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**Sport Page 2**

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# Argentina set up last-8 clash with Netherlands

● **Messi scores on 1,000th career appearance, surpasses Maradona's World Cup total**

Powerhouses Argentina and the Netherlands set up a rollicking FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 quarter-final clash following victories over Australia and the US, respectively, in the Round of 16 yesterday.

The two teams will vie for a spot in the last four at Lusail Stadium on December 9.

In the second of the two Round of 16 matches yesterday, Lionel Messi scored on his 1,000th career appearance in Argentina's 2-1 win over Australia to surpass his great predecessor Diego Maradona's tournament total.

Seeking a first World Cup at his fifth attempt, the mesmerising Messi curled the ball low past goalkeeper Mat Ryan from inside the area in the 35th minute to send the legions of Argentine fans into delirium at the Ahmad Bin Ali Stadium.

Julian Alvarez bagged Argentina's second from close range in the 57th minute after fatal hesitation from Ryan with the ball at his feet following a backpass.

Australia, who did superbly to reach the last 16 and are ranked 35 places below the double World Cup winners, defended valiantly with the towering Harry Souttar prominent. They set up a nervy



Lionel Messi celebrates after the match against Australia.

end after Craig Goodwin's shot was deflected into the net off Enzo Fernandez for an own goal in the 77th minute.

The 35-year-old Messi's goal was his third in the Qatar tournament and his ninth at World Cups, one more than Maradona.

Earlier, the Netherlands' full-backs proved the difference as veteran Daley Blind and hard-running Denzel Dumfries turned in decisive performances at Khalifa International Stadium to help

secure a 3-1 win over the US in yesterday's opening match of the World Cup knockout stages.

Dumfries netted and had two assists while Blind scored, too, as the Dutch saw off a brief spell of US resistance to ensure the victory.

Striker Memphis Depay got the first goal as the Netherlands advanced to a seventh World Cup quarter-final.

A comfortable 2-0 half-time lead was halved in the 76th minute as the Americans finally

made a breakthrough, even if scorer Haji Wright seemed to know little about the ball hitting his heel and then looping into the corner of the net.

However, any hopes they had of staging a comeback were ended five minutes later as Dumfries sealed his man-of-the-match performance by ghosting in at the back post and side-footing a volley into the net to restore the two-goal advantage.

The Dutch deserved the win but again there will be questions about whether they are serious World Cup contenders - something coach Louis van Gaal keeps insisting they are, although he was quick to admit yesterday's showing could have been a lot better.

"We also lost a lot of ball possession, and it is not acceptable at a World Cup, especially if you are playing a top-level team," he said.

Van Gaal's side did, though, offer some glimpses of classy potential, no more so than with a series of 20 passes that set up their 10th minute opener - finished off by Depay smartly hitting home a cut-back pass from Dumfries. (Agencies)

**Don't go to stadiums without tickets, says security committee**

The Safety & Security Operations Committee (SSOC) of the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 has advised people not to travel to stadiums hosting World Cup matches without valid tickets. "All attendees at FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 matches are required to hold the appropriate ticket. Please do not travel to stadiums without holding a valid match ticket," the SSOC said in a statement yesterday. "Instances of fans attempting to gain access to stadiums without holding the correct ticket are taken seriously by our security teams and will be dealt with accordingly," the statement noted.



The Netherlands' Denzel Dumfries celebrates scoring their third goal against the US.



Christian Pulisic and Cristian Roldan of the US look dejected after the match against the Netherlands.

## Amir meets Turkmenistan president



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani met yesterday at Khalifa International Stadium with Turkmenistan President Serdar Berdimuhamedov and the accompanying delegation, who are visiting Qatar to attend a part of the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 matches. President Berdimuhamedov congratulated the Amir on the occasion of the tournament, lauding the good organisation and wishing the participating teams success. The meeting also reviewed bilateral relations and means to bolster them, besides topics of mutual interest. (QNA)

## Qatar 2022 continues to create new records

After 13 days and 48 matches, the first edition of the FIFA World Cup to be hosted in the Middle East and Arab world has presented an array of facts and figures, starting with a cumulative stadium attendance of 2.45mn spectators. That equals an average of 96% occupancy and is higher than the corresponding 2.17mn figure for the 2018 edition.

The highest attendance in the history of the FIFA World Cup since the 1994 final was seen at Lusail Stadium, where 88,966 fans witnessed the Argentina vs Mexico match.

On the pitch, the FIFA World Cup has faithfully reflected football's increased competitiveness, as for the first time ever, teams from all continents have advanced to the round of 16. Likewise, three teams from the AFC (Australia, Japan and Korea Republic) have reached the knockout stages - a competition record for the Asian confederation, which previously only had two, in 2002 and 2010. Equally remarkably, for the second time, two African teams (Senegal and Morocco) have reached the knockout stages - the last occasion being in 2014.

