essentials.

Al Khulaifi holds phone call with Indonesian Foreign Minister

DOHA: Minister of State at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs H E Dr. Mohammed bin Abdulaziz Al Khulaifi held a phone call yesterday with Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia H E Arrmanatha Nasir.

At the beginning of the call, the Minister of State at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs congratulated the Indonesian Foreign Minister on assuming his new position, wishing him success in his duties.

The two sides reviewed the bilateral cooperative relations and ways to support and strengthen them. They also discussed the latest regional and international developments, most notably the situation in the Gaza Strip, the occupied Palestinian territories, and Afghanistan, along with a number of other issues of common interest. The Minister of State affirmed Qatar's support for all diplomatic efforts and initiatives aimed at reaching a solution that ensures freedom of maritime navigation and paves the way for a comprehensive agreement to achieve sustainable peace in the region. — ***QNA***







Qatar, Turkiye discuss strengthening defence and diplomatic cooperation

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Defence Affairs H E Sheikh Saoud bin Abdulrahman bin Hassan Al-Thani held a series of meetings with senior Turkish officials during his official visit to the Republic of Turkiye. H E Sheikh Saoud met with Minister of National Defence H E Yasar Guler and President of the Turkish Defence Industries Professor Haluk Gorgun. The meetings discussed topics of mutual interest as well as ways to strengthen and develop them. H E Sheikh Saoud also met with the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Republic of Turkiye H E Hakan Fidan and during the meeting the two sides discussed topics of mutual interest and explored ways to bolster and further develop bilateral cooperation.

Qatar joins GCC Culture Ministers' meeting in Bahrain to boost cooperation

MANAMA: The State of Qatar has taken part in a Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) meeting aimed at promoting cultural cooperation among the bloc's member states.

Minister of Culture H E Sheikh Abdulrahman bin Hamad Al-Thani attended the 30th meeting of Their Highnesses and Excellencies GCC Ministers of Culture, which took place yesterday in the Bahraini capital, Manama.

The meeting was chaired by Chairman of the Bahrain Authority for Culture and Antiquities H E Sheikh Khalifa bin Ahmed bin Abdullah Al Khalifa, who is also the current president of the GCC Committee of Ministers of Culture. GCC Secretary-General H E Jasem Mohamed Albudaiwi was in attendance. Discussions focused on enhancing coordination and integration, developing the cultural sector, supporting cultural and creative industries, and expanding the international presence of Gulf culture.

In his address, Albudaiwi said GCC countries shared a rich civilizational heritage and a well-established cultural identity that served as a source of strength and social cohesion.

He highlighted achievements in developing cultural institutions, preserving heritage, supporting creativity and launching specialized cultural initiatives across the region. — *QNA*



Minister of Culture H E Sheikh Abdulrahman bin Hamad Al-Thani attending meeting.

'Boat Show highlights marine sector's role in tourism growth'

VICTOR BOLORUNDURO
THE PENINSULA

DOHA: The third edition of the Qatar Boat Show is further strengthening the country's position as a growing maritime tourism destination, highlighting the marine industry's increasing contribution to Qatar's tourism development, according to Ahmed Al Fadala **(pictured)**, General Manager of Ronautica Middle East, which operates The Pearl Island Marina.

Speaking to *The Peninsula* yesterday on the sidelines of the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between Old Doha Port and The Pearl Island Marina at the Qatar Boat Show 2026, Al Fadala said the exhibition continues to attract an increasing number of visitors, reflecting growing interest in Qatar's maritime attractions, recreational boating and expanding marine tourism offerings.

"I believe this year's edition will be just as successful as the previous two. As you can see, visitor numbers are increasing by the day, even by the hour, and we are delighted to participate in such an event," he said.

The Qatar Boat Show serves as an important platform for showcasing the country's expanding marina infrastructure, luxury yachts and recreational boating facilities, while highlighting the growing contribution of the maritime sector to tourism development. The event also underscores Qatar's efforts to diversify its tourism offerings by complementing established attractions, including desert adventures and cultural landmarks, with world-class marine leisure experiences.

Al Fadala pointed to the long-term growth of The Pearl Island Marina as an example of this evolution.

He attributed the marina's growing international appeal to its world-class infrastructure, distinctive design and premium services, which have helped establish The Pearl Island as one of Qatar's leading tourism and leisure destinations.

He noted that the marina has undergone remarkable expansion over the past two decades, growing from a facility accommodating smaller vessels to one offering nearly 1,000 berths for boats and yachts ranging from seven to 70 metres, including luxury superyachts.

"The Pearl of Qatar has grown to become one of the most attractive destinations in Qatar. Everybody who comes to Qatar wants to visit The Pearl, and one of its major attractions is the marina," he said, highlighting the role of its sophisticated infrastructure and high-quality services in attracting visitors.

Al Fadala also welcomed the signing of a cooperation agreement between The Pearl Island Marina and Old Doha Port, describing it as an important step towards improving connectivity and facilitating marine services between the two destinations.

Under the agreement, Al Fadala explained, boat owners will be able to enjoy complimentary berthing for up to six hours at either marina, while vessels from The Pearl Island Marina will also have access to Old Doha Port's slipway, which he described as the largest in Qatar.

"If you are in Doha and want to visit The Pearl with your boat for five or six hours, it is easy. You can simply make a call and arrange a complimentary berth," he said.

He added that the partnership would enhance convenience for boat owners, encourage greater movement between the two waterfront destinations and contribute to the development of a more integrated maritime leisure experience.



Highlighting the marine industry's growing contribution to Qatar's tourism sector, Al Fadala pointed to the increasing popularity of recreational boating, traditional dhow cruises, luxury yachts and houseboats among visitors.

He noted that continuous improvements in the design, quality and variety of recreational vessels have significantly enhanced the country's maritime tourism offerings, providing visitors with more opportunities to explore Qatar's coastline and enjoy its marine attractions.



Sheikh Jassim Quran competition concludes

THE PENINSULA

DOHA: The Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs has concluded the four-day examinations of the Quran Categories branch of the 31st Sheikh Jassim bin Mohammed bin Thani Holy Quran Competition, with 1,073 Qatari men and women taking part.

The examinations, which ended yesterday, began on October 31 and covered five levels of memorisation, ranging from five to 25 parts of the Holy Quran. The participants included 454 males and 619 females. Organised by the competition's organising committee, the branch provides participants with an opportunity to assess their memorisation, improve their recitation and Tajweed skills, and gradually progress towards memorising the entire Holy Quran.

The experiences of participants highlighted the educational value of the competition, with many describing it as an incentive to regularly revise and consolidate their memorisation while setting higher goals for future editions.

Grade 8 student Saud Ali Al Nuaimi, who participated for the first time in the category of the last five parts, said the competition offered an opportunity to assess his memorisation and identify areas for improvement. He said he had prepared by allocating time to revise the required portions, expressing his ambition to memorise the entire Holy Quran.

Fellow Grade 8 student Hassan Abdulaziz Al Ansari, participating for the second time, said the competition encouraged him to strengthen his memorisation and improve his knowledge of Tajweed.

