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Psychiatry

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2<sup>ND</sup> DECEMBER 2022  
9:00 AM - 1:00 PM & 5:00 PM - 10:00 PM  
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## World Cup fans without tickets can enter Qatar

New 'Early December' feature now available on Hayya Card platform

Qatar has launched a new Hayya Card option which will allow non-ticketed fans to enter the country following the conclusion of the FIFA World Cup group stage.

The 'Early December' feature, which allows fans without tickets to apply for a Hayya Card, came into force yesterday midnight.

Fans will need to show proof of accommodation and pay an entry fee of QR500 to obtain the Hayya Card and enter Qatar, the Supreme Committee for Delivery & Legacy (SC) announced in a statement yesterday. Children under 12 will not be charged.

In a tweet, the Ministry of Interior explained that non-ticketed fans can

book hotel reservation on the website, qatar2022.qa/book

The Hayya Card is mandatory for FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 fans. It provides access to stadiums with a valid match ticket, entry to the FIFA Fan Festival and free public transport.

Khalid Ali al-Mawlawi, deputy director general, Marketing, Communications & Event Experience, SC, said: "It's been a wonderful tournament so far. We've welcomed hundreds of thousands of fans from across the world for an unrivalled festival of football and exchange of cultures.

"As we move into the knockout stages of the tournament, we're delighted to offer the chance for more fans to visit Qatar and experience the special atmosphere of the first FIFA World Cup in the Middle East and Arab world."

Fans have plenty of entertainment options away from the stadiums in Qa-

tar, including the FIFA Fan Festival at Al Bidda Park, the 6km Corniche Avenue and a vast array of live music, cultural experiences and fan zones.

Fans who wish to apply for the Early December Hayya Card feature should note the following: Ticket holders for matches from today (Saturday, Dec 3) will not be required to pay QR500. Fans who pay the QR500 entry fee and purchase FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 tickets later will not be eligible for a refund.

After paying the QR500 entry fee and confirming their accommodation, fans will receive an entry permit to Qatar via e-mail. Fans are advised not to travel until completing the Hayya Card application process as they will not be allowed to board a flight or enter through the Abu Samra land border without the entry permit. Hayya Card holders are able to stay in Qatar until January 23, 2023.

## Amir meets New York City mayor



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani met yesterday evening at Al Janoub Stadium with Mayor of New York City Eric Adams, who is currently visiting the country to attend part of the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 matches. During the meeting, they discussed co-operation relations between Qatar and the United States, in addition to discussing several issues of mutual interest. (QNA)

## Amir holds phone call with UK PM

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani held a phone call yesterday evening with UK Prime Minister Rishi Sunak. During the call, Sunak congratulated the Amir for the launch of the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022, praising the good organisation, and wishing the participating teams well in the competition. The call dealt with discussing bilateral relations, the means to enhance them in all fields of co-operation, besides discussing the latest regional and international developments. (QNA)

## International protection urged for Palestinians

The Palestinian presidency said yesterday that crimes which have become an official policy for the successive Israeli governments require urgent intervention to provide international protection for the defenceless Palestinian people. In a statement, it stressed that the continued international silence led to the commission of such crimes, stating that the ongoing policy of impunity and lack of accountability have encouraged these governments to commit more crimes against the Palestinian people. The presidency slammed the cold-blooded killing of a Palestinian youth at the hands of an Israeli soldier as a heinous crime and as part of the series of crimes committed daily against the Palestinian people. (QNA)

## S Korea, Switzerland reach World Cup last 16



Players of Switzerland celebrate defeating Serbia 3-2 and qualifying to the next round of the tournament, at the end of the Qatar 2022 World Cup Group G football match between Serbia and Switzerland at Stadium 974 in Doha yesterday.



South Korea's Kim Young-gwon scores their first goal against Portugal during the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 Group H match at Education City Stadium yesterday. (Reuters)

able to do my best and I am thankful for my team-mates that they were able to cover me in the moments I wasn't able to fulfil my duties. I'm very proud of them."

Earlier Uruguay crashed out of the World Cup despite beating Ghana 2-0 after South Korea scored a late winner in the other Group H match to leapfrog the South American side.

"We waited really long for this moment and we as players believed altogether we could do this," he said. "There were moments when I wasn't

able to do my best and I am thankful for my team-mates that they were able to cover me in the moments I wasn't able to fulfil my duties. I'm very proud of them."

"We had several chances to score the third goal (which would have put Uruguay through)," said Uruguay coach Diego Alonso.

"For 80 minutes we were qualified and we had lots of chances, but in the end it wasn't possible."

Also yesterday, Switzerland booked

However, Suarez finished the match on the bench in tears as the news came in of South Korea's last-gasp victory over Portugal, which meant the Asian side had moved above the Uruguayans into second place in Group H on goals scored.

"We had several chances to score the third goal (which would have put Uruguay through)," said Uruguay coach Diego Alonso.

"For 80 minutes we were qualified and we had lots of chances, but in the end it wasn't possible."

Also yesterday, Switzerland booked

a last-16 showdown with Portugal at the World Cup after a 3-2 win over Serbia in a bad-tempered match secured them second place in Group G.

Xherdan Shaqiri's deflected strike put the Swiss ahead but Aleksandar Mitrovic's fine header brought Serbia level at Stadium 974.

Dusan Vlahovic then gave Serbia the lead only for Brel Embolo to equalise before half-time.

Remo Freuler's brilliant goal early in the second half sent the Swiss through to the knockout rounds for the fourth time in five World Cups.

In an inconsequential match, Vincent Aboubakar headed in a stoppage-time winner and was then sent off as Cameroon claimed a memorable 1-0 victory over favourites Brazil at the World Cup yesterday, but still failed to go through to the last 16.

Aboubakar, who had come in to captain Rigobert Song's team, connected with a cross from substitute Jerome Ngom Mbekeli to break the deadlock in the 92nd minute at Doha's Lusail Stadium. **Sport Pages 1-8**

## Qatar condemns attempts to politicise and racialise sports



HE Sheikha Alya Ahmed bin Saif al-Thani

bin Hamad al-Thani with inspiring words.

"We have worked hard, along with many people, to make it one of the most successful tournaments. We have exerted all efforts and invested for the good of all humanity. Finally, we have reached the opening day, the day that you have been eagerly waiting for," she said, quoting the Amir's speech at the opening ceremony.

"People of different races, nationalities, faiths and orientations will gather here in Qatar, and around screens on all continents to share the same exciting moments. How beautiful it is for people to put aside what divides them in order to celebrate their diversity and what brings them together at the same time," His Highness added.

She expressed her appreciation of His Highness's historic speech, saying it was an eloquent reply to the unfair and politicised campaigns, that carried racial elements, target-

ing Qatar's hosting of the World Cup. HE Sheikha Alya noted that the announcement of sustainable development goals at the World Cup 2022 during the historic launch of Scoring For The Goals on Nov 21, which calls for co-operation to achieve sustainable development goals on the sidelines of the competition.

In this context, she noted the launch of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Pavilion on the sidelines of the World Cup competition in the Fan Zone at Al Bidda Park by Chairperson of Education Above All (EAA) Foundation and SDG Advocate Her Highness Sheikha Moza bint Nasser.

HE Sheikha Alya confirmed that this pavilion will hold and organise various activities throughout the days of the tournament, in co-operation with the Foundation's partners from Unicef, Unesco and the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, pointing to holding discussion sessions with

world leaders, presenting works of art, and workshops to highlight sport as a means to promote international development and peace, in addition to its role in achieving the goals of sustainable development.

She also expressed Qatar's pride in this pavilion, which had the honour of visiting UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres during his participation in the opening of the tournament.

HE Sheikha Alya renewed Qatar's firm commitment to work with regional and international partners to confront international challenges and problems, and to provide effective solutions to them, especially the implementation of the relevant General Assembly resolution.

She praised the report of the UN secretary-general on sports as an incentive for a better and stronger recovery for everyone, calling on member countries to implement the report's important recommendations.

## COMMUNITY

See Pages 7 & 8

### Today's schedule

Round of 16

Netherlands vs USA, 6pm  
at Khalifa International Stadium

Argentina vs Australia, 10pm  
at Ahmad Bin Ali Stadium

### Yesterday's results

Group G

Cameroon 1 Brazil 0

Serbia 2 Switzerland 3

Group H

Uruguay 2 Ghana 0

South Korea 2 Portugal 1

**Amir greets  
UAE president**

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani, His Highness the Deputy Amir Sheikh Abdullah bin Hamad al-Thani and HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Khalid bin Khalifa bin Abdulaziz al-Thani sent yesterday cables of congratulations to UAE President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed al-Nahyan on his country's National Day.

**Amir sends cables  
of congratulations  
to Lao president**

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani and His Highness the Deputy Amir Sheikh Abdullah bin Hamad al-Thani sent cables of congratulations to the President of Lao People's Democratic Republic, Thongloun Sisoulith, on his country's national day. HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Khalid bin Khalifa bin Abdulaziz al-Thani sent a similar cable of congratulations to Prime Minister Phankham Viphavanh. (QNA)

**QNL, QU presidents tour fascinating Darb Al Saai activities**

**H**E the Minister of State and President of Qatar National Library Dr Hamad bin Abdulaziz al-Kawari and Qatar University President Dr Hassan bin Rashid al-Derham visited on Thursday evening the Darb Al Saai permanent venue in Umm

Salal Mohamed, accompanied by HE the Minister of Culture and Chairman of the Organising Committee for the National Day 2022 celebrations Sheikh Abdulrahman bin Hamad al-Thani.

The National Day celebrations are held on Dec 18 under

the slogan "Our Unity Source of Our Strength".

During the tour, the dignitaries were briefed on some of Darb Al Saai's heritage and cultural activities.

They reviewed the artistic exhibitions and attended the Poetry and Values seminar at

Darb Al Saai Theatre. The Qatar University president said in a statement that he was pleased to visit Darb Al Saai in its new edition and the permanent venue in Umm Salal Mohamed, and to get acquainted with the new and distinguished activities, praising the remarkable

organisation. Speaking at the event, the QU president said that the first thing that caught his attention was the good and distinguished planning and organisation of activities and shows, adding that this year's edition includes many new activities and ideas that are pre-

sented for the first time. He hailed the Ministry of Culture's activities presented to the general public and the participation of parents, families and children, including citizens, residents, guests and visitors of the State of Qatar in Darb Al Saai activities. (QNA)

**Culture minister honours Kuwaiti school delegation**

**H**E the Minister of Culture Sheikh Abdulrahman bin Hamad al-Thani (pictured) and Chairman of the Organising Committee for the National Day Celebrations, honoured the delegation of Balat Al-Shuhada Secondary School for Boys in Kuwait, during their visit to Darb Al Saai yesterday, which hosts the activities of the Qatar National Day, which falls on Dec 18 each year.

The delegation toured Darb Al Saai, during which they learned about various aspects of the cultural events and activities held there, as they expressed their joy and pride in what Qatar offers to its guests, the exceptional organisation of the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022, as well as the beautiful and various activities in Darb Al Saai.

The Director of Balat Al-Shuhada School, Ali al-Dhafiri, appreciated in a statement the warm welcome of Qatari officials, saying that "warm reception and generosity is not strange for our brothers in our second country, Qatar".

He expressed his admiration for Darb Al Saai, which includes various cultural and heritage

activities and events and their educational implications for students, as they have the opportunity to learn about Qatari and Gulf heritage in general, due to the convergence of customs, traditions and culture as well.

Al-Dhafiri extended his congratulations to the leadership and people of Qatar on the National Day and the success of organising the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022, wishing the State further progress and prosperity.