History was also made by Stéphanie Frappart, who not only became the first woman to officiate a FIFA World Cup match, but also, together with Neuza Back and Karen

**More than 1mn visitors at FIFA Fan Festival**

The FIFA Fan Festival in Doha has welcomed more than 1mn fans since it opened its door on November 19 - one day before the World Cup kicked off. FIFA has announced. To celebrate 1mn visitors at the venue, FIFA has given away two tickets to the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 final at Lusail Stadium on December 18. Football fan Haytham Mokhtar is the one millionth visitor to the FIFA Fan Festival and the lucky recipient of match tickets to the final, as well as an official match ball signed by legends of the game. "I still cannot believe that I am so lucky to be the one millionth guest at the FIFA Fan Festival." Page 12

Diaz Medina, formed the first all-female trio to take charge. Against Ghana, Portuguese star Cristiano Ronaldo achieved another incredible milestone by becoming the first player to score at five editions of the tournament. To Page 12

## Pele 'stable'

Doctors treating Brazilian football legend Pele yesterday said the 82-year-old remained "stable" after developing a respiratory infection with his condition not having deteriorated over the last 24 hours. Pele, who was hospitalised this week amid ongoing cancer treatments, "has had a good response to care without any worsening in the clinical picture in the last 24 hours", doctors at Sao Paulo's Albert Einstein Hospital said in a statement. **Sport Page 8**

**FIFA WORLD CUP Qatar 2022**

**Today's schedule**

**Round of 16**

**France vs Poland, 6pm** at Al Thumama Stadium

**England vs Senegal, 10pm** at Al Bayt Stadium

**Yesterday's results**

**Round of 16**

**Netherlands 3 USA 1**  
**Argentina 2 Australia 1**

# Female World Cup fans feel safer in Qatar

FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 has multiple successes since its launch on November 20 and one of the outstanding results is that it is the first edition of the tournament that changed bad habits associated with soccer games, especially those targeting women, and have changed a range of ideas and stereotypes that have long been associated with the world's largest sporting event.

A report by British newspaper *The Times* quoted a group of female fans who accompanied their country's team to Doha to support the "Three Lions", as saying that they were not harassed, describing the Qatar World Cup stadiums as more suitable for women to watch matches than in their own country.

Under the 'Her Game Too' campaign, British citizen Ellie Mollosos, 19, is leading a broad campaign in her country to make the stadiums more welcoming to women because of the harassment they experience during matches.

She pointed out that before she came to Qatar to support her country's national team, she had asked her father to accompany her to Doha. However, in a statement to the British newspaper,



Referee Stephanie Frappart, assistant referees Neuza Back and Karen Diaz and fourth official Said Martinez react after the Costa Rica vs Germany match at Al Bayt Stadium.

she admitted that she "did not need to disturb her father, because the World Cup stadiums in Qatar are different than in her country, there were no cynical chants or gender discrimination of any kind".

The report considered that Qatar's stadiums provided a more favourable environment for women than in England, and Mollosos - a student from Nottingham - said: "I did not suffer from any of the harassment I experi-

enced in England," adding that "it was a great environment when I tried it". Mollosos said: "I've got to say coming here has been a real shock to my system. There have been no catcalls, wolf whistles or sexism of any kind."

She adds: "I felt incredibly safe. I've not had any catcalling or any of the strange comments that you would perhaps get in England sometimes. They've just been incredibly hospitable." Mollosos's 49-year-old father and a



Female fans at the Netherlands vs USA match at Khalifa International Stadium yesterday.

teacher explained that he had come to Qatar to care for his daughter but admitted that he had discovered that he did not need to do so because of what he found in this country.

English fan Joe Glover, 47, who has attended World Cup tournaments since the 2010 South African edition, has not hid her fascination with a distinct version of the World Cup at all levels in Qatar, describing the general atmosphere here as less nervous, "eve-

ryone is wearing their elected colours, and without any trouble".

Besides the cheerleaders' testimony, the British newspaper reporter quoted former English player Lianne Sanderson, 34, and the presenter of "Talk Sport" programme, praising the organisational atmosphere of the Qatar World Cup.

In the same context, a senior British police officer considered that the absence of riots in Qatar during the World Cup competition is evidence that the British Government should not ease restrictions on alcohol in football stadiums, adding that the United Kingdom could learn from the experience in Qatar.

Chief Constable Mark Roberts, in charge of the UK's Football Police, said the atmosphere in Qatar was "friendly", like last summer's Women's Euro 2022 finals.

It seems that female fans in the Arabic edition of the World Cup noticed not only the difference in the stands, but also inside the stadium, as Stephanie Frappart (38 years) became the first woman to referee in a men's World Cup match, one between Germany and Costa Rica. (QNA)



## Turkmenistan president arrives in Doha



Turkmenistan President Serdar Berdimuhamedov arrived in Doha yesterday to attend part of the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 matches. He and the accompanying delegation were received upon arrival at Hamad International Airport by HE the Minister of State Sheikh Fahd bin Faisal al-Thani. (QNA)

## Supporting teachers a top priority in all education systems, says official

**H**E the Undersecretary of the Ministry of Education and Higher Education, Dr Ibrahim bin Saleh al-Nuaimi, reviewed teachers' new roles in the context of developing the structure and curricula of education and in light of modern approaches in teaching and learning strategies based on digital technologies, and addressed the competencies and skills necessary to successfully perform these roles.