Cabinet's General Secretariat earns ISO certification for Information Security Management

DOHA: The General Secretariat of the Cabinet has obtained ISO/IEC 27001 certification for its Information Security Management System, reflecting its commitment to implementing international standards in information protection and strengthening corporate governance, thereby supporting operational efficiency and reinforcing confidence in its digital environment.

This achievement comes as part of the General Secretariat's efforts to develop its information security framework by strengthening organizational and technical measures, implementing the necessary controls to mitigate risks, and ensuring the confidentiality, integrity and availability of data, thereby supporting business continuity.

On this occasion, Director of the Information Systems Department at the General Secretariat of the Cabinet, Alshayma Ahmed Al Malki, affirmed that obtaining this certification marks an important milestone in the development of the General Secretariat's information security framework and reflects its commitment to enhancing the efficiency of its systems and approved policies in line with an institutional approach that keeps pace with evolving cybersecurity requirements. — *QNA*

QOC hosts seminar to promote sustainability and lasting legacy in sporting events

THE PENINSULA

DOHA: As part of its ongoing efforts to develop human resources, foster a culture of sustainability and raise awareness of its importance in the sports sector, the Qatar Olympic Committee (QOC), represented by its Human Resources and Administrative Affairs Department, in collaboration with the Strategy and Sustainability Department, organised a panel discussion yesterday, at its headquarters to mark Sustainability Week.

The discussion brought together two leading experts in sustainability: Professor Dr Ali Abdullah Al Ibrahim, Vice Chairman of the Regional Network for Social Responsibility and an expert in sustainable development, and Dr Mohammed Saif Al Kuwari, an expert in environmental and sustainability affairs and a researcher in Earth and climate sciences.

The two speakers offered valuable knowledge and in-depth insights, adding depth to the discussions on sustainability, social responsibility and the role of sport in advancing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

MoEHE launches campaign to encourage Qatari students to pursue teaching careers

THE PENINSULA

DOHA: The Ministry of Education and Higher Education has launched the first phase of an awareness campaign aimed at encouraging Qatari students to pursue teaching careers, highlighting the profession's importance, benefits and opportunities for professional growth.

The campaign, titled "The Teacher... The Maker of the Future", was implemented by the Academic and Career Guidance Section of the Ministry's Department of School and Student Affairs through a series of awareness sessions targeting Grade 11 and 12 students at four government secondary schools.

The sessions were held on November 3 at Al Ab Secondary School for Girls and Mohammed bin Abdulaziz Al Mana Secondary School for Boys, and continued on November 4 at Al Sailiya Secondary School for Girls and Hamad bin Abdullah bin Jassim Secondary School for Boys.

Representatives of the Academic and Career Guidance Section introduced students to the teaching profession, the "Tamouh" programme and the programmes offered by the College of Education at Qatar University.

Qatari school principals and inspiring Qatari teachers also shared their experiences in teaching and school leadership, while students from the College of Education provided their peers with an insight into studying education-related specialisations.

The awareness programme began by highlighting the status of knowledge and teachers in Islam. It also recalled the remarks of Minister of Education and Higher Education H E Lolwa bint Rashid Al Khater on the occasion of World Teachers' Day.

"If our young men and women knew that the teacher is the foundation of the renaissance of any country, they would flock to this great profession," the minister said.

The programme also highlighted achievements in the education sector under Qatar National Vision 2030 and outlined the professional benefits of a teaching career, including competitive income, job stability, continuous professional development and a clear career progression pathway.

Students were introduced to the career ladder in the education sector, which extends from teacher to coordinator, academic deputy and school principal.



Minister of Interior attends closing of Watan 2026 exercise

DOHA: Minister of Interior and Commander of the Internal Security Force (Lekhwiya) H E Sheikh Khalifa bin Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani attended the closing of the 6th edition of the Watan exercise (Watan 2026), yesterday.

A Lineup of Their Excellencies ministers, senior officials, and commanders from the state's military, security, and civilian sectors, attended the event along with officials and representatives from the French side.

The exercise comprised preliminary tabletop phases, followed by field exercises that simulated realistic scenarios for addressing security challenges and emergencies.

These activities were designed to test operational readiness, enhance the integration of roles, and improve the efficiency of the national response system. — *QNA*

HMC concludes International Congress on Healthy Aging and Geriatric Rehabilitation

THE PENINSULA

DOHA: Hamad Medical Corporation (HMC) has successfully concluded the International Congress on Healthy Aging and Geriatric Rehabilitation 2026 (IC-HAGR 2026), organised by HMC's Rumailah Hospital under the theme "Transforming Global Care through Innovation and Function."

The Congress was held from October 29 to 31. The Congress explored the latest scientific developments and medical practices in healthy aging, brain health, dementia, and geriatric rehabilitation, with a particular focus on Functional Longevity across medical disciplines.

The inaugural ceremony welcomed leaders from HMC, the Ministry of Public Health, Primary Health Care Corporation, private healthcare organizations and the wider social care sector. A senior Qatari community member served as Master of Ceremonies, reinforcing the importance of involving older adults and ensuring their voices are heard in discussions concerning their care.

The Congress explored the latest scientific developments and medical practices in healthy aging, brain health, dementia, and geriatric rehabilitation, with a particular focus on Functional Longevity across medical disciplines.

The scientific sessions emphasised the importance of shifting the focus from merely extending life expectancy to improving quality of life throughout the aging process. Discussions highlighted the need to preserve older adults' mobility, cognitive abilities and independence in performing daily activities, as well as the critical role of early intervention and preventive healthcare in maintaining health and functional capacity with advancing age.

The Congress also addressed several emerging areas, including precision geriatric medicine, frailty, neurorehabilitation, digital health and applications of artificial intelligence in healthcare. Other key topics included community-based care, integrated healthcare delivery and the importance of multidisciplinary collaboration in addressing the complex and diverse healthcare needs of older adults.

QF's Green Island launches Corporate Passport to advance workplace sustainability

THE PENINSULA

DOHA: As Qatar Sustainability Week 2026 takes place, Qatar Foundation's Green Island has unveiled its new corporate sustainability initiative, the Green Island Corporate Passport.

The programme aims to help organisations across Qatar move beyond one-off environmental activities and embed long-term, measurable sustainable practices into their daily operations.

The structured, year-long programme is already under way at Green Island, a recycling hub and edutainment platform based in Qatar Foundation's (QF) Education City that raises awareness about environmental issues, while encouraging individuals and organisations to take practical steps that help reduce environmental impact and foster a culture of sustainability.

Several companies have already begun their sustainability awareness sessions as the first step in their Corporate Passport journey.

The Corporate Passport can be renewed annually, bringing together four key areas of engagement: sustainability awareness, tree planting, recycling, and car-free days.

Through these interconnected activities, the initiative aims to strengthen employee participation, encourage environmentally responsible behaviour, and help organisations turn sustainability commitments into practical actions and measurable outcomes that can be built upon over time.

"Sustainability should not be a one-time activity or a commitment that ends when an event is over. Real impact comes when sustainable practices become part of how organizations operate and how employees make decisions every day," said Strategic Initiatives Advisor at Qatar Foundation, Ouassim M Alami.