For his part, the Assistant Director at Balat Al-Shuhada School Abdullah Zakaria, said that the visit to this large gathering of heritage and cultural events is very important, expressing his admiration for the design of the buildings in Darb Al Saai, which reflects the old architectural style in the Arab Gulf countries, and provides an opportunity for students to learn about the development of building forms in these countries.

The Kuwaiti school delegation, which includes 104 people, the principal, three assistant principals, 32 teachers and 68 students, arrived in Doha to attend part of the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 matches. (QNA)

**Pele thanks Qatar for tribute**

**F**ootball legend Pele thanked Qatar and football fans for the positive messages he received during his visit to the hospital.

He posted on his official Instagram account a picture of two towers in Lusail with his picture on it saying "Get Well Soon". Pele wrote: "Thanks to Qatar for this tribute, and to everyone who sends me good vibes." Pele is the only player in history to win three World Cups. (QNA)

**Al-Muraikhi meets Ghana's minister**

HE the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Sultan bin Saad al-Muraikhi met yesterday with Ghana's Minister for Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration, Shirley Ayorkor Botchwey, who is visiting the country to attend part of the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 activities. During the meeting, they discussed the bilateral relations. (QNA)

**Darb Al Saai hosts seminar on poetry and values**

**Q**atar Poetry Centre (Diwan Al Arab) held a seminar entitled 'Poetry and Values' at Darb Al Saai on Thursday as part of the programme of cultural seminars accompanying the activities and celebrations of Qatar National Day on Dec 18. This year, it is held under the slogan 'Our Unity Source of Our Strength'.

The event was attended by HE the Minister of Culture and Chairman of the Organising Committee for the National Day 2022 celebrations Sheikh Abdulrahman bin Hamad al-Thani, HE the Minister of State and President of Qatar National

Library Dr Hamad bin Abdulaziz al-Kawari and Qatar University President Dr Hassan bin Rashid al-Derham, and a number of intellectuals, writers, media professionals, and the audience of Darb Al Saai.

It was attended by poets Lahdan al-Kubaisi, member of the study committee at the Qatar Poetry Centre, poet Ali al-Masoudi, poet Mahmoud Zaibak, and presented by journalist Atta Mohamed.

The seminar highlighted the importance of poetry and values and their definition and tackled the meanings of different values. (QNA)

**Qatar records over 7,000 flights in first week of FIFA World Cup**

The Qatar Civil Aviation Authority (QCAA) announced that the first week of the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 recorded more than 7,000 flights, noting that the air traffic at both Hamad and Doha International Airports witnessed a significant increase since the kick-off of the tournament. In a statement, the QCAA said that many Gulf carriers began to operate shuttle flights to Qatar. In addition, airlines from Arab countries and the rest of the world enhance their services to Doha to provide integrated air transport for tournament fans. The QACC affirmed that several international airlines, including German Lufthansa, Air France, Finnair, and KLM, in addition to airlines from South America and Africa, have commenced operating regular and charter flights to Qatar, which has led to a noticeable operational intensity between Qatar and the rest of the world. The statement indicated that the development of air transport in Qatar continues with the activation of the Doha Flight Information Region (FIR), which increased capacity and air routes arriving to and departing from Qatar to achieve more streamlined air movements and a greater guarantee of safety. (QNA)

**Sensory rooms at World Cup stadiums help create memorable experience for fans with special needs**

FYI Yassine Chahboub, it has been a lifelong dream to attend the FIFA World Cup.

He loves the game, and is always excited when we go to the stadium. Although he loves the sights and sounds of being in the stands, they can sometimes be a bit too much for him. As a child with Autism, his senses can be overloaded, but these sensory rooms make the experience very manageable," said Badre Bedrikch.

Working with local stakeholders, the Supreme Committee for Delivery & Legacy (SC), FIFA and the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 LLC has set up sensory rooms for fans with access requirements at three Qatar 2022 stadiums: Al Bayt, Lusail and Education City. The spaces allow fans to watch matches in a quieter space, equipped with assistive technology and managed by expert staff. This edition of the FIFA World Cup has included the largest deployment of sensory rooms at a mega sporting event in history.

A number of mobile sensory rooms have also been set up across Qatar to give fans the opportunity to step away from large crowds or loud music. Locations include the Corniche, where the SC has organised a vast number of cultural activations, and the FIFA Fan Festival at Al Bidda Park. For Adel al-Awad, bringing his 13-year-old brother, Ibrahim, to a

FIFA World Cup match is an important experience.

"I am delighted to see Ibrahim

being given the opportunity to

attend football matches. He loves

the game, and is always excited

when we go to the stadium. Al-

though he loves the sights and

sounds of being in the stands,

they can sometimes be a bit too

much for him. As a child with Au-

tism, his senses can be overloa-

ded, but these sensory rooms make

the experience very manageable,"

said Badre Bedrikch.

"More importantly, these types

of facilities give Ibrahim the op-

portunity to experience large

events and gain the confidence to

be better integrated in social set-

tings," he added.

The SC, FIFA and the FIFA

World Cup Qatar 2022 LLC have

worked together closely to pri-

oritise accessibility throughout

tournament preparations, in line with the FIFA Sustainability Strategy.

The SC launched the Accessibility Forum in 2016, with members playing an active role in providing feedback on the SC's infrastructure projects, working towards meeting FIFA Accessibility and inclusive design standards, while helping to drive the accessibility agenda in Qatar. "Our commitment to accessibility has been part of our planning for the tournament from the very beginning. By working with the Accessibility Forum, we ensured that disabled people played a direct role in determining what type of services are available to them during the tournament, and how the World Cup can leave a long-lasting ac-

cessible legacy for the country and the region as a whole," said Khalid al-Naama, executive director, Community Engagement & Commercial Development, SC.

"For each edition of the FIFA World Cup, we step up our commitment to sustainability. Qatar 2022 is becoming a standard bearer for other major sporting events when it comes to accessibility, going beyond basic infrastruc-

ture. This is about ensuring that

every fan feels welcome and a part of

this event, and we are proud of

what we have achieved," added

Federico Addiechi, FIFA's Head of Sustainability & Environment.

In addition to sensory rooms, Qatar 2022 also features a number of firsts for disabled fans, including

the availability of audio descriptive commentary in Arabic at all matches. The tournament is

also being hailed as the most ac-

cessible edition of the FIFA World

Cup in history - with all eight

stadiums being outfitted with facil-

ties for disabled fans. (QNA)

**'Qatar ushered in new era of sports diplomacy'**

**QNA**  
New York

**K**uwait said that Qatar has become the focus of the world's attention after it successfully organised the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022, stressing that Qatar ushered in a new era of sports diplomacy and became a sports capital. This came in Kuwait's statement which was delivered by Diplomatic Attaché of the Kuwaiti mission to the UN Mubarak Saleh Abdullah during a session of the UN General Assembly, discussing the notion, "sports for peace and development."

The statement pointed out that Qatar's success in organising the World Cup 2022 is a Gulf achievement and an Arab success, adding that this outstanding edition of the World Cup will become an example for all sporting events in the future and will provide a practical example of the importance of sport and its role in nations' rapprochement and human solidarity.

The Kuwaiti diplomat said that his country's participation in this discussion emanates from its strong conviction in sports' role for evolving societies, cementing bonds among nations and raising good youth, he said, affirming Kuwait's support for the UNGA call on nations of the globe to observe "the world day for sports for sake of peace and development."

The best investment is the investment in human resources, he said, noting that sports help immune the youth against extremism, and that Kuwait, years back, had formed the ministry of youth and the public authority for youth and sports.

He also singled the great role played by the Kuwaiti Club for Disabilities "that has incubated special challenges' athletes of steel will."



Mejbri: Thrilled to be part of a team that defeated the much-celebrated French team.

## Tunisian World Cup 2022 squad member praises training facilities

By Joseph Varghese  
Staff Reporter

A member of the Tunisia's national football squad has showered praise on the training facilities offered during their World Cup campaign in Qatar, saying that was "perfect and superb".

In his first interaction with the media after his team's exit from the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022, Hannibal Mejbri, one of the youngest members of Team Tunisia, told *Gulf Times*: "We had superb facilities for practice all through our stay here. We had everything needed next to us and never had any issue with the any facilities."

"It was perfect and everything about the tournament is superb," he said. "We had a great experience, and I think it is one of the best world Cups ever."

The young Tunisian also noted that Qatar is a great place to be in.

"I came here for the Arab Cup last year. We were in the finals. I like the country and the entire atmosphere," Mejbri said. "The facilities in Qatar are very good, and the people are really nice. Qatar is a very nice country and the World Cup has shown that the country is capable of hosting any mega event."

The 19-year-old, who played the first game of the World Cup, said that it was a great feeling playing for his country.

"This is my first World Cup and I hope to play many more editions of the tournament in the coming years," Mejbri said. "I have played over 20 games for the country so far, and it is a wonderful feeling to be part of the national team and represent the country at the highest level of football."

He noted that it was great to be part of a team that defeated the much-celebrated French team.

"We are thrilled about it. It was a good win. But at the same time, it is disappointing that we could not qualify for the second round of the tournament and I am very sad about it," the footballer said. "However, as a team we have been able to play high quality football and hopefully we will be able to perform better in the next editions of World Cup and other matches."

He highlighted that Asian and African teams have done very well in this tournament.

"This World Cup is very different and special as several leading teams are out of the tournament in the first round itself," Mejbri said. "There are more representations from Africa and Asia in the next round. This is what the game of football is all about."

"I am very happy for Morocco qualifying for the next round," he added. "This will provide great boost for several countries in both the continents especially in the Arab world."

# A taste of local hospitality: Qatari offer refreshments to football fans



Fans receive refreshments outside a Qatari house near Al Thumama Stadium.



A yellow SUV parked on a street at night with people standing around it.

A number of Qatari living near Al Thumama Stadium are offering tables full of food and drinks for fans as they exit late at night after matches.

Local Arabic daily *Arrayah* reported that the Qatari hired workers specifically to distribute food and drinks to the fans to show them the traditional hospitality.

Ahmed Salem al-Sulaiti explained that since the start of the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022, the Qatari living near Al Thumama Stadium have been offering food and drink to fans and other guests, and they will continue this until the end of the tournament.

Light cakes, pancakes, sweets, dates, water, tea with milk, Arabic coffee and some desserts are being offered, he said.

"Through this gesture, Qatari show the guests and visitors the true nature of the people of the country, and highlight the spirit of openness towards others," al-Sulaiti said. "We want them to know that we are open for all and extend our hands for all, and they are welcomed in the country to enjoy our hospitality."

He added that he feels happy when fans pass by his house and accept his offer of hospitality.

Al-Sulaiti said that even though the



Ahmed Salem al-Sulaiti and his team waiting for fans outside his house near Al Thumama Stadium. PICTURES: Shemeer Rasheed

matches end late at night at the stadium, he does not mind waiting for the fans.

"More and more fans show their liking for Arabic coffee, and highly appreciate the gesture," he added.



A group of Mexican fans on their way to Hamad International Airport. PICTURES: Shafeeq Alingal



Two fans of Team Saudi Arabia.

## Saudi, Mexico and Tunisian fans upbeat despite teams not making it into second round

By Shafeeq Alingal  
Staff Reporter

Fans of Saudi Arabia, Mexico and Tunisia are upbeat even though their national teams did not make it to the second round of FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022.

Some of the fans have decided to stay in Doha while enjoying and ex-

ploring the country, while some left Doha on Thursday.

Others are planning to go home in the coming days.