HE Dr Ibrahim bin Saleh al-Nuaimi

Dr al-Nuaimi stressed the strong impact of teachers' role in education and in improving its quality as they play a crucial role in the success of reform and

change initiatives in the education sector, pointing out that the goal of preparing professionally qualified, well-trained, and supported teachers re-

mains a top priority in all educational systems.

His remarks came as he participated in the third educational conference 'Innovative education for a changing era', organised by the Arab Centre for Educational Research for the Gulf States, under the umbrella of the Arab Bureau of Education for the Gulf States in Manama, and his management of the fourth plenary session entitled 'Teacher preparation: competencies and new roles'.

He pointed out that issues related to their preparation and training programmes, their working conditions, and the perception of their

new roles, in the context of virtual and blended education, remain a source of concern for those concerned with education.

Assistant dean for teacher education at the national institute of education at Nanyang Technological University, Singapore, Dr P Ling, spoke at the session on empowering teachers to be future-ready, curriculum, teaching methods and technologies, along with the participation of Director General of the Unesco Regional Center for Quality and Excellence in Education in Saudi Arabia Dr Abdulrahman bin Ibrahim al-Mudaires. (QNA)

# World Cup boosts food, beverage sales in fan zones, other places

**T**he FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 has significantly boosted sales of about 400 food and beverage outlets (kiosks) in the areas surrounding the stadiums and fan zones that host cultural and entertainment events, with an expected increase in turnout of 1.2mn fans by the end of the tournament. Speaking to Qatar News Agency (QNA), several managers of these projects estimated that the turnout during the World Cup first week surged by 80% to record levels compared to the days preceding the tournament launch on Nov 20, with the positive impact and momentum.

In August, the Supreme Committee for Delivery & Legacy and Aspire Katar Hospitality company announced the availability of hundreds of food and beverage outlets for rent in many locations in the country, including the areas surrounding the stadiums that host the World Cup matches, the Doha Corniche's 6km stretch, and other places that witness fans' entertainment activities.

Entrepreneurs in the food and beverage sectors benefited from these investment opportunities, as they confirmed that the influx of tourists and fans of international teams to Qatar has revived their sales of various types of food and beverages to almost double compared to the pre-tournament period, especially since some visitors have a great passion to know Qatari and Arab cuisines, exploring local food with all its components, in addition to buying handicrafts of the traditional nature of the Qatari people.

The outlets are distributed in about nine areas for fans zones and inside the stadiums, taking into account the size of the area, its breadth, and the density of the fans' presence in it.

There are two types of outlets, the first contains food and drinks, while the second contains gifts, souvenirs, and heritage and historical items.

Abdul Ghafoor Mohamed, who runs an outlet for selling drinks and juices on the Doha Corniche, said that turnout reached record levels of about 80% during the first week of the World Cup, pointing out that they start working from 11am until 12 midnight, emphasising that the project is feasible from an economic point of view and that work is proceeding smoothly to meet the needs of visitors.

He said that the shops and commercial outlets are in line with the State's directions and strategy aimed at hosting the first carbon-neutral edition of the World Cup, as all shops committed to using paper cups and utensils that can be recycled, which reinforces the country's plans to establish global standards in preserving the environment, to serve as a role model in the major world championships, in addition to building a sustainable legacy that benefits future generations.



Busy eateries at Souq Waqif. PICTURES: Thajudheen



The momentum of the tournament has made a positive impact in Qatar, benefiting food and beverage outlets, according to Qatar Tourism, which allowed visitors to taste a variety of food and beverages in the country, and Qatari cuisine is the most famous, which derives its characteristics from Asia, the Middle East and North Africa, as a result of the diversity of 100 communities living in the State.

Osama Saeed, a visitor to Qatar, said that it is easy to find the original cuisines of most of the countries of the region in the restaurants hosted by Souq Waqif or other commercial centres, pointing to the diversity of restaurants and the availability of oriental, Arabic, Western, Chinese, Japanese and many other cuisines that suit all cultures and tastes.

The World Cup has provided the impetus to all sectors of the Qatari economy, including the tourism and hospitality sector, especially with the increase in visitors to the country and the increase in the population of Qatar to more than 3mn people, and in conjunction with the State's plans to triple the number of tourists in the country, to reach 7mn tourists annually by 2030. (QNA)

He expected that the pace of turnout will increase in the coming period with an increase in visitor flows to Qatar.