"Through the Green Island Corporate Passport, we are moving beyond isolated initiatives to build long-term partnerships that turn awareness into action, action into measurable impact, and environmental responsibility into a lasting workplace culture. Our ambition is not simply to encourage companies to participate in sustainability, but to help them make it a continuous commitment that grows stronger year after year."



Participants during the launch of the initiative.

To obtain the Green Island Corporate Passport certification, organisations must successfully complete all four stages. They will then receive a certificate highlighting their participation, achievements, and quantified environmental contributions, including the estimated carbon emissions reduced through their engagement.

The programme is open to organisations across Qatar, inviting them to join a growing network committed to translating sustainability goals into tangible practices and lasting impact.

MoT takes part in Qatar Boat Show 2026

THE PENINSULA

DOHA: The Ministry of Transport is taking part in the Qatar Boat Show 2026, which opened yesterday and runs through November 7, at the Old Doha Port.

This is the third edition of the show. The MoT is a Strategic Partner. And the show is seeing a large participation from local and international entities and companies specialized in maritime services and industries.

In its stand at the show, the MoT is highlighting some of its maritime initiatives and services. The Water Taxi is one of them — a project designed to advance the nation's public transit system.

In its stand at the show, the MoT is highlighting some of its maritime initiatives and services. The Water Taxi is one of them – a project designed to advance the nation's public transit system.

A scale model is on display, showcasing the project's 3 key facilities and stops: Lusail City, The Pearl-Qatar, and the West Bay (Corniche).

The project offers waterborne mobility solutions that harness cutting-edge, ecofriendly technology. This helps diversify mobility options and foster an integrated, sustainable transportation network in step with Qatar's vision for sustainable development.



Participants during the show.

And continuing raising awareness of maritime security and safety procedures, the MoT is showcasing maritime navigational aids (NAVAIDs) to help stand visitors understand their role in enhancing navigational safety and guiding crews and captains to avoid danger zones. The MoT stand helps visitors learn more about maritime markers and buoys and the meaning of each one of them and their colors and signals, according to the IALA Region A system adopted in Qatar.

At the MoT stand visitors also have the chance to learn more about MoT's several digital maritime services available at the Ministry's "Darb" app., where users can complete their transactions anytime, anyplace, thereby saving time and effort.

Using the Darb app, users can easily register a new small craft, renew a small craft's registration, amend a small craft's specifications, have a lost or damaged registration card replaced, deregister a small craft, issue owners' sequence certificate, amend ownership, in addition to mortgage and mortgage release services, and cards delivery via Qatar Post. Children visiting the MoT stand can also try the 'little captain' route and learn and experience maritime navigation aids in a simple and interactive manner, enhancing their understanding of maritime safety.

The MoT remains committed to supporting such major national events that contribute to enhancing Qatar's global ranking in areas of tourism, marine activities and superyachts.

Al Reyada for Girls launches new e-magazine *Alam Al Reyada*

THE PENINSULA

DOHA: Al Reyada for Girls Centre, affiliated with the Ministry of Sports and Youth, has launched its new electronic magazine, *Alam Al Reyada*, in a move that reflects the Centre's commitment to strengthening media outreach, showcasing girls' achievements and talents, and establishing a media platform to document the Centre's journey and highlight its diverse programs, initiatives, and activities.

The launch comes as part of the Centre's ongoing efforts to develop its media tools, keep pace with digital transformation, and deliver content that combines creativity and knowledge while reflecting its role in empowering girls and developing their abilities and skills across various fields.

On this occasion, Director of Al Reyada for Girls Centre Najla Al-Hajri, said, "Some ideas deserve to reach people, and some experiences deserve to be shared so they can inspire others. From this perspective, *Alam Al Reyada* magazine is designed to provide a space where we celebrate creative ideas, highlight young talents, and give inspiring experiences and achievements the opportunity to gain visibility and make an impact.

"The launch of the magazine marks a new milestone in the journey of Al Reyada for Girls Centre and reflects our belief that empowering girls begins with building their confidence in their abilities and providing platforms that enable them to express themselves, exchange knowledge and experiences, and participate actively in their community."

Al-Hajri explained that the magazine features a variety of articles and media coverage showcasing the Centre's key events and achievements, alongside highlighting its pioneering initiatives, community engagements, and inspiring stories. This content reflects the diversity of the Centre's activities and its contributions to developing girls' capabilities and enhancing their community participation.

She also noted that the magazine includes an interactive section entitled "Share Your Opinion," which allows readers to express their views and share their ideas and suggestions. This initiative aims to strengthen direct communication with the audience and contribute to developing the magazine's content in line with girls' interests and aspirations, while giving them an opportunity to participate in enriching the Centre's media output.

She added that the magazine also welcomes contributions from the Centre's members who wish to publish their creative work and literary and intellectual contributions, offering them the opportunity to showcase their writings and ideas through its pages. This provides a supportive platform for young talents and encourages girls to express their abilities and further develop their writing and creative skills.

"We begin this journey with the belief that a word can shape awareness, an idea can open new horizons, and every talent, when given the right opportunity, can make a difference," she added.

Jazz meets Arabic rhythms at Katara European Jazz Festival

KHALID ELSAWI
THE PENINSULA

DOHA: Jazz tunes blended with Arabic musical heritage as the 10th Katara European Jazz Festival brought diverse musical traditions together in a celebration of cultural exchange.

Speaking to *The Peninsula* on the sidelines of the festival on Wednesday, the Qatar Music Academy (QMA) Director Zlatan Fazlić described jazz as "timeless music," noting that several pieces performed on the Katara stage date back to the early 20th century and remain widely popular today.

Fazlić described jazz as a fine medium to fuse with traditional Arabic music, due to shared rich melodic and rhythmic elements available for exploration.

The distinct sounds of prominent Arabic music instruments, such as the darbuka and nay, add an exciting flavour to jazz arrangements, he said.

These musical fusions were met with warm applause from the audience when nay player Ibrahim Kadar, along with George Oro and his Arab percussion students, took the stage alongside Fazlić and his band.

Soraya and her husband Franc, celebrating their wedding anniversary at the Katara esplanade, said they were drawn to the blend of Eastern sounds and traditional North American jazz.

"We love the blend of jazz and Arabian musical heritage," she said, adding that they were particularly looking forward to the performance by French group the Illyes Ferfera Quartet, known for incorporating North African rhythms into contemporary jazz.

A performer's ability to experiment with varied musical traditions while preserving the core structure of the piece takes great technical skill, Fazlić explained.



Qatar Music Academy Director Zlatan Fazlić (right) and Qatar Philharmonic Orchestra bassist Matteo Gaspari (left) with a student at the event.

This was demonstrated when the ensemble performed their own rendition of Dave Brubeck's famous cool jazz standard "Take Five"— titled "Take Four"— as well as an Arabic percussion-infused performance of the timeless Brazilian tune "Mas Que Nada"; the latter even drawing the attention of some pedestrians casually strolling the Katara beachside, who paused momentarily to catch the music. The QMA performance also showcased several young musicians, who accompanied seasoned veterans Zlatan Fazlić and bassist Matteo Gaspari.