"I am glad that our team performed well while making efforts to enter the second stage," Mexican fan Jorge told *Gulf Times*. "Unfortunately, this is not our turn."

He left for Mexico yesterday.

Mexico and Saudi Arabia are

among the countries that recorded high demand for the World Cup while Tunisia's match in the Education City Stadium on Wednesday witnessed thousands of fans cheering in red.

Tunisia defeated France 1-0 but the victory was not enough to help the team enter the second round.

Mexico beat Saudi Arabia at Lusail Stadium on Wednesday but both

countries failed to make it to the last 16.

"We supported and cheered for our team and we will continue to do it," said one of the Saudi fans. "We are glad and proud that Saudi Arabia shone in the World Cup by defeating Argentina. We got enough reason to cheer up."

Mohamed al-Ghanim said he would stay longer in Doha if Saudi

Arabia made it to the second round.

"Mexican fans believe that the team will bounce back soon," said Armando Castro. "The next World Cup is coming home and our team will leave its mark through stunning performance."

Some of the Mexican and Tunisian fans have decided to visit neighbouring countries like Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, the UAE, Oman and Bahrain.



## World Cup fever sparks creativity

By Joey Aguilar  
Staff Reporter

The FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 has ignited creativity among football fans and volunteers, either to showcase their nation's heritage, make new friends, or simply express their excitement and enthusiasm for the sport.

Every match since the start of the tournament on November 20 at Al Bayt Stadium witnessed a large number of supporters cheering their teams by wearing colourful dresses or traditional costumes and painting their faces with flags and

Left: Japanese national Tomi, wearing a traditional dress, welcomes fans at the stadium's entrance.

PICTURES: Joey Aguilar

Below: Mexicans in traditional dresses and hats while others wear ghutra.

football-inspired designs.

It is learnt that such a trend fascinated many who want to join the frenzy in the metro, stadiums, in some of the most visited sites such as Souq Waqif, Katara - the Cultural Village, Msheireb Downtown Doha or while heading to watch the matches at the venues or fan zones.

Japanese national Tomi shows his support for his team by wearing traditional dress and greets incoming fans by singing and playing his guitar while taking pictures and videos with them at the stadium's entrance.

"I am really enjoying this World Cup ... people say Japanese anime is great and Japanese people have kindness ... and (they) pick the garbage, so they like Japanes," he laughed.

Tomi is just one of the many friendly supporters who not only attracts and en-

tertains the crowd but also puts a spotlight on this country's heritage.

This was underlined by the increasing demand and popularity of wearing traditional Arab dress such as *thobe*, *ghutra*, and *igal* - designed with the flags of participating nations and sold at various outlets in the city.

Javier, a Spanish supporter, said that he finds these kinds of attire unique, attractive, and impressive in a tournament like the World Cup, compared to the usual jerseys and sports apparel.

"Such ingenuity helps promote a nation or a region's culture, which sparks curiosity among visitors and those who watch it on social media pages, so it may eventually entice many people to explore the destination," he added.

This was echoed by Polish supporter Arthur, who said that these fashion trends

also presented creative ways to promote the tournament and for fans to familiarise themselves with the culture of the host nation and the region.

"I hope I get to see more of these in the coming days, weeks until December 18, the finals, and hopefully even in the next World Cup because it gives us plenty of artistic ideas," he said.

Volunteers, especially those who guide metro passengers at various stations, found a way to do their jobs in an entertaining way.

Apart from "metro man" Abubakr Ababas's "Metro? This way. Metro? This way", several other volunteers have been welcoming fans of different teams by dancing and singing their usual phrases of chants like as "Ole Ole" or mentioning their nationality and adding the words "this way", such "Espanol, this way".



Metro volunteers entertain passengers with song and dance.



A Japan team supporter in a traditional costume before a match.



A Mexican supporter joins the football frenzy in Qatar.

Katara - Cultural Village is hosting a variety of activities. **PICTURES:** Thajudheen and supplied.

# Entertainment galore at Katara

For the 15th day in a row, Katara - the Cultural Village continued yesterday its celebrations accompanying the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022, attracting a large crowd of various nationalities and groups. Katara is offering a variety of events to suit all tastes and interests of people from all over the world.

The Katara Traditional Dhow Festival also witnessed a number of official visits, with Katara general manager Prof Khalid bin Ibrahim al-Sulaiti meeting with Croatian President Zoran Milanovic and his wife Sanja Mosic Milanovic, Oman's Agricultural and Fisheries Minister Dr Saud bin Hamood bin Ahmed al-Habsi and other dignitaries.

The Katara Traditional Dhow Festival attracts visitors from different countries, as William from England, said: "The atmosphere here is wonderful, exceeding all expectations. I enjoy every place in Qatar. I liked very much getting to know the old life in Qatar through the Mahaseel Festival."

Victoria from France said: "I love Qatar very much and visited many places. This is the first time I visit Katara. It is really beautiful and displays many cultures."

Allan from Switzerland said: "The atmosphere of the World Cup is amazing, and I liked the events all over Qatar. Everyone here shares enthusiasm and joy."

Peter from England said: "It

## The cultural village at the heart of Doha is offering a variety of events to suit all tastes and interests of people from all over the world

was a great opportunity to join my friends here in Qatar. I came the day before yesterday and I am very pleased with this atmosphere."

As part of its openness to various types of arts, Katara allows artists to present their various artworks to the public in various places. At the Katara beach promenade, Russian artist Danis and his group present graffiti art.

He said: "I came here to do some artwork. We worked on everything related to football, and the atmosphere of the place helped us to inspire new ideas. This is the first time we have visited Qatar, and I liked the place very much, as the atmosphere is different and the people are very nice. They ask me about the drawing and my choice of colours and shapes."

Further, he expressed his great admiration for Katara, saying that the cultural neighbourhood is very beautiful. "I was inspired by many ideas during my work here. I feel that every day here is a day of joy and happiness, as everyone is harmonious and happy with the international sporting atmosphere, especially with the convergence of many cultures

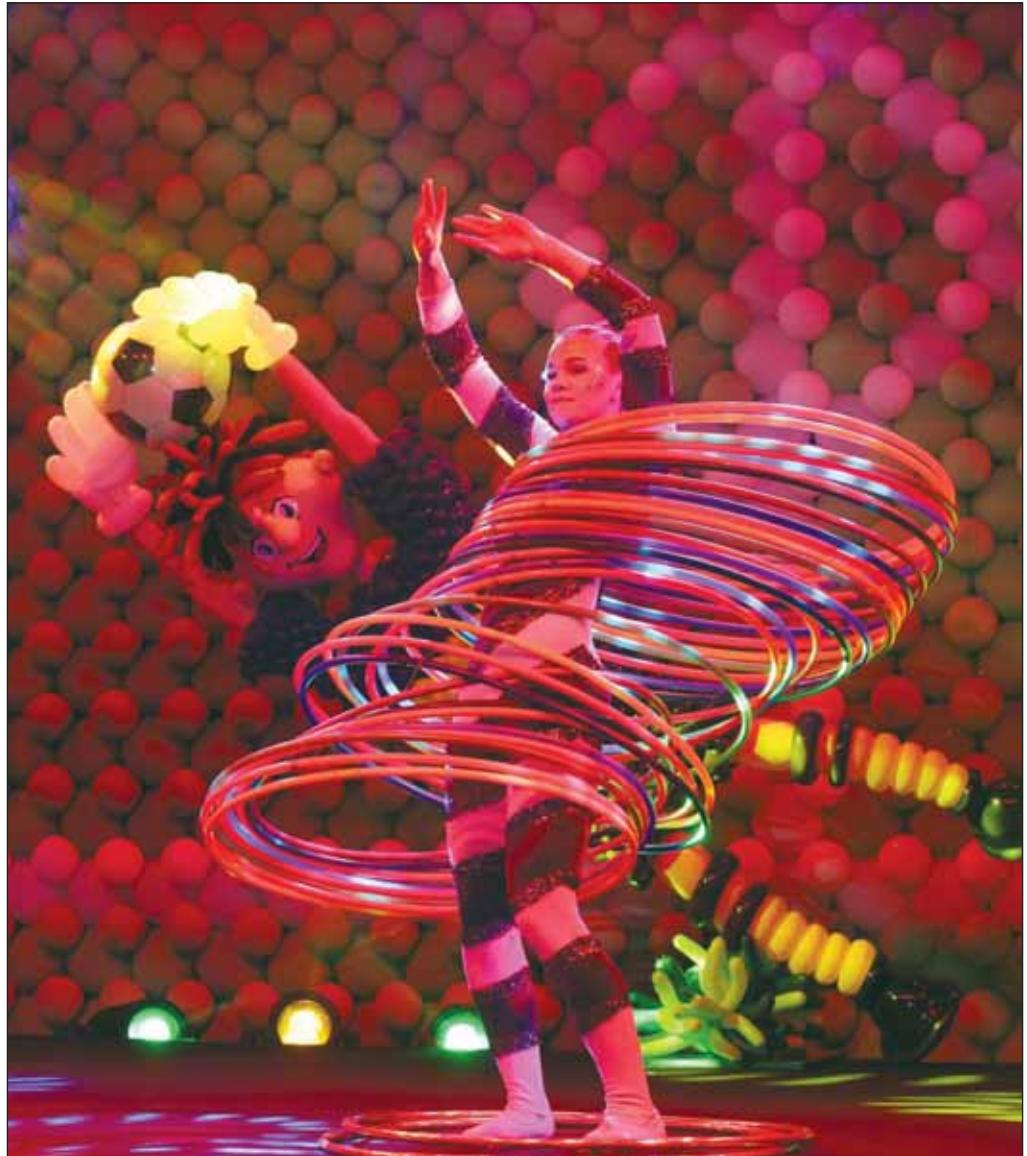
introduces children to the Qatari heritage through beautiful creative activities.

The 'World Wonders Balloon Tour Show' continues to attract the audience, especially children. Today (Saturday, December 3), will be the last day of the show, which will be presented at 5pm and 7pm, at Al Hikma Square. The Bosnian embassy, in co-operation with Katara, is presenting a folklore show at 6.30pm and at 9pm at Al Biraq Square.

The Katara Fashion Show will continue to present Qatari fashion in a modern spirit. The show's third night: 'The Kindergarten' has been inspired by the flowers and plants in the Qatari environment, and reflects the rainy spring weather in the Gulf. Four Qatari designers are participating - Kholoud al-Musallam, Dana al-Mulla, Jawhara al-Suwaidi and Aisha al-Obaidan.

The Katara amphitheatre hosted a concert by Kuwaiti artist Hammoud al-Khader, which attracted a large audience. Many concerts will be presented on the open stage, including the concert of artist Maher Zain, Elissa and artist Adam on December 7, and a concert by artist Saad al-Mujrad on December 8.

Ahmed Saad and Tamer Ashour will be performing on December 11, and Aseel Hamim, DJ Aseel and Saud Jassim on December 15.



# Katara calling all culture lovers





## QU Health organises Open Day for Graduate Studies

QU Health, the Health Cluster of Qatar University (QU), recently organised an Open Day for Graduate Studies through the graduate office.

It saw the participation of all QU Health colleges: the College of Medicine, College of Health Sciences, College of Pharmacy, College of Dental Medicine and College of Nursing.

The event was organised to promote QU Health academic programmes and the opportunities each programme offers. It also aimed to raise awareness of the requirements for applying for graduate studies, introduce the various study plans and the educational and academic opportunities available to students.

The Open Day also provided the opportunity for students to communicate with ambassadors and representatives of each academic programme.