### Checks at Rawdat Al Khail Park eateries

The Doha Municipality has carried out checks at food and beverage outlets at Rawdat Al Khail Park. This is in order to ensure compliance with the rules pertaining to food consumption and hygiene. Rawdat Al Khail Park

was rehabilitated and opened earlier this year ahead of the World Cup and it has witnessed a remarkable turnout of visitors. The park features many public facilities, including a pedestrian path.

### Health inspection campaign



Umm Salal Municipality's health control section has carried out an inspection campaign at the Central Market there for three days to ensure compliance with the ministerial decision on regulating the use of plastic bags and the ban on single-use plastic bags. Besides, the campaign aimed at raising awareness about food health and safety regulations and standards.

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HE Dr Ali bin Smaikh al-Marri and Gilbert Hougbo during their visits to a fan zone and Barahat Al Janoub.

# Labour minister, ILO director-general visit fan zone

**H**E Dr Ali bin Smaikh al-Marri, Minister of Labour, met yesterday with Gilbert Hougbo, Director-General of the International Labour Organisation (ILO), who is currently visiting the country.

During the meeting, they discussed aspects of co-operation between Qatar and the ILO, and ways to further support and de-

velop them in the coming period.

Following the meeting, HE Dr al-Marri, accompanied by Hougbo, visited one of the fan zones located in the Industrial Area, which is supervised by the Ministry of Labour (MoL).

The dignitaries participated in the accompanying activities taking place in the fan zone, which was set up to give fans the oppor-

## Dignitaries also visit labour housing city, Barahat Al Janoub

tunity to enjoy the unique World Cup festivities.

They also watched part of a FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 match at

one of the fan zones, and also held discussions with expatriate labourers with regard to their experiences, and enquired about their enjoyment of the World Cup. HE the Minister of Labour was briefed on the amenities provided and the preparations undertaken by the ministry at some of the fan zones, stressing the need to provide all facets of support to these fan

zones, as they directly contribute to the success of Qatar's hosting of the World Cup through its continuous efforts over the past years, the MoL said in a press statement.

HE Dr al-Marri explained that the Ministry of Labour fully realises the great importance of facilitating recreational experiences for labourers by organising events that run alongside the World Cup. He

also noted that various other entertaining and recreational events are organised during various occasions such as Qatar National Day and National Sport Day, among others.

Moreover, the ministry has set up a host of fan zones across the country so that everyone can enjoy watching matches and tap into the great World Cup atmosphere. The

dignitaries also visited the labour housing city, Barahat Al Janoub, which is managed by Barwa Real Estate Company, within the specifications and requirements of the MoL for labour housing. Barahat Al Janoub has a capacity of more than 67,000 labourers, and is expected to start receiving labourers during the second quarter of next year.

# Art, music and dance to blend in upcoming Qatar Creates festival

QNA  
Doha

**T**he 'Qatar Creates' initiative launched yesterday the 'Festival in Motion' event, from Dec 5-20, offering a major international dance and music programme with more than 55 site-specific performances at some of Qatar's most significant architectural landmarks, coinciding with the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022.

The Festival in Motion is co-curated by two internationally acclaimed artists: French choreographer and filmmaker Benjamin Millepied, Artistic Director and Co-founder of the influential LA Dance Project, choreographer of the film *Black Swan*,

and former Director of the Paris Opera Ballet, and renowned American composer Nico Muhly whose music has been performed at the Metropolitan Opera, English National Opera, Los Angeles Philharmonic, Carnegie Hall, and others.

Commenting on the occasion, HE the Chairperson of Qatar Museums Sheikha Al Mayassa bint Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani said: "We have made it our strategy to take our art to the neighbourhoods and cities of Qatar. From the airport to every part of the country, the landscape is open for people to experience arts and culture, complementing our landmark museums and collections." "For the World Cup we have invited Benjamin Millepied and Nico Muhly to curate modern dance perform-

ances representing dancers from all around the world. The Festival in Motion, the first of its kind, will combine the discipline of dance with architecture, art and music. We hope that these performances will inspire people to think of the unlimited possibilities of creativity," HE Sheikha Al Mayassa added.

The 13-day programme showcases more than a dozen exceptional artists from around the world. Audiences can view the performances free of cost in exceptional locations across Qatar, including museums (the National Museum of Qatar and the Museum of Islamic Art), public art installations (Richard Serra's monumental desert installation East West/West East at the Brouq Nature Reserve in Zekreet and Tony Smith's Smoke at the Doha

Exhibition and Convention Centre, Olafur Eliasson's Shadows travelling on the sea of the day in Al Zubarah) and heritage sites (Historic Barzan Towers). Benjamin Millepied will appear in his own work for a special one-night-only performance with the LA Dance Project on the late afternoon of Dec 20 with live music by Nico Muhly at the site of Richard Serra's East West/West East.

The programme will also feature a lineup of choreographers and performers, some appearing in the Middle East for the first time. The Festival in Motion is one of 300 exciting activities, from cultural events to fashion shows and performances, delivered by Qatar Creates during the World Cup in November and December.