Fazlić attributed the students' confidence and composure on stage to their dedicated rehearsals and thorough preparation. "It comes down to training," he said.

"When we go on stage, the students are already confident because they can replicate the same quality performance without fear, because they are confident in their ability and in the rest of the band."

The Katara European Jazz Festival will run until November 7, 2026.



Minister of Justice launches *Legal and Judicial Journal's* new website

DOHA: Minister of Justice and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs, H E Ibrahim bin Ali bin Issa Al Hassan Al Mohannadi, yesterday launched the new website for 'The Legal and Judicial Journal'. The launch took place during a graduation ceremony for participants in the qualifying and mandatory training programmes organised by the Ministry's Center for Legal and Judicial Studies. This initiative establishes a digital platform for the journal, facilitating access to its scholarly content and broadening its utility for researchers and legal practitioners.

The website is the first of its kind for the journal, which is dedicated to publishing peer-reviewed legal research and studies, supporting legal scientific inquiry among academics and specialists, and disseminating legal knowledge across various segments of society. The journal is published by the Center for Legal and Judicial Studies. It is a specialised, peer-reviewed academic journal issued semi-annually, with its first edition dating back to 2007.

The journal features sections dedicated to research, studies, and legal commentaries, with contributions from law professors, members of the judiciary and the Public Prosecution, lawyers, and other researchers in the legal field. It serves as a platform for presenting specialised studies on legal and judicial issues, encompassing analytical and comparative legal research, as well as expert commentaries on legislation, judicial rulings, and international agreements.

Furthermore, the journal includes a section titled "From the Rulings of the Court of Cassation," which publishes significant judgments from the Qatari Court of Cassation along with the legal principles derived from them. It also features a section for legal opinions (fatwas), presenting key legal interpretations issued by the Department of Legal Opinions and Studies at the General Secretariat of the Council of Ministers, accompanied by analyses and the legal principles established therein.

The launch of this website is part of the Ministry of Justice's efforts to advance digital transformation, in alignment with the objectives of its 2025-2030 strategic plan. By leveraging modern technology to enhance legal services and facilitate access to legal and judicial knowledge, the initiative supports the Ministry's commitment to fostering institutional excellence and embedding a culture of innovation and continuous development. — ***QNA***



Minister of Municipality meets Ambassador of Benin

Minister of Municipality H E Abdullah bin Hamad bin Abdullah Al Attiyah met with Ambassador of the Republic of Benin H E Nouhoum Youssoufou Abdouraman, at his office yesterday morning. During the meeting, the two sides discussed cooperation between the two countries in areas of mutual interest.

Qatar launches PIRLS 2026 assessment across 278 schools

THE PENINSULA

DOHA: The Ministry of Education and Higher Education has launched the sixth cycle of the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS 2026), with 278 public and private schools across Qatar taking part in the international assessment.

The assessment began on Monday, November 2, and will continue until December 3, 2026, targeting Grade 5 students in Qatar as part of the country's participation in the international study.

Testing sessions at participating schools begin at 8am and are conducted under the supervision of the Ministry's International Tests Section at the Student Assessment Department. Field monitoring is also being carried out to ensure the assessment follows internationally approved standards of quality and accuracy.

While PIRLS is internationally designed to assess students in Grade 4, Qatar is administering this year's assessment to Grade 5 students, in accordance with the arrangements and procedures approved by the international body overseeing the study.

PIRLS is an initiative of the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA), a leading organisation in international comparative education research, with offices in Amsterdam and Hamburg.

Conducted every five years, the study measures students' reading literacy and comprehension skills. It also provides reliable international data and indicators that help countries evaluate educational performance, develop education policies and improve the quality of teaching and learning outcomes.

The Ministry said Qatar's participation in the 2026 cycle reflects its commitment to taking part regularly in large-scale international assessments and using their findings to monitor students' performance and track developments in the education system.

NPC hosts QU President to discuss building national talent and future of higher education in age of AI



President of Qatar University (QU) Dr. Omar Mohamed Al-Ansari (right) speaking during the sixth episode of Podcast AlTanmiya.

THE PENINSULA

DOHA: The National Planning Council (NPC) hosts President of Qatar University (QU),Dr Omar Mohamed Al-Ansari, in the sixth episode of Podcast AlTanmiya.

The episode discussed the university's role in preparing a future ready workforce for the labour market, its efforts to update its academic programmes to keep pace with rapid developments in artificial intelligence (AI), the introduction of new admission standards, and mechanisms to increase the Qatarisation rate of its academic staff.

The episode also explored the university's approach to aligning its research with national priorities and turning its outputs into practical applications, contributing to the achievement of the targets of the Third National Development Strategy (NDS3) and Qatar National Vision 2030.

Dr Omar Al-Ansari affirmed that Qatar University, alongside the country's other higher education institutions, contributes to supplying the labour market with qualified national talent, noting that employers are keen to recruit its graduates for their academic preparation, which is aligned with labour market needs.

In this context, Al-Ansari said: "The most distinctive and clearest thing about Qatar University is the word 'Qatar'. It is the country's first and largest national university, and for decades it was the cradle of higher education. Today, it's hard to find a home or family without a connection to QU; more than three generations now have ties to the university." "Over time, I believe any student we graduate who doesn't know how to use AI in their field will fall short, and may even face difficulties finding a job," Al-Ansari said. He added: "Students are not prohibited from using AI; what matters is how they use it to raise the quality of their work." Al-Ansari also outlined the university's efforts to enhance the skills and knowledge of its faculty, explaining that it is close to finalising a framework that defines the skills, knowledge and abilities required of any faculty member it recruits, so they add real value to the learning process and raise students' standards, alongside the continuous development of current faculty through a dedicated centre that offers workshops and training programmes.

"Faculty members are, first and foremost, teachers before they are specialists in any field, whether engineering, law or education," he said.

On the Qatarisation of academic staff, Al-Ansari explained that Qatari faculty make up around 30% of the university's total faculty and said he aspires for this to reach 60 to 70% in the future.

On research and innovation, Al-Ansari affirmed that Qatar University is the country's largest contributor to scientific research, with more than 4,000 research publications a year, noting that the university directs its research grants towards the country's development priorities and provides researchers with an incubation environment that supports their ideas from incubation through to technology readiness and intellectual property protection.

BPS Malayalam Department Head honoured by ICC

THE PENINSULA

DOHA: Birla Public School (BPS), Doha, has expressed pride in the recognition of Shiju P R, Head of the Malayalam Department, who was felicitated by the Indian Cultural Centre (ICC) during its Kerala Piravi celebrations held at Ideal Indian School recently.

Shiju P R was among the distinguished Malayalam teachers from Indian schools across Qatar honoured for their dedicated service and valuable contributions to Malayalam language education. The recognition acknowledges the significant role played by educators in nurturing the Malayalam language and preserving its rich literary and cultural heritage among the younger generation.



Shiju P R receiving the award from Ambassador of India to Qatar H E Dr. K Srikar Reddy and renowned singer G Venugopal during the function.