The importance of the Graduate Studies Open Day is to provide all the necessary information and a detailed explanation for students who plan to complete their graduate studies and move forward in their scientific and practical career at



QU, within the graduate studies, diploma, master's or PhD programme.

The Open Day event for graduate studies in QU Health included the presentation of 10 postgraduate programmes in QU Health, including two postgraduate certificate programmes in health professions education and biomedical sciences, in addition to a Doctor of Pharmacy programme, and six master's programmes, namely:

Master of Science Programme - Biomedical, Master of Pub-

lic Health, Master of Human Nutrition, Master of Genetic Counselling, Master of Pharmacy, Master of Education in Health Professions, in addition to a PhD programme in Health Sciences.

This event targets students intending to apply for admission to graduate programmes during Spring and Fall 2023, and introduce them to the steps to be followed to successfully complete the process. Each programme's admission requirements and expectations were discussed.

Head of Graduate and Research at the College of Health Sciences, Dr. Mashaal al-Shafei, stressed the importance of the Open Day, saying: "The aim of the event is to introduce students who wish to enrol in the various programmes available in the sector and its affiliated colleges, the terms of admission, how to apply for these programmes and future job opportunities. We encourage students and workers in the health sector to apply and join the QU Health family."

The application window will open on January 8, 2023, and close on February 16.

## MDD launches 'Stronger Together' exhibition

Msheireb Downtown Doha (MDD) has launched its first edition of the 'Stronger Together' exhibition which features some of the best local designers' products in the fields of fashion, jewellery and beauty.

Located in the Doha Design District building in MDD, the exhibition demonstrates the capabilities of emerging design talents in Qatar and reflects the true essence of the Qatari culture to visitors from around the world.

The exhibition offers various local brands in jewellery, cosmetics, and fashion. The brands at the booths are changed weekly to support all small projects and allow them to reach out to the international audience during the period of the world cup tournament.

Maryam al-Jassem, manager of PR and Communications at Msheireb Properties, stated: "We are honoured to provide this platform to the Qatari talents to support them, share their creations and services with the visitors of our city during this period. It is part of our mission and vision to sup-



The exhibition offers various local brands in jewellery, cosmetics, and fashion.



The exhibition demonstrates the capabilities of emerging design talents in Qatar.

port the new generation of designers. We encourage everyone to visit the exhibition and learn more about local Qatari

products and share it with the world."

The jewellery section fea-

Hiraat jewellery by Nada al-Sulaiti and Ghada al-Buainain Jewellery.

Four brands are participating in the fashion section of the exhibition, including 'The Hive' by Noura al-Mulla, 'Harlienz' by Ayah Adsani and '1309 Studios' by Ghada al-Suabie. The three female designers offer unique abaya designs with contemporary touches and colours. 'The Project' is a unisex streetwear brand created by Abdul Rahman al-Hamad which uses recycled or leftover fabrics to promote sustainability.

In the cosmetics department, Terra Beauty sells organic skincare, makeup and perfume, while Coating provides manicures while also selling skincare products.

On the sidelines of the exhibition, visitors can find a variety of food and beverage carts including Petit Camion and Cloud & Co.

To celebrate the joyous moment of the year, MDD initiated various events for tourists and fans to cheer for their favourite teams while enjoying the beauty of Qatari heritage-reflecting buildings and its smart facilities.

## Handicraft shops at Souq Waqif do brisk business



The handicraft centre at Doha's Souq Waqif has seen a high turnout of customers from among the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 fans. The fans have been keen to buy the traditional handicraft items, with sellers at the shops asserting their sales rose by up to 100%. Local Arabic daily *Arrayah* pointed out that the handicraft centre includes a number of shops that sell various products such as pottery, brass items, traditional gifts, shoes, belts, swords, bags and different accessories and figures made of glass, brass and wood. Tourists loved in particular local traditional textile rugs and carpets, and natural leather products, in addition to the miniature models of wooden boats and dhows.



## QF girls' ability friendly team meets US soccer team representatives



Qatar Foundation's (QF) girls' ability friendly team has met with US soccer team representatives. Hosted by QF and the US soccer team, the football clinic was led by Amy Griffin, former US World Cup Champion and current US Deaf Women's National Team head coach, along with Stuart Sharp, senior technical director of US Soccer Extended National Team.

The session kicked off with a small-sided game that was played between Griffin, the girls' ability friendly team, and their



## Qatar joins 'date palm' file on Unesco's Intangible Heritage List

**Rabat**

Qatar has joined countries registered for the "Date palm, knowledge, skills, traditions and practices" file on the List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity of the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (Unesco).

This came during the 17th session of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Safe-

guarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of the Unesco in Rabat, which will continue until Dec 4, with the participation of Qatar.

Qatar is represented in the session by HE the Permanent Representative of Qatar to Unesco Dr Nasser bin Hamad al-Hanabah and Head of the Heritage Department in the Heritage and Identity Department at the Ministry of Culture Abdulaziz al-Mutawa.

In a statement on this occasion, HE Dr al-Hanabah stressed

that Qatar attaches great importance to preserving and protecting tangible and intangible cultural heritage, and has placed the protection of intangible heritage at the core of its national policies and international efforts within the scope of the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage.

He added that the accession of Qatar to the countries registered for the "date palm" file is a testament to the fact that the history and culture of Qatar is

associated with this important element, which has a cultural, social and economic dimension in the local society, especially that the date palm tree has a long and authentic heritage in the culture of Qatari society and the Arab region.

It also has an exceptional symbol of giving around which many foundations in our culture revolve, as it represented the backbone of the economic and social life of the ancestors in the past and throughout the generations until our time, and through

it they were able to build and communicate with other cultures, so the date palm tree remained a basis in the Qatari and Arab society through the ages.

Qatar's Permanent Representative to Unesco also appreciated the efforts of the Ministry of Culture, represented by the Department of Heritage and Identity, for its efforts to prepare the date palm tree file, and many files that are in the process of being prepared.

It is worth noting that after

Qatar joined the date palm file, the countries registered for this file will become 13 Arab countries, including: Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Egypt, Palestine, Oman, and Yemen, in addition to Qatar.

The Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, which consists of 24 elected representatives from 180 States Parties to the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, examines during the 17th session 56 requests for inscription in

the lists of intangible cultural heritage, of which 46 requests for inscription on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, four requests for inscription on the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding, five proposals for inscription on the Register of Good Practice for the Preservation of Heritage, in addition to the request for international financial assistance from Malawi and a series of reports on the status of previously listed items.



## Fun on wheels



A tram tour of Msheireb Downtown Doha (MDD), which offers an immersive and comprehensive experience with FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 activations, has become a big hit among the thousands of visitors. MDD has three zones for fans and media coming from all over the world to enjoy the games and celebrate together. The first is the Baraha Zone, the hub for watching the matches on a giant screen or in special pods which promote privacy while fostering social interaction. The second is the Heritage Zone where visitors can experience various activities and explore the essence of authentic Qatari heritage. The third is the Sikka Zone with selfie-worthy spots covering art exhibitions and cinematic works. It includes interactive zones where fans can play games and relax at cafes and restaurants. Broadcast and media facilities are also available for journalists and content creators. The activities and facilities in Zone 3 also include Conmebol Tree of Dreams, Mawater Warehouse Exhibition, Intaj - Film, Television, and Theatre Exhibition and Quest Gaming District. **PICTURE:** Gulf Times news editor Bonnie James.

## AIMA Qatar chapter forms new committee

The All India Management Association (AIMA) Qatar Chapter has formed a new committee. The officials are Dr Nizar Kochery (chairman), Salim Mullappillai (president), Kabeer T M (vice president), Sheldince Victor (general secretary), Abdul Jaleel R S (treasurer), Mohamed Faizal (joint secretary) and Rizwin Kochery (joint secretary).

AIMA, established in India in 1957, currently has a strength of over 38,000 individual members and about 6,000 corporate/institutional members through 67 local management associations, a statement said.



Salim Mullappillai  
Sheldince Victor



Kabeer T M  
Abdul Jaleel R S

## Cameroon expats release song celebrating Qatar and FIFA World Cup

By Joseph Varghese  
Staff Reporter

A group of Cameroonian residents in the country has come out with a colourful and beautifully picturised song in celebration of the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022.

Several of them have been the residents of the country for a very long time and celebrating the glory of the Qatar World Cup in many ways. The song, *Ole Ole*, is a crowning tribute of their joy to the country and a humble dedication to the successful organisation of the World Cup.

"The song is an expression of love towards the country and also sports. It is a great occasion and Qatar has shown the spirit and greatness by hosting a wonderful World Cup. When Qatar was awarded to host the 2022 FIFA World Cup, we all cheered and it is expressed through this song. As they say music unites us all and it does not know borders. It connects hearts and makes us cheer. It does not have a language," said the singers of the song, Eddy, Tinaice, Boris, Maryanick and Kay-C. The production crew include: Rocky Gracian, director; Mohamed Shanaz, director of production; Mohamed Rafi, production manager; Charith

The song was conceptualised a few months ago in September and has been developed over time. The song is "relentlessly upbeat and melodic," situating it perfectly with most official World Cup anthems. The energy is seen through the visuals and choreography.

The song was shot on the outskirts of Doha and Seaside Beach with vibrant elements and dozens of junior artists. The song carries the content of greeting and welcoming in the name of all Cameroonian expatriates in Qatar, and the director of the song, Rocky Gracian shot the visuals through a diverse musical vision based on



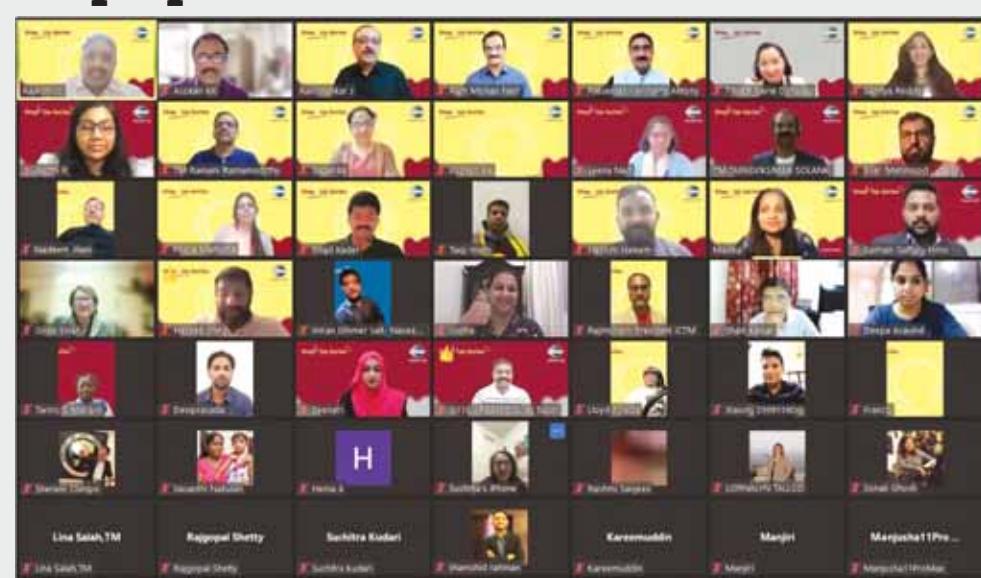
the theme of sea, land, and hip-hop.

The singers are: Eddy, Tinaice, Boris, Maryanick and Kay-C. The production crew include: Rocky Gracian, director; Mohamed Shanaz, director of production; Mohamed Rafi, production manager; Charith

Imado - VFX artist and Steffnie De Silva, colourist.