# World Cup: Taking part is real victory

By Fahad Badar  
Doha

**I**f the sole measure of success for World Cup fans was for their team to win, the vast majority would be disappointed. Of the 32 teams who reached the finals, 31 of them will fail to lift the trophy. But winning the cup is not the only purpose.

As a Qatari national who has been fortunate enough to attend a couple of the matches, and sample the atmosphere in the fan zones and the souqs, the overwhelming emotion around me has been joy. People have come from all over the world to take part in a festival. Many have expressed admiration for the friendly welcome they have received, the high levels of personal security, which enables them to relax and enjoy themselves, as well as the excellent stadiums and other facilities. There is a fusion of cultures. Wonderful to witness has been the sight of fans from other continents dress up in a ghutra decked out in the colours of their team. There is laughter, music and dancing in the fan zones.

There is exuberance in the stadiums in spite - or perhaps because of - the lack of alcoholic beverages inside the grounds. Before the matches began, some of us in Qatar were apprehensive. The event has exceeded our expectations. Key to the success has been the contribution of the thousands of volunteers who have maintained a positive good cheer, including on the rare occasions that they have intervened to deal with incidents, which fortunately so far have been few and minor. Peoples of the world have become just a little bit closer.

(Fahad Badar is a prominent Qatari banker with many years of experience in the banking industry in senior positions)



Fahad Badar

**Wonderful to witness has been the sight of fans from other continents dress up in a ghutra decked out in the colours of their team. There is laughter, music and dancing in the fan zones**

# Qatar Museums announces free entry for Hayya holders

**Q**atar Museums (QM) has announced that entry to all museums, with the exception of National Museum of Qatar and the Museum of Islamic Art, will be available free of charge to Hayya card holders, effective from today until the end of the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022.

Hayya Card holders will have access to Qatar's world-class portfolio of galleries and museums, including 3-2-1 Qatar Olympic & Sports Museum, Mathaf: Arab Museum of Modern Art, and Qatar Museums Gallery - Al Riwaq.

Visitors with a Hayya Card can also enjoy free admission to a number of ongoing exhibitions, such as World of Football (3-2-1), Taysir Batniji: No Condition is Permanent (Mathaf), Lusail Museum: Tales of a Connected

World (Al Riwaq), Art Mill Museum 2030 (Qatar Flour Mills Warehouse), and Labour of Love: Embroidering Palestinian History (Qatar Museums Gallery - Katara), most of which are now open seven days a week.

In addition to this, QM has decided to extend opening hours until 10pm for most sites (excluding Al Zubarah, Dadu Gardens and Art Mill Museum 2030), and prospective visitors will be able to book an 8pm-9pm time slot. This change comes into effect from today and continue until Dec 20.

One can find more information regarding Qatar Museums during the World Cup period and beyond, as well as more detailed visitor guidelines at <https://qm.org.qa/en/stories/all-stories/football-fans-art-culture-guide/>



# Students from Qatar participate in IJSO contest in Colombia



A team of students from Qatar participates in the 19th edition of the 2022 International Junior Science Olympiad (IJSO 2022) in Bogota, Colombia, which runs until December 12. The team comprises 6 students, a supervisor and 3 academic leaders from the mentors of the Department of Science in the Department of Educational Guidance of the Ministry of Education and Higher Education. This is Qatar's fifth participation in this international competition which consists of 3 tests in science, including theoretical and practical aspects to measure higher thinking skills, problem-solving skills and scientific investigation in biology, chemistry, and physics subjects. (QNA)

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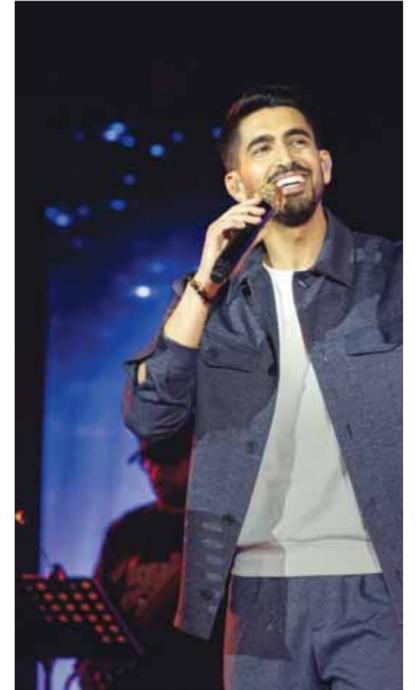
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# Katara Dhow Festival, concerts and performances reflect culture, heritage

Visitors to Katara have praised the activities accompanying the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022, being presented by the Cultural Village Foundation until December 18.

The visitors have expressed admiration for the diverse and rich cultural, arts and entertainment events that showcase the culture and heritage of Qatar and the region and narrate a deeply-rooted history.

On Thursday evening, the Katara amphitheatre hosted a concert of elegant melodies by Kuwaiti artiste Hammoud al-Khader.

It was attended by a large audience of fans. At the same time, the Katara Traditional Dhow Festival continued to receive lovers of maritime heritage of various nationalities.