Ambassador of India to Qatar H E Dr. K. Srikar Reddy and renowned singer and Chairman of the Kerala Sangeetha Nataka Akademi G Venugopal jointly presented the awards. The proceedings were led by ICC President A P Manikantan, Vice President Shantanu Deshpande and General Secretary Abraham K Joseph, along with other distinguished dignitaries.

The celebration, commemorating the formation of the State of Kerala, highlighted the importance of Malayalam language education in helping students in Qatar remain connected to their roots. For children growing up away from their homeland, learning Malayalam provides a meaningful connection to Kerala's literature, songs, stories and cultural traditions.

This prestigious recognition marks a proud moment for Birla Public School and its Malayalam Department, reaffirming the institution's commitment to promoting linguistic diversity and preserving cultural heritage through education.

The Management, Principal, staff and students of Birla Public School, Doha, extended their heartfelt congratulations to Shiju P R on this well-deserved honour and commended his dedication to Malayalam language education.

ICE Qatar highlights engineering's role in building a better future

THE PENINSULA

DOHA: The Institution of Civil Engineers (ICE) Qatar has reaffirmed the vital role of engineering in improving quality of life and supporting Qatar's development, as it brought together industry leaders and engineering professionals to recognise professional achievements and highlight the contribution of infrastructure to society at its annual gathering in Doha recently.

ICE Qatar held its annual Gala Dinner recently at the InterContinental Doha Beach & Spa. The prestigious gathering welcomed President of the Institution of Civil Engineers David Porter, whose attendance reinforced the connection between Qatar's engineering community and the Institution's international network.

Led by ICE Qatar Chair Dr. Khaled Alnaas, alongside the organising committee, the evening recognised newly qualified Chartered Engineers and Fellows, celebrating their dedication to professional competence, leadership and lifelong learning.

In his welcome address, Dr. Khaled Alnaas said that engineering's greatest contribution lies in improving everyday life. Reliable roads, transport networks, water supplies and power systems underpin public health, comfort and dignity, even when their importance goes unnoticed.



Some of the participants at the event.

"Infrastructure gives us time," he said, explaining how shorter journeys allow families to spend more time together, while dependable essential services make communities safer and healthier. "Engineering is not about us. It is about the people we serve." The address highlighted the quality and scale of Qatar's infrastructure, including its modern road networks, Doha Metro, international airport, ports and utilities. These achievements reflect the country's long-term vision and investment in connecting communities, supporting economic growth and improving quality of life. Tribute was paid to the engineers, technicians, planners and workers whose efforts have helped translate that vision into services people rely on every day.

The evening also highlighted ICE's contribution to enriching Qatar's engineering community. Through technical lectures, site visits, mentoring and support for Chartership and Fellowship, the Institution helps professionals exchange knowledge, strengthen their skills and uphold high standards of competence and ethics.

Al Wakrah Municipality to distribute 10,000 free seedlings under green initiative

THE PENINSULA

DOHA: Al Wakrah Municipality will distribute 10,000 free seedlings to residents as part of an environmental initiative aimed at raising awareness about sustainability and encouraging home gardening.

The five-day initiative, titled "Al Wakrah Goes Green," will take place at Al Wakrah Public Park from November 8 to 12, from 7am to 11am daily.

The initiative will also include the distribution of free organic fertiliser to support residents in growing plants at home, alongside educational awareness visits to 10 schools to promote environmental awareness among students.

The programme seeks to encourage community participation in environmental protection, promote green spaces and instil sustainable practices among residents, particularly younger generations.

Through the distribution of seedlings and organic fertiliser, the municipality aims to make home gardening more accessible and encourage residents to contribute to a greener and healthier environment.

Five Palestinians killed by Israeli fire

GAZA: Five Palestinians, including a child, were killed yesterday in Israeli airstrikes, shelling and gunfire in different areas of the Gaza Strip, according to Palestinian medical and security sources.

In the latest incident, an Israeli drone strike targeted the town of Al-Zawayda in central Gaza, killing one Palestinian, Al-Aqsa Hospital said in a statement.

Earlier yesterday, another Israeli drone strike hit a tent sheltering displaced people in the same area, killing one Palestinian, the hospital said.

Meanwhile, a 12-year-old child was killed by Israeli army gunfire east of the Bureij refugee camp in central Gaza, according to Al-Awda Hospital.

In the southern Gaza Strip, Nasser Medical Complex said it received the body of a 54-year-old woman who was killed by Israeli army fire outside areas under Israeli control in the coastal Al-Mawasi area, west of Khan Younis.

The death toll among Palestinians in Gaza since the ceasefire took effect in October 2025 has reached 1,602, with 5,794 others wounded.

In a separate statement, the hospital reported that a 19-year-old girl was also killed by Israeli army fire in the same area.

Palestinian security sources told Xinhua that Israeli military vehicles opened heavy fire on the southern areas of Khan Younis, accompanied by artillery shelling and the demolition of buildings east of the city.

The eastern areas of Gaza City also came under sustained artillery shelling throughout the night, while Israeli tanks and armoured vehicles advanced toward the vicinity of Kamal Adwan Hospital and the Jabalia refugee camp in the northern Gaza Strip, the sources added.

According to the statistics released by Gaza's health authorities on Wednesday, the death toll among Palestinians since the ceasefire took effect in October 2025 had reached 1,602, with 5,794 others wounded.

The figures brought the cumulative death toll in the Gaza Strip since October 7, 2023, to 74,618, while the total number of wounded reached 175,920. — ***XINHUA***



Israeli authorities raze Palestinian homes

Palestinians carry belongings after Israeli authorities demolished five houses in the village of Biddu in the so-called Area C of the Israeli-occupied West Bank yesterday. (AFP)

Coalition intercepts missile launched towards Madinah region

RIYADH: The Coalition to Restore Legitimacy in Yemen announced that air defences intercepted and destroyed a ballistic missile launched by the Houthi group toward Al Madinah Al Munawwarah Region.

This was stated by Official Spokesperson of the Coalition to Restore Legitimacy in Yemen Major General Turki Al-Malki.

The Saudi Civil Defence also announced yesterday that the National Early Warning Platform had issued an alert about a potential danger in Yanbu Governorate.

In a post on X, the Saudi Civil Defence urged residents to remain calm, follow official instructions and go to the nearest safe location, where they should remain until the danger has passed.

It also urged them to avoid gathering in crowds or taking photos.

The Saudi Civil Defence also announced earlier yesterday that an alert had been issued by the National Early Warning Platform to alert of a potential danger in Sharurah Governorate. In a post on X, the Saudi Civil Defense urged residents to remain calm, follow official instructions and head to the nearest safe location, where they should stay until the danger has passed.

It also urged them to avoid gathering in crowds or taking photos or videos. — ***QNA***

Uncertainty over Nigeria vote as court bars opposition leader

LAGOS: A Nigerian court yesterday declared invalid the nomination of Atiku Abubakar as the presidential candidate for the opposition African Democratic Congress (ADC), just two months before the country's elections.

The party, which accused the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC) of involvement in the lawsuit, will appeal, its spokesman said — but the ruling creates legal headaches for the party and uncertainty for voters with the January 16 vote right around the corner.

The ADC, one of the main opposition parties trying to oust President Bola Tinubu, has been mired in lawsuits around its leadership, which have now ensnared its 2027 nominee.