Production assistants are: Kanchana Gunawardena, Ishan Perera and Maneesa Nadeeshani and the song is released on <https://www.youtube.com/VequalMusic>

## Step Up series launched



District 116 (Qatar) Toastmasters International recently conducted the first-ever episode of Step Up Series. Sahitya Reddy hosted the online training session attended by more than 80 Toastmasters from Doha and around the world. The presenters were Anthony Williams (Doha), on what it takes to be 'Toastmaster of the Day' and Hashim Haleem (UAE), on 'Speech - Topic Selection and Crafting'. Programme quality director Ravishankar J acknowledged the contributions of the training manager Ram Mohan Nair and his team. District director Rajesh V C appreciated all stakeholders.

## NU-Q students and alumni take part in World Cup activities

Many students and alumni from North-western University in Qatar (NU-Q) are taking part in the media coverage of the ongoing FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 as they work with some of the world's major international media outlets, including CNN, Fox Sports, and regional and international media.

"The kick-off of the World

Cup in Qatar is offering several opportunities to Qatar and the Arab world," Marwan M Kraidy, dean and CEO, noted. "It is also providing a major opportunity to our students and alumni who are taking advantage of the education they received at NU-Q in media and communication by contributing to both the coverage of the event, as well as other com-

munication needs related to the tournament."

Kraidy pointed to Lt Majed al-Naimi, a public relations officer in the Ministry of Interior in Qatar, who is among the alumni working on safety communications between local organisations and the public during the tournament.

Al-Naimi said that he takes particular satisfaction as a

Qatari in helping to make the games successful - and safe. "Effective communication with audiences who come from different backgrounds and speak multiple languages is key when talking about organising mega sports events with the magnitude and scale of the World Cup," said al-Naimi.

Another alum, Shaden Wahdan, is a producer at Al Kass

Sports Channels, based in Qatar. During the tournament, she is on the ground covering games and activities around the country. After the tournament, she said that she will be reporting on the sporting legacy and social impact from the tournament on communities in Qatar.

A former Olympian and gymnast, Wahdan said. "Being passionate about sports and as

a journalism graduate myself, it is only natural to be interested in taking part in covering the first World Cup in the Arab world."

For students at NU-Q, the World Cup is also offering them internship opportunities at news outlets covering the tournament, including Fox Sports and CNN, as well as marketing communications agencies.

Annastazia Ng'ambi, a student from Zambia, is completing an internship at FIFA Legacy as a broadcast assistant. An aspiring broadcast journalist, Ng'ambi says working on projects related to the World Cup offers her the chance to put into action the reporting skills she has learned at NU-Q as well as expanding her professional experience in the field.



# IPE activity on diabetes held by QU Health

The QU Health Interprofessional Education (IPE) Committee at Qatar University recently organised its second IPE activity on diabetes.

A total of 191 students and 24 facilitators from different healthcare programmes in QU and University of Doha for Science and Technology (UDST) participated in this activity. Professions involved were pharmacy, medicine, dental medicine, biomedical, nutrition and medical radiography.

The IPE was meant to introduce the health profession team members and their roles. An ice-breaker game was followed by an activity about the epidemiology of diabetes. Later, students worked on a case study about a diabetic patient. This helped them to exchange knowledge and skills with each other and get involved in the decision-making process while planning and implementing care.

Students began by sharing their knowledge about diabetes epidemiology globally and locally. The group then discussed the roles of the different professions involved in the care of patients with diabetes. The activity was



then narrowed to focus on MA, a 46-year-old, who was admitted to the emergency department after his wife found him to be agitated and confused. According to his wife, MA had Type I Diabetes. She stated that he had a sore throat and stomach flu for four days with vomiting, pain in his throat and stopped taking

his insulin two days ago when he became sick. Students discussed MA's condition, and identified diagnostic parameters through physical examination results and laboratory results consistent with diabetic ketoacidosis.

Then they discussed which professions are involved at this stage (admission) and their roles

in assessment and monitoring of MA. Students also reflected on their clinical knowledge of the condition (diagnosis, treatment and laboratory tests), and identified priorities of care for the patient.

In the second stage of the case (discharge plan after patient stabilisation for few days), students



worked on creating an interprofessional discharge plan and designed a pamphlet for sick day management for type 1 diabetes. Students then reflected on the strength of each profession involved and how interprofessional practice is implemented in the care of patients with diabetes.

Myriam Jihad Eljaam, teach-

working together hand in hand to face challenges."

Safa al-Haneedi, 4th Year student from College of Pharmacy said: "As a pharmacy student, I was grateful to be part of the IPE activity especially being face to face after so long. We had the opportunity as healthcare students to express our roles as part of the future healthcare team and prepare ourselves to enter the health workforce, where teamwork and collaboration are important competencies. This event means a lot, where it allows us to meet our colleagues from different health colleges to promote information and knowledge exchange. It also helps develop and promote interprofessional thinking and acting and as Helen Keller said: "Alone we can do so little. Together we can do much."

The IPE programme was found to develop and facilitate interactions between health profession students from different institutions, and world-leading training synergies across health professions, equipping learners with team-based collaborative skills and emphasising interactive learning.

## AIFF official given community reception



Karnataka Sangha Qatar (KSQ) in co-operation with Indian Cultural Centre (ICC) organised a reception for FIFA invited dignitary and All India Football Federation (AIFF) vice-president N A Haris. Also president of Karnataka Football Association and a member of Karnataka Legislative Assembly from Shanti

Nagar Assembly, Bengaluru, Haris was felicitated in traditional Mysore style. ICC president P N Baburajan, vice-president Subramanya Hebbagelu, Indian Community Benevolent Forum president Vinod Nair and other prominent community members were present. KSQ president Mahesh Gowda welcomed the

gathering. Haris thanked KSQ and ICC and briefed the audience about how AIFF's new committee plans to strengthen football in India and also mentioned how the Indian women's team is improving. KSQ joint secretary Manjot anchored the event. Sports secretary Zakhir Ahmed proposed a vote of thanks.

The Music Affairs Centre under the Ministry of Culture became a meeting ground for art and cultural programmes from different regions of India on November 24, as part of the cultural day initiative for various communities in connection with the FIFA World Cup. The function was officially inaugurated by Centre for Indian Community Qatar (CIC) general secretary Naufal Paleri in the presence of Women India Qatar president Nahya Beevi and Tania Qatar director R S Abdul Jaleel. Artists from Malarwadi Balasangham, Tania Qatar, Women India, Shantiniketan Indian School and Podar Pearl School presented various art performances.

Art forms unique to different regions of India such as Haryanvi dance, Kolkali, Dandiya dance, Oppana, Punjabi Bangara dance, Duff Mutt, Peacock dance, Hindi, Tamil, Punjabi, Malayalam songs, musical sculpture and folk songs were performed.

Various paintings of artist Abdul Basit were displayed in addition to an exhibition of mehndi designs, handicrafts and Islamic calligraphy.

K C Abdul Latif, Dr Abdul Wasih, Ahmad Shafi, Dr Salman, Salim Velam, Siddique Vengara, Sarina Basheer, Ilaihi Sabilla, and Abdul Jalil M M were the lead of the programmes.

## Indian cultural day organised



## Kerala legislator praises Qatar's World Cup preparations



Qatar Kerala Muslim Cultural Centre (KMCC) Ernakulam constituency committee recently felicitated Kerala legislative assembly member P K Basheer. The legislator had come to attend the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 inaugural match along with the Argentina-Saudi Arabia and Brazil-Serbia matches. Basheer, who hailed the facilities and infrastructure to promote football, noted that the organisers' approach towards the fans is commendable. President Ajmal Areekcode presided over the function. General secretary Ahmed Niyas Moorkanad welcomed the gathering. District secretary Mohamed Layis Kuniyil and KMCC functionaries Abdul Manaf, Safeerussalam, Abdul Hameed, Faiz Elayodan, Nooruddeen, Ashraf KE, Firoze Chaliyar and Abdur Rahman Salih Thangal, Kizhuparamp were present.

## Inter Community Volleyball League closes first season

GIMS India bagged the championship in the men's division while Nakshie's Angels (Philippines) bested four other teams to win the recently-concluded Inter Community Volleyball League, held at the Hamilton International School Qatar. Other matches were held at the Qatar Sports Club with the participation of a total of 11 teams (six for men's and five for women's category), comprised of community members from India, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Thailand and the Philippines. The First Season's Most Valuable Player for men's division was awarded to Muhasin Abdulkader from GIMS India and Amalia Glanida of Nakshie's Angels for the women's division.



GIMS India wins men's championship



Women's team champion.



Women's division MVP Amalia Glanida.



Men's division MVP Muhasin Abdulkader.



## DISCLOSURE

**Man killed in October was IS chief: Syria**

An Islamic State group commander killed in Syria in October was the group's overall leader, a Syrian security source was quoted as saying by state media yesterday. The source, quoted by SANA news agency, credited the army and local groups with the operation that led to the death of IS chief Abu Hasan al-Hashimi al-Qurashi. IS on Wednesday said he died in battle and announced a replacement to head up its remaining sleeper cells. The US military's Central Command (CENTCOM) said Hashimi was killed in an operation carried out by Syrian rebels in Daraa province in the country's south in mid-October, but said the US provided no support.

## DECISION

**Malaysia PM Anwar to helm finance ministry**

Malaysia's newly-appointed Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim said he would also serve as the country's finance minister, retaking a cabinet role he first held 30 years ago as he looks to address a slowing economy. He also appointed Ahmad Zahid Hamidi, who has been charged with graft, as a co-deputy prime minister, indicative of the need to appease coalition partners essential for the stability of his administration. Ahmad Zahid has denied the charges. Anwar became premier last week, after a general election last month resulted in an unprecedented hung parliament. Anwar's bloc did not win a simple majority but he formed a coalition government with the help of other political blocs.

## LAW AND ORDER

**Philippines' prison holds mass burial for 70 inmates**

The bodies of 70 inmates from the Philippines' largest prison were laid to rest yesterday in a mass burial, weeks after their decomposing remains were discovered in a Manila funeral home. They were among 176 corpses found by police during an investigation into the death of an inmate, who was accused of being involved in the killing of a journalist in early October. Most of the deaths were due to "natural causes", said Cecilia Villanueva, the Bureau of Corrections' acting director for health and welfare services. Among them was a Japanese national. Villanueva said 127 of the 140 bodies buried so far were badly decomposed and could not be autopsied again.

## VERDICT

**Killer at centre of hit podcast jailed for 24 years**

A former Australian high school teacher convicted of murdering his wife after a hit podcast unearthed new evidence was yesterday sentenced to 24 years in prison. Chris Dawson, 74, was found guilty of killing Lynette Dawson some 40 years ago while pursuing an affair with his teenage babysitter and former student. Her body was never found and there were few leads in the case until 2018 when "The Teacher's Pet" podcast sparked renewed public interest and ultimately a fresh police investigation. The murder had been driven by Dawson's "possessive infatuation" with his former student, which led him to kill his wife.

## LEGAL

**High-profile Australian rape case not to resume**

An Australian rape case that sparked national protests will not return to court after a mistrial, because of fears the intense public scrutiny could have a grave toll on the accuser's mental health, prosecutors said. Former political aide Brittany Higgins, 27, alleged that fellow conservative staffer Bruce Lehrmann, 27, raped her inside the parliament office of a cabinet minister in March 2019. The allegations first came to light through media reports in early 2021 and sparked nationwide protests. The court case ended in a mistrial earlier this year after a courtroom sheriff discovered a jury member with a copy of a document that was prohibited by the trial's rules.