The festival's activities attract thousands of spectators and visitors who are keen to explore the pavilions on Katara Beach and attend the diverse and enjoyable cultural, artistic and heritage events, presenting to the World Cup guests the ancient culture of Qatar, its great maritime heritage, and coexistence with a reality that narrates the glories of the

**The visitors have expressed admiration for the diverse and rich cultural, arts and entertainment events that showcase the culture and heritage of Qatar**

era of pearl diving, fishing and sea voyages, a press statement notes.

Heritage museums participating in the Katara Traditional Dhow Festival - Museum of the late Jassim al-Mannai, the Abdul Aziz al-Buhashim al-Sayed Museum, and the Isa al-Mulla Museum - attract lovers of old collectibles and fishing tools and means that tell exciting stories about fishing trips and pearl diving, to shed light on their sacrifices and voyages.

Meanwhile, the Iranian cultural exhibition at Katara (Hall 12), which is being held in co-operation with the Iranian embassy in Doha, is witnessing a

remarkable turnout of visitors.

The ring art suite (wood inlays) draws the interest of art lovers because of its beauty, accuracy and creativity.

It is based on inlaying the brightest wooden pieces with geometric shapes of small and delicate triangles of mosaics next to each other and by using ivory, gold, silver, copper, aluminium.

The audience expressed admiration for this ancient art, which is rooted in the depth of the diverse Iranian culture. The exquisite pieces of art are considered among the best souvenirs to be acquired.

The artistic performances yesterday at Katara also continued to witness large audiences of different groups, nationalities and ages.

The 'World Wonders Balloon Tour', in addition to the Bosnian folklore show presented by the Bosnian embassy in co-operation with Katara, are among the key attractions.

The highly appreciated Katara Fashion Show saw designers using traditional fabrics with designs inspired by the aesthetics of Qatari heritage along with innovations and modern touches.



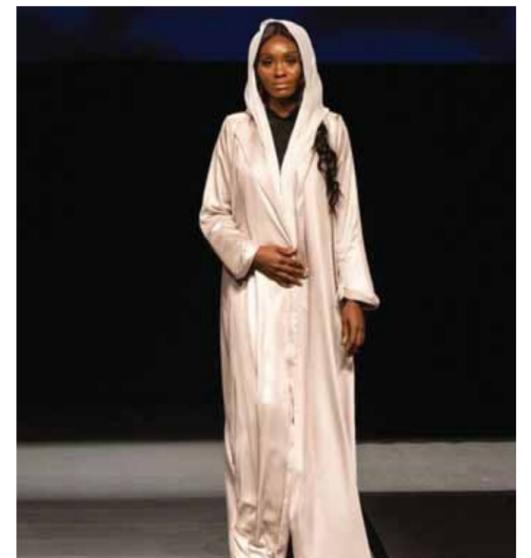
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- Auction documents can be collected from Aljazeera Media Network, Warehouse Building, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor, Procurement & Contracts Directorate, Near TV Intersection, beside Al Yarmouk Petrol Station/Nissan Service Center by submitting an authorization letter showing the tender number and ID number of collecting person under the company letterhead.
- Auction documents are to be collected from 04Dec2022 to 08Dec2022, between 08:00AM to 11:00AM.
- The items to be sold WHERE IS-AS IS basis. All the items can be inspected on 11Dec2022. The inspection will not be allowed after this period. The bidder should have inspected the items and agrees to purchase them in their current state.
- The Bid must be submitted with a Tender Bond (Bank Guarantee) issued by a Qatari Bank or by a bank operating in Qatar and should be valid for a period of 180 days from Bid Closing Date.
- The bid must be valid for a period of 180 days from the Bid Closing Date
- Bids should be submitted as per the instructions in the auction documents which shall bear the tender number and bid closing date.
- The last date for accepting the bids shall be 10:00AM of the bid closing date and any bids submitted after this date will not be accepted.
- For more information, please call 44897131.

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# 'World Cup provides great momentum for women in Qatar'



Mariam Mamdouh Farid

**By Joseph Varghese**  
Staff Reporter

The number of women in sports from Qatar is growing and the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 is providing a huge momentum for them to follow their passion, a Qatari woman athlete has said.

"The presence of women in sports activities is growing in Qatar and the region. The FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 is a great occasion for the nationals to nurture their talents and skills. The World Cup is providing great momentum for everyone in the country and women, in particular, to follow sports activities. I always tell everyone, especially

all the women, to excel in their field, to do whatever they are good at and love what they do," Mariam Mamdouh Farid told *Gulf Times*.

Farid represented the country at the 17th World Athletics Championship held in Doha in 2019 where she participated in the women's 400m hurdles race.

"The vibes are so thrilling and I am so excited about the ongoing World Cup. Thousands of tourists and fans are here from every corner of the world and they are all exploring the city like anything. It is very exciting and we are very proud that it is happening here in Qatar," she noted.