Yesterday's decision is "another desperate attempt to cripple the opposition and deny Nigerians the right to choose their leaders in the forthcoming general elections", ADC spokesman Bolaji Abdullahi said in a statement. Earlier this year, the federal government backed a separate lawsuit over the ADC's eligibility to contest the 2027 vote.

Tinubu spokesman Daniel Bwala told AFP the APC "is not involved at all" in the suit over the party's leadership that sparked yesterday's decision.

Nigerian media reported that the federal high court in Abuja overturned the current leadership of the ADC by David Mark, who has been fighting with Nafiu Bala Gombe over heading the party.



Candidate of the opposition Peoples Democratic Party Atiku Abubakar raises hands during a campaign rally in Kano, northwest Nigeria, on February 9, 2023. (AFP)

In ruling against Mark, the nomination of Abubakar — made while he helmed the party — has also been tossed, Nigerian media reported. AFP

The decision was handed down a day after Abubakar launched his campaign with a rally in Sokoto state.

"The timing of this judgment is no coincidence," Abubakar said in a statement. — ***AFP***

At least seven killed in Cameroon attack

YAOUNDE: At least seven people, including four civilians and three militants, have been killed when Boko Haram fighters raided a locality in Cameroon's Far North region. The attack occurred overnight into Thursday in Koza in the Mayo-Tsanaga division. The militants invaded the locality while residents were asleep, ransacking homes and firing indiscriminately. — ***XINHUA***

Joshua Wong sentenced to 10 years in jail on national security charge in Hong Kong

HONG KONG: Joshua Wong was sentenced to ten years in jail yesterday in Hong Kong for "conspiracy to collude with a foreign country or with external elements to endanger national security."

The sentence was delivered by the High Court of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. Wong, former secretary-general of the now-disbanded anti-China group "Demosisto," was charged with conspiring with Nathan Law Kwun-chung and other persons to request a foreign country or an institution, organisation or individual outside the Chinese mainland and China's Hong Kong and Macao to impose sanctions or blockade, or to engage in other hostile activities against the HKSAR or the People's Republic of China, during the period from July 1 to Nov. 23, 2020. Wong was arrested for the case in Stanley Prison in June 2025 when he was serving a 56-month sentence after being convicted of conspiracy to subvert state power in November 2024.

He pleaded guilty in September this year. — ***XINHUA***

Singapore to end most haze mitigation measures tomorrow

MOST Singapore government agencies will cease haze mitigation measures tomorrow (Saturday), as the country's air quality improves after weeks of dense smog.

The distribution of N95 and equivalent masks through vending machines and at community clubs will end at 6pm on November 7, the National Environment Agency said in a statement. Air-conditioned rooms at select centres that have been designated as shelters will also close then, while haze-related measures for outdoor workers will also end on Saturday.

"The haze situation for Singapore has improved with the establishment of inter-monsoon conditions and more showers," the agency said.

Meanwhile, the Public Health Preparedness Clinic Scheme and Haze Subsidy Scheme will be deactivated by the health ministry on Nov. 12, according to the statement.

The inter-agency Haze Task Force will also be stood down.

The decision comes after Singapore has enjoyed more benign readings for its pollution standards index in recent days, following weeks of "unhealthy" or "very unhealthy" air quality due to a severe wildfire season in Indonesia. The country toughened its law on cross-border haze on Wednesday, which now includes restrictions and fines for businesses dealing with entities or individuals suspected to have engaged in conduct leading to the blazes. — ***THE WASHINGTON POST***

IEC assures transparency as vote counting and verification continue across South Africa

JOHANNESBURG: The Electoral Commission of South Africa (IEC) yesterday called for calm and patience as vote counting and verification continued following Wednesday's local government elections, which were conducted largely peacefully despite some localized disruptions.

Sy Mamabolo, chief electoral officer of the IEC, briefed the media yesterday morning on the progress of the vote-counting and results-processing operations.

He said that ballots were being counted at voting stations, while election results were being captured, transmitted and verified as part of the process to ensure the accuracy and integrity of the results.

"The counting, tallying and verification process continued throughout the night in the presence of political party agents, independent candidate agents and accredited observers, reinforcing the transparency, integrity and accountability of the electoral process," Mamabolo said.

"The Commission appeals to political parties, independent candidates and their supporters to exercise patience and allow the counting and results-capturing processes to unfold," he added.

Mamabolo also urged political candidates and other stakeholders to refrain from circulating unverified information or disinformation about the election results, warning that such actions could create unnecessary tensions, incite violence and potentially lead to property damage and injuries.



Supporters of a local candidate celebrate as partial results are announced, in Durban, South Africa, yesterday. (AFP)

Early results released by the IEC yesterday showed the ruling African National Congress (ANC) narrowly ahead of its main opposition rival, the Democratic Alliance (DA), in the national proportional representation vote.

With about 33 percent of the votes counted, the ANC had secured around 32 percent of the vote, compared with approximately 28 percent for the DA, according to preliminary figures reported yesterday. The results remain provisional and could change significantly as more voting districts complete the counting and verification process.

The early results also indicated strong regional performances by several parties. The ANC maintained leads in a number of provinces, while the DA was ahead in Gauteng and the Western Cape.

The uMkhonto weSizwe (MK) Party was leading in KwaZulu-Natal.

As these are local government elections, the composition of individual municipal councils, rather than the national vote share alone, will determine which parties govern at the local level.

Where no party wins an outright majority, coalition negotiations are likely to play a decisive role in forming municipal administrations.

The 2026 local government elections represent a significant political test for the ANC amid years of declining electoral support. In the 2021 municipal elections, the party received 45.59 percent of the national vote, falling below the 50-percent threshold for the first time since the end of apartheid in 1994. — ***XINHUA***

World in brief

Egypt, Saudi Arabia call for dialogue, diplomacy

CAIRO: Egyptian Foreign Minister Badr Abdelatty and his Saudi counterpart, H H Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al Saud, yesterday stressed the need to prioritise dialogue and allow more time for diplomatic and political efforts to prevent further escalation in the region.

During a phone call, the two ministers also called on all parties concerned to negotiate and demonstrate the necessary flexibility to avoid the risks of renewed military confrontations, whose negative repercussions continue to affect the region, according to a statement by the Egyptian Foreign Ministry.

The two sides also reviewed joint efforts, in coordination with regional and international partners to restore calm and prevent further escalation in the region, the statement said.

They agreed to maintain coordination and consultations and intensify contacts with relevant parties in the coming period to build consensus on prioritising negotiations and avoiding escalatory steps. — ***XINHUA***

Jordanian security officer killed in stabbing attack

AMMAN: A Jordanian security officer was killed yesterday in a "terrorist" stabbing attack during his official duty in Amman, and another officer was wounded while arresting the attacker, according to the Public Security Directorate (PSD).

The incident occurred at 12:20pm (0920 GMT) when an assailant ambushed the officer and stabbed him with a "sharp weapon," a PSD spokesperson said in a statement.

The officer was rushed to the hospital but succumbed to his injuries shortly afterward.