# Labour beats Conservatives to retain UK parliament seat

Reuters  
London

**B**ritain's opposition Labour Party scored a resounding victory in a vote for a parliamentary seat in northwest England yesterday, underlining the scale of the challenge facing Prime Minister Rishi Sunak to win a general election in the next two years.

Compounding the gloom for the Conservatives, who are trailing in nationwide polls and seemingly heading for defeat in a national election expected in 2024, one of the governing party's most experienced frontline politicians, Sajid Javid, said he planned to stand down.

The country's former finance minister joins a growing group of Conservative lawmakers who will quit Westminster at the next national election, as the party faces the strong possibility of being out of power for the first time since 2010.

Polling experts said the scale of the Conservative defeat in the Chester by-election was in line with national polls giving Labour a 20-point lead.

It offered the first electoral judgment since the party embarked on a chaotic bout of infighting, ousting Boris Johnson and Liz Truss as prime minister, the latter after markets took fright at her unfunded fiscal plans.

Sunak became prime minister on October 25, inheriting a divided and fractious party at a time of economic crisis, tasked with tackling soaring inflation and restoring the confidence of financial markets.

Governing parties rarely do well in so-called by-elections, which take place outside the schedule of national elections when a lawmaker leaves their position.

In Chester, Labour candidate Samantha Dixon secured 61% of the vote, compared to 22% for the Conservative candidate.

Labour's outright majority rose to 10,974 from 6,194.

Labour has held the Chester seat since the 2015 national election, when the party scraped through with a majority of just 93 there, the narrowest winning margin in the country.

Chester was held by the Conservatives between 2010 and 2015.

"It's important to see this by-election in context," a Conservative spokesman said. "By-elections for governing parties, not to mention parties who have been in government for...12 years, are always difficult, and this is a Labour seat, one which they have held at three consecutive elections."

Charles Walker, one of those Conservative lawmakers who will bow out at the next election, said Sunak was doing the right things against a difficult backdrop, but defeat at the next national election was likely unavoidable.

"It's almost impossible to see us coming back from this," Walker told Times Radio. "I hope what Sunak does is make sure Labour doesn't wipe the floor with us, so that...we form a viable opposition."

Javid said the Conservatives had asked lawmakers to confirm their intentions for the next election, to allow the party to prepare.

He played his own role in the year's drama — resigning as health secretary in July, minutes before Sunak quit as finance minister, triggering the unprecedented ministerial rebellion that brought down Johnson.

Javid, who had also served as finance minister under Johnson, then said he would stand to replace him, but withdrew before the contest began.

He also stood to replace Theresa May as leader in 2019, and was eliminated midway through the race.

"After much reflection I have decided that I will not be standing again at the next general election," Javid said.

## Palestinian shot dead by Israeli police



An Israeli soldier confronts a Palestinian protester during a search in the occupied West Bank city of Hawara yesterday. Israel police shot dead a Palestinian in the occupied West Bank, in an incident described by a Palestinian official as a quarrel.

# WHO welcomes China's change in Covid strategy

AFP  
Geneva

unwound Covid restrictions yesterday, loosening testing and quarantine rules.

"We're pleased to learn that the Chinese authorities are adjusting their current strategies," balancing control measures with the lives of communities who have "suffered", WHO emergencies director Michael Ryan told a press conference.

"We hope this progresses and we see that coherent, calibrated strategy emerge that balances the control of the virus with the lives, livelihoods, well-being and human rights of the people of China."

Ryan said there were "natural frustrations" around the world as people have had their lives turned upside-down by the pandemic.

"It's really important that governments listen to their people when people are in pain. We really want to see that adjustment happen and accelerate," he said.

As for Covid-19 vaccination in China, Ryan said the UN health agency was pleased to see that take-up rates were improving.

The WHO has given its Emergency Use Listing green light to nine Covid-19 vaccines and variations, including three produced

by China: those of Sinovac, SinoPharm and CanSinoBIO.

However, those three do not use mRNA technology, as deployed in the Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna jabs.

Ryan said mRNA vaccines produced "very effective" immunity against the virus, and some countries that did not use such jabs in their primary vaccination course were now using them as boosters to enhance protection.

"I know the Chinese authorities were looking at developing their own mRNA vaccines, and I don't think there's any restriction on China accessing those. Certainly, it's a very solid option for a country to target boosters using other vaccines that may provide a better breadth, depth and length of protection."

The easing of Covid-19 testing requirements and quarantine rules was met with a mix of relief and worry in some Chinese cities yesterday.

The looser measures were welcomed by workers frustrated by three years of economically damaging curbs but have jolted others who suddenly feel more exposed to a disease authorities had consistently described as deadly until this week.

# US, Asian allies impose new sanctions on N Korea

Reuters  
Washington

**T**he US, South Korea, and Japan have imposed sanctions on North Korean officials connected to the country's weapons programmes after Pyongyang's latest and largest intercontinental ballistic missile test last month.

The US Treasury Department named the individuals as Jon Il Ho, Yu Jin, and Kim Su Gil, all of whom the European Union designated for sanctions in April.

South Korea's foreign ministry announced sanctions on seven other individuals, including a Singaporean and a Taiwanese, and eight entities.

All are already under sanctions by the US imposed between January 2018 and October 2022, the ministry said.

Japan also designated three entities and an individual for new sanctions, Japan's foreign minis-

try said, including the Lazarus Group suspected of carrying out cyberattacks.

China and Russia have blocked recent efforts to impose more United Nations sanctions, saying they should instead be eased to jumpstart talks and avoid humanitarian harm.

That has left Washington to focus on trilateral efforts with the Republic of Korea and Japan against officials who have had leading roles in the DPRK's unlawful WMD and ballistic missile programmes," Treasury undersecretary for terrorism and financial intelligence Brian Nelson said in the statement, using the initials of North Korea's official name.

"Recent launches demonstrate the need for all countries to fully implement UN Security Council resolutions, which are intended to prevent the DPRK from acquiring the technologies, materials, and revenue Pyongyong needs to develop its prohibited WMD and ballistic missile capabilities."

## Navy Day rehearsals



Marine commandos of the Indian Navy suspended from a helicopter fly past during rehearsals for Navy Day celebrations at the Gateway of India in Mumbai, yesterday.

# Japan 'eyes \$318bn defence spending plan'

Reuters  
Tokyo

**J**apan is set to earmark 40-43tn yen (\$295-318bn) for defence spending over five years starting in the next fiscal year, which begins in April, three sources with knowledge of the matter said yesterday.

That would be a jump from the current five-year defence plan for spending 27.5tn yen, stoking worry about worsening one of the industrial world's worst debt burdens, which amounts to twice the size of Japan's annual economic output. The new numbers marked a compromise between the defence and finance ministries, the three sources said.

Until recently, the defence ministry had sought 48tn yen, while the finance ministry had multiple options centring around 35tn yen. Prime Minister Fumio Kishida told key ministers on Monday to work on a plan to lift defence spending to an amount equivalent to 2% of gross do-

mestic product within five years, from 1% now, as Tokyo faces an increasingly assertive Beijing.

The key ministers — Finance Minister Shunichi Suzuki and Defence Minister Yasukazu Hamada — are expected to meet again with Kishida this month to iron out differences over the spending plan.

The finance ministry declined to comment. Defence authorities had informally floated an idea of spending in the upper range of 40tn yen over five years, while finance bureaucrats had sought spending along the lines of the current five-year plan.

"It won't be critical to spend some 40tn yen. The question is whether the government could secure funding sources and whether we can let the money flow through domestic defence and related industries to back the economy," said Takuya Hoshino, senior economist at Dai-ichi Life Research Institute. "If we spend the money to buy weapons and other military goods overseas, that would trigger capital outflows and yen depreciation."

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**GULF TIMES**

## Development banks neglect nature ahead of COP15

The world's development banks could play a major role in protecting nature, but are largely ignoring biodiversity in a climate-led financing push, environmentalists warn, calling for action to fix the imbalance at this month's COP15 UN summit.

About 195 nations are tasked with finalising a new accord to halt and reverse damage to plants, animals and ecosystems at the Dec 7-19 conference in Montreal, Canada.

The need for more financing for poorer nations, to help them meet new targets likely to be set at COP15, has long been a sticking point in the talks to hammer out a biodiversity pact, already hit by Covid-19 delays.

Multilateral development banks (MDBs) could do more in brokering an ambitious agreement on a new global biodiversity framework and implementing it, green groups said.

"MDBs are not where they should be. Their biodiversity portfolio is lagging behind their climate one," said Li Shuo, a policy adviser at Greenpeace China.

"Whether more MDBs can commit to allocate more resources to the nature protection agenda will be a key test of the success of COP15," he said in an interview.

Boosting conservation and management of natural areas, such as parks, oceans, forests and wildernesses, is seen as crucial to safeguarding the ecosystems on which humans depend and to limiting global warming to internationally agreed targets.

But forests are still being cut down – often to produce commodities such as palm oil, soybeans and beef – destroying biodiversity and threatening climate goals, as trees absorb about a third of planet-warming emissions produced worldwide.

Investments in protecting and better managing the world's ecosystems must reach \$384bn a year by 2025, more than double their current levels, a UN Environment Programme report said this week. MDBs must prioritise

green finance and incentivise private investment, especially in sustainable supply chains, it added.

Public development banks are owned by governments at international, regional and national levels, and their assets combined make up about 10% of global investment.

Most lend to nature-sensitive sectors – notably agriculture, mining and infrastructure – whose activities are often carried out in environments rich in biodiversity.

Researchers warned last year that lending by public development banks could destroy nature worth \$800bn annually, and urged greater transparency to reduce the risks.

European Investment Bank (EIB) President Werner Hoyer said last month he hoped the upcoming biodiversity summit would help MDBs accelerate their nature efforts.

An EIB spokesperson said the bank is committed "to protecting nature, forests and oceans", citing its support for the Althelia Climate Fund which invests in sustainable land use.

The Asian Development Bank, which will participate in COP15, has "long supported environmental sustainability", a spokesperson said, adding the bank had raised its climate finance goal for 2019-2030 from \$80bn to \$100bn – and expects a significant share to go toward nature investments.

Examples of MDB nature finance include a hydropower project in the Solomon Islands with a biodiversity protection plan, backed by the World Bank and others, and a World Bank project in Sumatra, Indonesia, to curb emissions from forests and peatland by promoting sustainable fishing and alternative livelihoods.

Earlier this year, the Climate Investment Funds, one of the world's largest climate finance instruments working with six major MDBs, launched a fund aiming to invest at least \$500mn in protecting nature in developing countries.

Toerris Jaeger, head of the Rainforest Foundation Norway, said extensive funding was needed to protect remaining biodiversity hotspots – and MDBs have "a huge role" to play here, while ensuring their investments do not harm nature.

Very few development banks have policies that are in line with government commitments on biodiversity, he noted.

A year ago at the COP26 climate summit in Glasgow, a group of MDBs issued a statement recognising the importance of nature and pledged to co-operate on bolstering biodiversity protection. (Thomson Reuters Foundation)

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# The economics of mainstreaming climate

By Jean Pisani-Ferry and Selma Mahfouz  
Paris

The outcome of this year's UN Climate Change Conference – COP27, in Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt – is a true disappointment. In the run-up to the 2021 conference in Glasgow, 24 countries analysed by the Climate Action Tracker, including major emitters like China, India, the European Union, and the United States, submitted or proposed stronger emissions-reduction targets. Despite the growing urgency of climate action, only five countries analysed by the CAT stepped up their ambitions this year. Even Egypt, the host country, failed to strengthen its commitments.