According to Farid, the group

**"The vibes are so thrilling and I am so excited about the ongoing World Cup. Thousands of tourists and fans are here from every corner of the world"**

stage of the tournament has been very interesting and unexpected on many counts with several upsets "It has been an exciting and unpredictable first round of the tournament with so many upsets and several new countries entering into the second round. Such things rarely happen in the World Cup. More and more Asian and African countries are in the second round which is very good for football in these continents," she said.

"I have been to a couple of games and the organisation of

the tournament is incredible. It is so beautiful to watch the games for the stadium and the entire atmosphere is electrifying both inside and outside the stadiums. Everything with Qatar World Cup is outstanding and wonderful. It has been a top-class World Cup so far," she continued.

Farid said she is supporting the African and Arab countries first. "As of now, I am a supporter of Morocco. My other favourite team is Brazil and hope they will have a wonderful tournament," she said.

On her personal journey as an athlete, Farid said she was fortunate to be part of the national team. "I have been part of international tournaments for the last 10 years. It is my love and passion to track and field that prompts me to continue in the field and work hard for the glory of my country. I have given my everything for the love of my sport. I was the first one to represent Qatar in two World Athletics Championships. I hope to perform better in the upcoming competitions," she added.

# Indonesia mulls issuing visa on arrival for expatriates in Qatar

**By Joey Aguilar**  
Staff Reporter

Indonesia is exploring the possibility of giving expatriates in Doha visa-on-arrival entry aimed at further attracting more visitors from Qatar, Indonesia's Tourism and Creative Economy Minister Sandiaga Salahuddin Uno has said.

"There is an idea given by the tours and travel community here (Doha) - we could issue visa on arrival for countries, basically citizens of other countries but with a Qatar ID... so we could tap much wider potential markets because Qatar has large expatriate communities," the minister told reporters during his recent visit.

"And having direct flights to Indonesia, not just one destination but several destinations, would be a good way to tap that potential," he said, citing Indonesia's strong tourism recovery post-Covid-19 pandemic.

"Indonesia's Ministry of Investments noted that the '10 New Balis' project, which consists of 10 destinations in Indonesia that are assigned to be 'the next Bali'; is pro-



Indonesia's Tourism and Creative Economy Minister Sandiaga Salahuddin Uno (centre) at the embassy.

jected to attract a large number of visitors, including those from the Middle East.

The '10 New Balis' includes Borobudur Temple (Central Java), Belitung (Sumatra), Mount Bromo (East Java), Labuan Bajo (East Nusa Tenggara), Lake Toba (North Sumatra), Thousand Islands (Jakarta),

Mandalika (West Nusa Tenggara), Wakatobi (Southeast Sulawesi), Tanjung Lesung (Banten) and Morotai (North Maluku), according to the ministry.

"I'm pretty sure that we're segmenting the right market and we are very optimistic that we will be able to attract more tourist arrivals from

Qatar, as well as expatriate communities living in Qatar," Uno said, as he highlighted the key role that Qatar plays as a hub for tourists inbound to Indonesia.

He also underscored the importance of holding the Qatar-Indonesia Year of Culture 2023, saying it will further strengthen the "already close bilateral relationship at all levels", from people to people, business to business, communities to communities, and educational institutions.

This unique cultural initiative, the minister said, provides a lot of opportunities between the two countries such as boosting the tourism sector and creative economy. "We are very excited and we are preparing a series of events to commemorate this Year of Culture and hopefully we could benefit from it, both Qatar and Indonesia.

"For me in particular, I want to look for more investments coming from Qatar in the area of tourism because we see how hospitality has been transformed here and although we have the human capital, but I would say we're in a very serious need to upgrade our amenities, accommodation, hotels, specially new destinations," Uno said.

# Indonesia takes cues from advanced World Cup technology used in Qatar

**By Joey Aguilar**  
Staff Reporter

The 2022 FIFA World Cup in Qatar provides an opportunity for Indonesia to better prepare for its hosting of the Under-20 (U-20) tournament next year, particularly in using the latest football technologies and in organising sporting events, Indonesia's Tourism and Creative Economy Minister Sandiaga Salahuddin Uno has said.

Speaking to reporters at the embassy, he said Indonesia could learn from the event's use of state-of-the-art technologies in enhancing people's experience, crowd control and ticketing, in addition to the semi-automated offside technology during matches. "We should see how the game has changed and it's showcased here in Qatar, the use of technology to determine offside goals, something that's appeared like the Japan goal (against Spain)," the minister said. "When you see it with your eyes from a certain angle it's definitely out, but because of the use of technology, they're able to call the right outcome."

Lauding Qatar for organising the 2022 edition of the tournament splendidly, he said they learned a lot from its preparations, including the FIFA applications - "an astonishing technology that this World Cup has introduced".

This, Uno noted, allows fans in the stadium to watch and able to see the players' statistics, name tags and other relevant information using the applications. He also lauded the well-maintained level of safety and security at the tournament with several facilities and measures in place to protect football fans while they enjoy roaming around.