A security patrol intervened immediately and arrested the attacker. An officer in charge of the patrol suffered facial injuries during the confrontation and was also taken to hospital. His condition is stable, said the statement.

Preliminary findings indicated that the attacker had intended and planned to carry out a terrorist attack against public security personnel, the statement added. — ***XINHUA***

Türkiye, Iran probe death of soldier along border

ANKARA: Türkiye and Iran are investigating an incident involving the death of a Turkish soldier along the Türkiye-Iran border, the Turkish Defense Ministry said yesterday.

The ministry's spokesperson Zeki Akturk said at a press briefing that Turkish soldier Yusuf Sait Unlu was wounded by gunfire on October 31 while intervening in an illegal border crossing, and the soldier died on the same day despite medical interventions.

The incident took place in the area overseen by the Engin Mayin Border Outpost on the Türkiye-Iran border, and the gunfire was assessed to have originated from the Iranian side, he added.

Akturk said Türkiye launched judicial and administrative investigations immediately following the incident and held talks with the Iranian side at the scene on Tuesday, noting that the two sides are cooperating closely. — ***XINHUA***

India approves $1.53bn energy storage projects

NEW DELHI: The Indian government on Wednesday approved a $1.53bn scheme to help build 92 GWh of energy storage capacity in the country.

In breakdown, the scheme envisages the development of 60 GWh of Hydro Pumped Storage Plant capacity, 30 GWh of Battery Energy Storage System capacity and 2 GWh of capacity through alternative energy storage technologies, according to a government statement.

A key objective of the scheme is to strengthen India's domestic energy storage manufacturing ecosystem through demand-side financial support and reduce dependence on imported components, the statement said. Reports said this development is significant given India's ambitious target of 500 GW of renewable energy by 2030. — ***XINHUA***

Bomb threats hit European flights for third day

ROME: Italian, French and Bulgarian fighter jets scrambled yesterday as at least 14 European flights were hit by hoax bomb alerts for the third day this week, authorities and airlines said.

The hoaxes particularly targeted low-cost carriers and flights to or from Bulgaria, Czech Republic and Italy.

Italian air force jets escorted a Finnair flight from Helsinki to Rome while French fighters guided a Aer Lingus Dublin-Rome flight to a military base outside Paris. Bulgaria's air force escorted three planes targeted by threats.

Three flights were diverted in all but all the jets landed safely with no explosives found.

More than 20 hoaxes have now been reported this week with low-cost carrier Ryanair the victim of at least seven.

Three Ryanair planes headed for Sofia from Madrid, Copenhagen, and London Stansted were targeted by bomb threats, a spokesperson for the Bulgarian Ministry of Transport told *AFP*.

Italian air force jets escorted a Finnair flight from Helsinki to Rome while French fighters guided a Aer Lingus Dublin-Rome flight to a military base outside Paris. Bulgaria's air force escorted three planes targeted by threats.

Two of the planes landed in Sofia but the flight from London-Stansted was diverted to Plovdiv Airport, east of the capital.

Air force fighter jets escorted all three planes, the defence ministry said, saying such missions "detect, identify and escort the aircraft." All three planes were later inspected, and no explosives were found, an interior ministry spokesperson told *AFP*.

A Finnair flight from Helsinki to Rome was escorted to Rome by a fighter jet and checked by bomb experts, a Romes Fiumicino Airport spokesman told *AFP*.



A Lufthansa aeroplane passes by Ryanair and Bulgarian aeroplanes at Vassil Levski airport in Sofia yesterday. (AFP)

A Finnair spokesperson Stiina Tuunanen, confirmed that "nothing unusual was found" when the jet landed.

Finnair has a "very clear process that we follow in situations like this, and we always work closely with the local authorities," Tuunanen said.

She said another false bomb threat had targeted flight AY1471 from Helsinki to Vienna, without providing further information.

After receiving a threat, a Wizz Air flight from Milan to Warsaw was re-routed to Vienna, the airline said, "in accordance with established safety protocols and procedures".

Another Wizz Air flight from Milan to Bucharest landed at its destination safely, "following which a crisis unit was set up at Henri Coanda Airport," the Romanian intelligence service said in a statement.

An Aer Lingus flight from Dublin to Rome was rerouted to France after a bomb threat. It was escorted by military aircraft to the Evreux air base west of Paris, French authorities said.

"The flight landed safely and Aer Lingus will work to reaccommodate customers to their final destination as soon as possible," the airline said in a statement.

The origin and motives of the threats were unknown, but come amid a rise in hybrid attacks in Europe, sometimes linked by authorities to Russia or Iran.

France's secretary general for defence and national security, Nicolas Roche, highlighted to parliament last month "the massing of hybrid attacks in all their diversity - sabotage, cyber, drones, espionage of course -that we are seeing take shape in Europe." Earlier threats yesterday, 10 flights were targeted with bomb threats, all of which turned out to be hoaxes.

The alerts forced the closure of a Warsaw airport and the deployment of Italian air force jets to protect flights. — ***AFP***

EU hosts talks on Ukraine's post-war reconstruction

BRUSSELS: The European Commission hosted talks yesterday on Ukraine's post-war economic development and instruments to support its reconstruction, according to a Commission statement.

Representatives of the European Union (EU), Ukraine, Germany, France, Britain, the United States, NATO and the World Bank participated in the discussions.

The talks followed recent meetings in Miami and built on a prosperity framework developed earlier this year with Ukraine and the US, the statement said.

The work focuses on refining scenarios for Ukraine's post-war economic development and identifying tools to support its future development and complement its own efforts.

The Commission said EU support would continue as efforts toward a lasting peace proceed. According to the statement, the EU has provided €231.5bn (about $260 bn) in overall support since the conflict escalated in 2022.

Separately, talks on security guarantees for Ukraine are scheduled for yesterday at NATO headquarters, news outlet Rapporteur reported.

A NATO spokesperson said representatives of France, Germany, Britain and the United States would meet with NATO officials to discuss steps toward a "just and sustainable" end to the conflict, according to the report.

Diplomats told the outlet that the European Commission would also attend. — ***XINHUA***

Sweden to reintroduce internal Schengen border controls

HELSINKI: Sweden announced yesterday that it would reintroduce internal border controls within the Schengen Area for six months starting Nov. 12, citing "a serious threat to public order and internal security." In a statement, the Swedish government said its decision was based on an assessment of the deteriorating security situation resulting from the Russia-Ukraine conflict.

The new border controls will remain in place until May 11, 2027.

The government said reintroducing internal border controls was one of the measures necessary to address serious threats to Sweden's internal security, helping authorities identify incoming travelers who could pose risks to public order and internal security.

Swedish police will determine where and how the checks are conducted and adjust the measures according to what is necessary to safeguard public order and internal security.

The government said the decision was made in accordance with European Union law. — ***XINHUA***



Ibero-American Summit held in Madrid

Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez and King Felipe VI joined leaders from across Latin America, Spain and Portugal for a family photograph at the 30th Ibero-American Summit in Madrid yestserday. The summit focused on strengthening regional cooperation and addressing shared challenges, including economic development, digital transformation and climate change. (AFP)

Over 2.6 million Cubans lack access to sufficient water

HAVANA: More than 2.6 million people in Cuba are affected by disruptions to piped water supplies, a water resources official said.