Equally distressing is the divide between a fringe of climate militants – many of whom are relying on increasingly radical actions – and the vast majority of ordinary citizens, most of whom are concerned about their decreasing purchasing power. Europe, especially, is facing energy shortages, rising fossil-fuel prices, inflation, and a looming recession – all of which might make it lose sight of its climate ambitions.

Still, there is growing evidence that people are taking climate change more seriously than ever. This year's extreme weather events have served as an eye-opener, even in the affluent West, by demonstrating that global warming is not some slow process that will materialise in the distant future. Climate change has become an imminent threat that policymakers cannot ignore when assessing the outlook for growth, jobs, inflation, and public finances. To paraphrase Clemenceau, the French statesman who famously quipped that war is too serious a matter to be left to the military: climate has become too serious to be left to the activists.

More broadly, capitalism has become a pitched battle between brown (fossil-fuel) and green (clean, renewable) industries. Because the necessary investment is so large, a carmaker cannot hedge its bets by investing in both electric and traditional internal-combustion-engine (ICE) vehicles. It must choose which side it is on and then throw all its forces into the effort. Whatever the outcome, some will win big, some will lose big, and there will be collateral damage.

The mainstreaming of climate action raises many new and still debated questions. Emission cuts over the next ten years are largely expected to result from substituting capital to replace fossil fuels: hydroelectric dams, nuclear



power plants, and wind and solar farms all have low operating costs, but their up-front capital costs are high.

The transition to a low carbon economy thus brings new risks. Though ramping up investment to expand a capital stock usually pays off through higher productivity, and therefore higher output, the opposite could happen in this case. If some capital (such as fossil-fuel-powered plants) is discarded prematurely, even more capital will be needed to deliver the same quantity of electricity. Yes, the transition eventually will deliver additional benefits in the form of lower fossil-fuel imports and operating costs. But these will appear only later. In the first stage, more investment will be needed to make up for the fact that productive capacity will shrink or level off.

The same mechanism applies to the substitution of electric vehicles for conventional ones: as old factories are dismantled, more capital will be needed to produce EVs, the electricity they consume, and the charging infrastructure they require. Likewise, renovating buildings to improve efficiency means that the same housing service will be provided but at a higher capital cost (and a lower operating cost thereafter).

There is nothing wrong with providing a service at near-zero marginal cost. That is the essence

of the digital economy, and recent technological advances increasingly suggest that a world of widely available electricity from renewable sources is not out of reach. It is entirely possible that future generations will look at energy from oil and gas the same way we look at energy from coal: as outdated, dirty, inefficient, and obsolete.

At a horizon of 5-10 years, however, things look quite different. The necessary build-up of the capital stock will likely translate into higher demand set against a lower or unchanged supply, and factoring in reallocation costs will worsen the corresponding imbalance further. Some skills will lose value, for example, among workers employed in the ICE car industry. Newly required skills, such as those of specialised construction workers, will be in short supply (or available, but in the wrong place).

Further complicating the outlook is the lack of credibility in climate policymaking. Many governments have pledged to reach carbon neutrality by mid-century, but their actions do not yet align with this objective. In the absence of stronger carrots or sticks, energy producers, unlike carmakers, can and still do hedge their bets. The result, according to the International Energy Agency, is that overall energy investment is critically insufficient to meet future demand.

Taken together, these developments threaten to create a stagflationary environment where brown energy is scarce and green energy is still in short supply. Coping with such imbalances will be an ongoing challenge for governments and central banks. Policymakers can no longer afford to overlook these issues, nor can they rely on fairy tales about what the energy transition entails. To convince citizens, they will have to define and implement a realistic agenda for managing the costs and complexities of the transformation.

Fortunately, there is much that policymakers can do to contain the harmful economic fallout from sweeping sectoral changes. There is no avoiding the temporary investment effort that the transition requires. But with an economically sound, credible, and fair strategy that makes sensible use of public funds, governments can lower costs substantially. – Project Syndicate

• Jean Pisani-Ferry, a senior fellow at the Brussels-based think tank Bruegel and a senior non-resident fellow at the Peterson Institute for International Economics, holds the Tommaso Padoa-Schioppa chair at the European University Institute. Selma Mahfouz, former director of research, studies, and statistics at the French Ministry of Labour, is a member of the Inspection générale des finances at the French Ministry of Finance.

## The climate crisis is also a health crisis

By Seth Berkley and Werner Hoyer  
Geneva

The latest Lancet Countdown report, which monitors the health consequences of climate change, highlights the need to prepare for future calamities. Even as Covid-19 continues to spread, a recent study suggests that the likelihood of another pandemic increases by 2% each year. In the coming decades, the interplay between the climate crisis and public health could create a perfect storm of global devastation and disruption.

The good news is that if we take immediate steps to transform our health systems, we can avert another Covid-style catastrophe. As with the current pandemic, the obstacles to mitigating climate change are not just scientific or technological, but also rooted in geopolitics and market forces. Self-interest can undermine public health, particularly when it comes to equitable access to resources. Even so, the international community came together to introduce innovative mechanisms like the Covid-19 Vaccine Global Access facility (Covax), which was designed to remove the financial barriers that prevented lower-income countries from obtaining vaccines.

We must launch similar mechanisms for addressing the global public-health impact of climate change. While we already know many of the likely solutions, their effectiveness requires that we put them in place before disaster strikes. This is not just a moral imperative; it is also a smart economic choice that would likely reduce the overall cost of outbreaks and other climate-related catastrophes.

The UN Climate Change Conference (COP27) in Egypt this past November underscored the fact that sustainability is not just about decarbonisation,



electric vehicles, or climate-adaptation measures such as flood defences. It is also about pandemic preparedness. More broadly, climate change is expected to shift the habitat range of deadly pathogens, causing infectious, mosquito-borne diseases like malaria, yellow fever, and dengue fever to spread as far as northern Europe and Canada. At the same time, the climate crisis threatens to increase the prevalence of malaria, cholera, and schistosomiasis across the developing world.

The world's poorest countries remain the most vulnerable to climate change, despite contributing the least to creating the problem. That is why the international community must take immediate steps to ensure that impoverished, marginalised communities have access to vaccines, treatments, and diagnostics. Given the devastating impact that a single virus has had on billions of lives, livelihoods, and the global economy over the past three years, it is abundantly clear that we must urgently take steps to counter climate-related health threats.

The global effort to ensure equitable distribution of Covid-19 vaccines

provides a useful model. The Gavi Covax Advance Market Commitment, a financial mechanism funded by donors and accelerated by the European Investment Bank, enabled people in the world's 92 poorest countries to obtain free vaccines. These lower-income countries, representing roughly half of the world's population, would have struggled to secure access otherwise.

So far, more than 1.6bn Covax doses have been delivered to developing countries, helping to ensure that 52% of their citizens are fully vaccinated, compared to a global average of 64%. This is a remarkable achievement, particularly in the context of intense vaccine hoarding by developed countries, the export restrictions that some countries placed on vaccines and the components needed to produce them, and the actions of some manufacturers that have seemingly prioritised profit over fairness.

The Covax model's success shows that there is scope for similar innovative financing solutions to climate-related health risks. For example, several private-sector actors are currently exploring a Climate

Advance Market Commitment to stimulate innovation and investment in climate solutions. Similarly, there is great potential for mechanisms based on the model of the International Finance Facility for Immunisation, which uses dedicated "vaccine bonds" to frontload long-term donor commitments so that funds can be made available immediately.

Multilateralism is essential to establishing these safety-net mechanisms. Covax was possible only because it united the financial firepower and knowhow of more than 190 governments, along with private-sector partners, civil-society groups, and international agencies, around a common cause that benefited everyone. But if Covax had already existed before the pandemic, equipped with at-risk contingency financing and surge capacity, it could have mounted its response – the world's largest and most complex global deployment of vaccines ever – even faster, ultimately saving more lives.

Following COP27, donor governments and multilateral lenders must examine how existing financial mechanisms could be adapted to the fight against climate change to guarantee that funds are made available as soon as a threat emerges. Minimising the overall financial costs of climate-related health risks involves not just prevention but also early action. These safety-net mechanisms should also be designed to protect the world's most vulnerable people, wherever they live.

But what matters most is that these steps are taken now. As The Lancet report warns, the countdown to the next global health crisis has already begun. – Project Syndicate

• Seth Berkley is CEO of Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance. Werner Hoyer is President of the European Investment Bank.



## WHO estimates 90% have some resistance to Covid-19, warns of drop in alertness

AFP/Reuters  
Geneva

The World Health Organisation (WHO) has estimated that 90% of the world population now had some resistance to the coronavirus (Covid-19), but warned that a troubling new variant could still emerge.

Gaps in vigilance were leaving the door open for a new virus variant to appear and overtake the globally domi-

nant Omicron, said WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus.

"The WHO estimates that at least 90% of the world's population now has some level of immunity to Sars-CoV-2, due to prior infection or vaccination," said Tedros, referring to the virus that causes Covid-19 disease.

"We are much closer to being able to say that the emergency phase of the pandemic is over – but we're not there yet," he told reporters. "Gaps in surveillance, testing, sequencing and vaccina-

tion are continuing to create the perfect conditions for a new variant of concern to emerge that could cause significant mortality."

Last weekend marked one year since the organisation announced Omicron as a new variant of concern in the Covid-19 pandemic, Tedros noted.

It has since swept round the world, proving significantly more transmissible than its predecessor, Delta.

Tedros said there were now more than 500 highly transmissible Omi-

cron sub-lineages circulating – all able to get around built-up immunity more easily, even if they tended to be less severe than previous variants.

Countries have reported 6.6mm deaths to the WHO, from nearly 640mm registered cases.

However, the UN health agency says this will be a massive undercount, and unreflective of the true toll.

Tedros said more than 8,500 people were recorded as having lost their lives to Covid-19 last week, "which is not

acceptable three years into the pandemic, when we have so many tools to prevent infections and save lives".

Covid-19 infections are at record highs in China and have started to rise in parts of Britain after months of decline.

Further easing of Covid-19 testing requirements and quarantine rules in some Chinese cities was met with a mix of relief and worry yesterday, as hundreds of millions await an expected shift in national virus policies after

widespread social unrest.

"While Covid-19 and flu can be mild infections for many, we must not forget that they can cause severe illness or even death for those most vulnerable in our communities," Mary Ramsay, director of public health programmes at the UK Health Security Agency, said.

The WHO urged governments globally to focus on reaching those at risk, such as people over the age of 60 and those with underlying conditions, for vaccination.

## Biden signs bill to block rail strike

AFP/Reuters  
Washington

US President Joe Biden signed into law yesterday a rare intervention by Congress forcing freight rail unions to accept a salary deal, avoiding a possibly devastating strike – but putting the pro-union Democrat in an awkward political position.

Biden signed the law in a brief White House ceremony only a week before unions who had rejected the deal were expected to have gone on strike, threatening crucial supply chains across the world's biggest economy.

The deal delivers a hefty wage increase but four of the 12 unions involved refused to accept it because there was no agreement on giving workers paid sick leave.

Congress acted under a little used power to resolve disputes involving railroads.

As he signed the bill, Biden said Congress had "avoided what, without a doubt, would have been an economic catastrophe".

"Without freight rail, many of the US industries would literally have shut down," Biden said, adding that his advisers feared the loss of 750,000 jobs within two weeks if the strike had gone ahead.

The episode was awkward politically for Biden.

Trade unions constitute a major element in his electoral coalition and he frequently describes himself as a lifelong union supporter and the "most pro-union president" in history.

That brand has taken a hit from the emergency bill signing.

ing, with some on the left accusing Biden of having sold out.

After the Senate came down decisively in favour of the rail management, one union leader called the situation "horrible".

The Brotherhood of Railroad Signalmen alleged that Senators had "demonstrated they are for the corporate class".

Judging by the overwhelmingly bipartisan support in Congress for forcing through the deal, the political hit for Biden will be contained.

The House easily passed the bill and on Thursday the Senate, where usually Biden's bills are lucky to scrape through with the one-vote Democratic majority, passed 80-15.

Biden said he had no choice but to act quickly in the face of what the White House warns would have been a crippling strike right when the US economy is showing signs of stabilising in the wake of the coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic.

In his comments at the signing ceremony, Biden said the wages deal – which his administration was heavily involved in crafting – was "a good product".

He acknowledged the lack of sick leave but said "I'm coming back at it" with "more work to do".

Above all, Biden said, the forceful intervention by Congress and the White House would benefit the country as a whole.

"It was tough for me but it was the right thing to do at the moment – save jobs, to protect millions of working families from harm and disruption and to keep supply chains stable around the holidays," Biden said.

### 11 injured in mosque attack in Nigeria

Gunmen stormed a mosque in southern Nigeria's Delta state yesterday, wounding 11 worshippers after attempting to kidnap the imam, police said. No group has claimed responsibility for the violence, but Nigeria is facing a myriad of security challenges, including a religious militant insurgency in the northeast, kidnappings in central and northwestern states and separatist tensions in the south. The early morning assault occurred at the mosque in Ughelli, near the oil city of Warri. -AFP

## US drops charges against Huawei official held in Canada

AFP/Reuters  
Washington

The US Justice Department has dropped all charges against Huawei executive Meng Wanzhou, who was held by Canada on a US warrant for Iran sanctions-related charges for nearly three years.

Meng, who had fought extradition to the United States while Ottawa struggled with China's alleged retaliatory arrest of two Canadians, was freed in 2021 after reaching a deferred prosecution agreement with US authorities.

The Justice Department said yesterday that she had completed the period of the

agreement without violating it, and so the charges were fully dropped and could not be revisited.

The case became a major thorn in relations between China and both Canada and the United States.

Meng, the 50-year-old daughter of Ren Zhengfei, the billionaire founder of the Chinese telecoms giant, was Huawei's chief financial officer when she was arrested in Vancouver in December 2018.

The United States had sought her arrest for wire fraud and deceiving HSBC bank, relating to her alleged efforts to hide violations of US sanctions on Iran by Huawei affiliate Skycom.

During the same period that Meng was held under house arrest, Washington in-

tensified a campaign against the use of Huawei equipment in the US and allies, saying it posed deep security threats.

Meanwhile, China arrested and held two Canadians – former diplomat Michael Kovrig and businessman Michael Spavor – forcing talks on what became labelled "hostage diplomacy".

The US "deferred prosecution" deal, and the release and repatriation of Meng and the two Canadians came in a tightly arranged series of actions in September last year.

As part of her deal – the deferred prosecution agreement – she acknowledged that she had made false statements about the company's Iran business in a 2013 meeting with a bank executive.

Meng's untrue statements were in a statement of facts that she agreed was accurate and voluntary and would not contradict.

However, that did not end the US pressure to exclude Huawei, one of the world's largest suppliers of networking and 5G technology, from the markets and systems of allies.

US authorities say that Huawei equipment could provide China's intelligence apparatus backdoor access to rivals' telecommunications networks.

The United States banned Huawei equipment in government use and discouraged its use in the commercial market.

In May this year Canada banned Huawei equipment from its 5G network.

### 223 pre-Hispanic artefacts returned to Mexico

The Netherlands has returned 223 pre-Hispanic archaeological pieces to Mexico, Mexico's foreign ministry said on Thursday, as it looks to recover more of its cultural heritage held in foreign collections. The returns were the result of "active cooperation" between the two countries and showed a commitment to restore historical and cultural objects to their place of origin, the ministry said. Mexico's heritage institute INAH said the objects dated to between 400 BCE and the 16th century, and had belonged to various pre-Hispanic cultures from both Pacific and Atlantic coasts as well as the central highlands. President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador's administration has a campaign called "My

patrimony is not for sale", aimed at bringing back to Mexico what it calls looted pieces. The INAH this week denounced a Paris auction that included Mexican objects valued in the thousands of euros.

Last month, neighbouring Guatemala seized some 1,200 Mayan objects found at the house of two US citizens as part of its investigations into crimes against cultural heritage.

The Netherlands this year returned a collection of 343 pre-Hispanic era ceramics to Panama.

Culture ministers from around the world have pledged to boost efforts to return stolen and illegally traded artefacts to countries of origin. Many are in European museums or private collections. -Reuters

## Ecuador seeks to protect Galapagos birds from flu

Ecuador has put in place a plan to try and protect its unique wild bird species on the Galapagos islands from the H5N1 virus also rampaging through Europe and North America.

The bird flu virus reached South America via migratory wild birds in recent weeks, impacting mainly Peru, where thousands of pelicans and other seabirds have died, and Ecuador, which has ordered the culling of 180,000 farm birds.

The director of the Galapagos National Park, Danny Rueda, said in a statement that "permanent monitoring has been arranged in areas with the most seabirds", including all tourism hotspots.

The Galapagos is a bird-watcher's paradise for the scores of unique and colourful birds found on the archipelago, such as the blue-footed booby with its quirky mating rituals, and endemic penguin, cormorant and albatross species.

English naturalist Charles Darwin developed his theory of evolution after studying finches and mockingbirds on the Galapagos islands in 1835.

On Wednesday, Ecuador declared a 90-day animal health emergency after detecting the highly contagious bird flu on some farms, which includes a ban on transporting any bird products from affected areas.

In Peru, authorities have culled at least 37,000

chickens to try and control an outbreak which has killed more than 14,000 seabirds, mostly pelicans.

The current bird flu outbreak began in Canada and spread to the United States, which has seen a record 50mm avian deaths, according to the US Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Europe is also experiencing its worst-ever outbreak of the virus, according to the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control.

There is no treatment for bird flu, which spreads naturally between wild birds and can also infect domestic poultry. -AFP



QATAR

FIFA WORLD CUP  
Qatar 2022

QATAR



## Festivities, celebrations and fun everywhere

An array of festivities and entertainment activations in Doha's Souq Waqif and Corniche, as part of the ongoing FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022, continued yesterday to draw big crowds of football fans from across the world. Qatar's global street carnival along the iconic 6km waterfront, from the Museum of Islamic Art to Hotel Park, takes place daily until December 18, from noon until midnight (entertainment from 3-11pm).

PICTURES: Shaji Kayamkulam



Accompanying the on-field action of the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 is a dazzling array of entertainment and leisure activations.

Here are some highlights:

**FIFA Fan Festival: Al Bidda Park**, daily until December 18.

Timings: 4pm-2am.

Gates close for last entry at midnight.

Join thousands of fans and enjoy FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 matches live on the mega-screens.

See global music acts and local artists take to the stage in a true celebration and vibrant festival of culture. Entry only for Hayya card holders.

**Corniche celebrations**

Qatar's global street carnival along Doha's iconic 6km waterfront, from the Museum of Islamic Art to Hotel Park.

Taking place daily until December 18, from noon until midnight (entertainment from 3-11pm).

The atmosphere along the Corniche will celebrate nations – allowing football fans to connect from all around the world.

**Welcome to Qatar: Corniche**

Welcome to Qatar is a must-see for all during the tournament, featuring the Circle of Lights – a shimmering circle suspended above the water that transforms to poetically narrate won-

derful stories. Daily shows start from 4pm.

### Hayya Fan Zone

A celebration of the beautiful game at Lusail South Promenade, open until December 18 from noon until lam.

Head to Lusail South Promenade and join the festivity, fun and football.

Access: entry fee and ticketed activations.

Hayya Card holders are eligible for discounted tickets if you purchase your ticket upon entry.

### Ras Abu Aboud Beach 974

Hit the shore at Beach 974, extending from the heart of Doha along Ras Abu Aboud's glistening waterfront.

Combine football and beach life, enjoy the water – then kick back and let the beat move your feet!

Closed on December 5.

For timings and more details, visit <https://www.qatar2022.qa/en/live-it-all-in-qatar/ras-abu-aboud-beach-974>

### MDLBEAST Presents: Aravia

Step off the pitch and onto the dance floor for 28 Aravian nights.

A magical world that combines music, performance and song – from top international talent and rising regional stars – inspired by the colours and shapes of Arab culture, blending rave with Arabia.

Taking place until December 18 from 8pm-2am.

## Live it all in Qatar!



Accompanying the on-field action of the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 is a dazzling array of entertainment and leisure activations. **PICTURE:** Thajudheen

Located next to Al Wakrah Metro Station, 12 minutes from Doha.

Access: Event admission ticket required.

20% discount on your first ticket and 50% for any other ticket you purchase within the same order when using promo code Hayya50.

This offer is valid on all ticket categories until the last day of the festival, on a limited number of tickets.

Visit <https://aravia.mdlbeast.com/en> for ticket details.

### Arcadia Music Festival

This world-renowned event will mesmerise you late into the night – as the energy of this one-of-a-kind experience takes over! Featuring international artistes and DJs, extraordinary sculpted stages with a fire-breathing spider, and much more.

Open until December 19, daily from 6pm-3am, at Ras Bu Fontas.

The organisers have announced free entry for women, couples and everyone wearing a national team jersey

before 10pm. Regular tickets are available from \$49 via [Tixbox.com](https://www.tixbox.com)

### Daydream Festival

The Daydream Festival returns to Doha with an unparalleled line-up and a brand-new stage.

The festival will host some of the world's largest Electronic Dance Music (EDM) artistes at the Doha Golf Club.

The festival opened late last month and continues on December 6, 10, 14 and 18.

For more information and tickets, visit <https://www.tixbox.com/en/events/?page=0&size=12>

### Lusail Boulevard

Live entertainment lights up the boulevard!

The modern city of Lusail is brought to life from morning to night with live music, parades and street performances.

You'll be captivated by it all!

Taking place until December 18, daily from 11am-2am.

### QetaifAN Beach Fest

Be entertained day and night! Enjoy concerts, special performances, giant screen live matches, water activities and a Floating Aqua Park – all at one of the largest entertainment venues in Qatar!

Open until December 18 in Qetaifan Island North, Lusail.

Admission is free to the General Admissions Area – enabling all visitors

to enjoy the beach, music, activities and F&B facilities, as well as watch live football matches on the giant screens.

Tickets are needed for access to the front stage area during special music performances and admission to the VIP area.

Tickets are available through Q-Tickets at [www.q-tickets.com](https://www.q-tickets.com)

### Carnevale Quartier, The Pearl Island

Carnevale Quartier at The Pearl Island's little Venice precinct has been launched.

At the Venice-like festival, visitors will get to experience the international flavour of Italy with a roaming parade recreating the spirit of one of the most famous festivals in the world via performances including elaborate masquerade shows, human statues and dazzling floating arts.

The Carnevale Quartier takes place until December 4 (tomorrow, Sunday), from 4pm-9pm at the Qanat Quartier Boardwalk.

Visitors can enjoy several other attractions at The Pearl and Gewan islands.

### World Cup activations/celebrations

at Katara – the Cultural Village, Souq Waqif and Msheireb Downtown Doha, plus Katara Traditional Dhow Festival and more.

Please refer to <https://www.qatar2022.qa/en/live-it-all-in-qatar> for more information.