"As of Tuesday, 2,681,770 inhabitants were affected by disruptions to the piped water network," Antonio Rodriguez, president of the National Hydraulic Resources Institute, said on a radio programme hosted by Cuban President Miguel Diaz-Canel and broadcast by state-run Radio.

Another 25 percent of the disruptions were attributed to problems with water-pumping equipment, he said. In Havana alone, 536,000 people were affected, the highest figure among the country's provinces, he added.

To tackle the problem in Havana, authorities plan to build 10 solar farms with a combined capacity of 200 megawatts, along with energy storage systems, to support three of the capital's water supply sources, Rodriguez announced. — ***XINHUA***

World in brief

EU plans 'AI literacy' certificates for schoolchildren

BRUSSELS: The European Union said yesterday it plans to start piloting an "AI literacy" certificate for schoolchildren, as part of efforts to address the impact of the fast-developing technology on education.

"It will help young pupils understand how AI works, check what it tells them, spot manipulation, and know when to switch off," said European Commission vice president Roxana Minzatu.

Brussels said it would look to launch the new certificate for 15-year-old learners for the 2027/2028 school year. — ***AFP***

Ukraine says nuclear plants cut generating capacity

KYIV: Ukraine's nuclear power plants have been forced to reduce their power generating capacity due to large-scale Russian attacks on the country's energy infrastructure, Ukraine's Energy Ministry said on Wednesday.

The plants will gradually return to normal operating levels once energy workers repair the damaged power grid, the ministry said in a statement. The latest attacks have left consumers without electricity in six regions, while scheduled power outages are in effect across most of the country. — ***XINHUA***

Armenia to apply for EU membership by 2028: PM

YEREVAN: Armenia plans to formally apply for European Union membership by 2028, Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan said yesterday, signalling a further shift away from longtime ally Russia.

Armenia's relations with Moscow have deteriorated sharply after Yerevan accused Russia of failing to protect it against Azerbaijan, while Moscow imposed trade restrictions on Armenian agricultural exports and threatened to cut energy supplies. — ***XINHUA***

EU unveils education package to tackle declining skills, teacher shortages

BRUSSELS: The European Commission yesterday unveiled an education and skills package to reverse declining achievement in basic skills, address teacher shortages and help schools use artificial intelligence (AI) safely.

The Commission proposed a Council recommendation urging member states to target reforms and investment at improving basic skills, strengthening school support and giving teachers greater autonomy.

European School Alliances will link schools across member states through long-term partnerships, each with a measurable plan to improve pupils'.

Digital education measures include plans to pilot an AI Literacy Certificate from the 2027/28 school year. A proposed European Healthy Screens Pledge will offer guidance on online safety, screen time and balancing online and offline activities. — ***XINHUA***

Paraguay oppn seeks President's removal over banking crisis

PARAGUAY: The Paraguayan opposition presented a motion to remove President Santiago Pena from office over the Central Bank's seizure of a major lender linked to him, a lawmaker told *AFP* on Wednesday.

Protests have rippled across the South American nation after the takeover of Ueno Bank on Tuesday left millions of depositors, including pensioners, without access to their money.

Right-winger Pena owned shares in a group that controlled Ueno Bank, but he sold them last year.

The request for his dismissal for alleged misconduct and conflict of interest received 35 signatures among opposition lawmakers, dissident ruling party lawmaker Mauricio Espinola told *AFP*.

Congress will hold a session on the motion yesterday morning, he said.

After examining the charges, at least 53 out of 80 lawmakers must approve the removal of Pena and Vice President Pedro Alliana for the proposed punishment to move forward.

The request would then move to the Senate, where it would require 30 out of 45 votes of approval.

Pena's ruling party holds a majority in both houses.

Life savings gone

Long lines of people trying to withdraw their money from Ueno branches snaked down Asuncion's streets on Tuesday.

Distraught depositors joined protests around the capital that evening, with more expected to take place on Wednesday.

"I lost my entire life savings," a tearful Marcelino Vergara, 68, told *AFP* at a demonstration.

"They should all go to jail," Vergara said.

Pena has attempted to placate rising anger among Paraguayans over the ordeal.

Arrest warrants were issued for eight of Ueno's top executives, including its president, Miguel Vazquez, who turned himself in to police. — ***AFP***

NASA confirms Swift Observatory has re-entered Earth's atmosphere

LOS ANGELES: NASA confirmed Wednesday that its Neil Gehrels Swift Observatory re-entered Earth's atmosphere nearly 22 years after its launch.

The U.S. Space Force confirmed that the Swift observatory re-entered Earth's atmosphere at 739 a.m. Eastern Time (1239 GMT) Wednesday over the North Sumatra region of Indonesia, at about 3.4 degrees north latitude and 98.6 degrees east longitude.

NASA had expected most of the spacecraft to burn up during re-entry, although some components may have survived.

Launched in 2004, Swift was designed to study gamma-ray bursts, the universe's most powerful explosions. Originally planned for a two-year prime mission, the observatory operated for more than two decades, studying a wide range of cosmic phenomena. It observed different wavelengths of light, rapidly pointed toward short-lived cosmic outbursts and sent alerts to other observatories to coordinate follow-up observations, NASA said.

NASA had sought to extend Swift's operational life through a commercial spacecraft servicing mission. Katalyst Space Technologies' robotic spacecraft LINK was launched in July to approach, capture and boost Swift to a higher orbit.

However, LINK encountered attitude-control problems during commissioning, preventing it from safely carrying out the planned operations. The mission was scaled back to technology demonstrations, and LINK re-entered Earth's atmosphere on Sept. 25.

NASA announced on Oct. 23 that Swift had ended its science mission as its orbit continued to decay. — ***XINHUA***

France workers strike, march for 'dignified wage'

PARIS: Striking workers marched across France against the rising cost of living yesterday, with hundreds of thousands of people expected to take to the streets nationwide in a new escalation following weeks of protest.

More than 250,000 people were taking part in demonstrations across 73 cities by the afternoon, the major labour union CGT said.

The demonstrations come as the eurozone's second largest economy battles to redress its finances, six months ahead of elections to replace centrist President Emmanuel Macron, with the far right leading in opinion polls.

The high school student movement that began with youths protesting over learning conditions has coincided with widespread anger over the rising cost of living and inequality, which culminated on October 17 in the worst rioting France has seen in years.

The unions are calling for across-the-board wage raises, tax reforms and better learning conditions for young people and have complained about police restrictions on certain protests.As many as 80,000 people were expected to march in the capital Paris.

The planned action prompted the Eiffel Tower to close for the day, operators said on the monument's website. Dozens of high-schoolers protested in several cities, with the government reporting blockades at 81 out of the country's 3,700 high schools.

A high school student association said classes had been suspended at 1,000 such secondary schools, including those blockaded and those closed on a day of strikes.

Around 16 percent of teachers nationwide were on strike, the education ministry said. — ***AFP***



Demonstrators gather at place de la Republique during a demonstration as unions hold strikes alongside student-led demonstrations in Paris yesterday. (AFP)