The minister said he witnessed how fans are enjoying and celebrating after winning every match, usually held at iconic locations such as Souq Waqif.

Many people have also been visiting places such as Msheireb Downtown Doha, the Doha Corniche, Souq Al Wakra and various fan zones to experience an array of shows and activities. "I think this is a very good showcase, it's the first time a World Cup is held in the Middle East and I think it would open up opportunities for a country such as Indonesia to host similar events in the future," the minister said.

The tournament in Qatar, Uno added, provides economic opportunities and huge job



Sandiaga Salahuddin Uno at Katara Cultural Village.

creation for the country, and "this is something that we want to do also for the FIFA World Cup U-20 next year". "I think it's also time for Indonesia not just to promote sand, sea, and sun but also serenities, virtuality, and sustainability, and for a country of 270mm people and 17,000 islands, I think it's going to boost the image of tourism having a presence here in Qatar.

"First the use of technology; second, how security and the health aspects are being truthfully watched; and also I would say, sustainability, how it could be more focus on green economies and jobs," he said.

About the World Cup in Qatar, Uno said he finds the event "very well organised, well marketed and well promoted", as he sees excitement on the ground.

Apart from a vibrant culture and art scene, and the use of technology, he said he saw the involvement of local businesses, as well as small and medium enterprises.

"I think this is also a very well-prepared World Cup, probably the first major event that I see live after the pandemic and I would say that this will be an inspiration to the world," the minister said, adding that the tournament allows Indonesia to promote its tourism and creative economy. "This is something that we're able to show the world how football is magnificent, it's able to unite people. It's a tense match but after that, everybody becomes family - something that is truly remarkable," he added.

# Omani minister visits Panda House



Dr Saud Hamoud al-Habsi, Omani's Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources, visited Panda House at Al Khor Park, where he toured a number of recreational and tourist facilities there. He was accompanied by Mohamed Ali al-Khori, director of the Public Gardens Department and other officials at the Ministry of Municipality. Al-Habsi appreciated the efforts of Qatar in constructing the Panda House, considering it an international achievement for the region and the GCC, on the occasion of the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022.



# Inspection tour in Al Khor



The director of Al Khor and Al Thakhira Municipality, Abdulla Ibrahim al-Sada, has carried out an inspection tour in the vicinity of Al Bayt Stadium to follow up on the progress of work pertaining to cleanliness, monitoring health control, and other services offered to the public during the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022. This has been done to ensure that the work is performed as required at a high pace and round the clock. He praised the efforts of the municipality's work teams and the Department of Public Cleanliness, stressing the need to continue the hard work with dedication and sincerity throughout the World Cup. He was accompanied by some other officials.

## CONDOLENCES

We deeply mourn the sad demise of



**Mr. Georgie John Mathew (31)**

Son of Mr. Johnny Mathews Parappattu and Mrs. Nishi Mathew, Parappattu House, Chathangattu Cross Road, Palarivattom, Ernakulam  
Son-in-law of Mr. K.V. Mathew (Kerala Jewellers, Doha) and  
**Mrs. Molly Mathew**, Karuvellil House, Kadapra-Mannar

**Who entered into eternal rest on 2nd December 2022**

We express our heartfelt condolences to his wife **Mrs. Annu Mathew** and son **Micah Georgie**

Funeral Services will be held at  
**Kalkunnel Mar Geevarghese Sahada Jacobite Syrian Church,**  
**Kottappady, Kothamangalam**

*May almighty God rest his soul in eternal peace and give grace and fortitude to the bereaved family to bear this irreparable loss.*

**Sorrowing Friends and Relatives**

# QF amplifies Palestinian voices and culture during World Cup

The culture, achievements and inspiring stories of Palestine and its people are being spotlighted by Qatar Foundation as the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 showcases the Arab world to the wider world.

A series of events and performances hosted by Qatar Foundation (QF) during December will amplify Palestinian voices, starting with a storytelling and poetry event by activist Muna El Kurd at 2pm tomorrow at the Cinema Hall in Multaqa (Education City Student Centre).

El Kurd – who gained international attention in 2021 when she and her brother were detained by Israeli authorities during protests against the forced displacement of Palestinian families from their homes in Jerusalem's Sheikh Jarrah neighbourhood – will share her own story and recite her mother's poems at the

event, which will take place during GOALS, an exhibition where storytellers are providing their perspectives on the FIFA World Cup, football in Qatar, community and culture.

And Palestinian performers will be centre stage at QF's D'reesha Performing Arts Festival, which is being held at Oxygen Park and Al Khater House in Education City from December 11-17 under the theme of 'Travel and Adventure' and will bring the local, regional, and international community together to celebrate creativity, Arab culture and heritage, and the Arabic language.

On December 12 at 6.45pm, Palestinian singer and producer Dalal Abu Amneh, who is also a neuroscientist, will, for the first time, combine her love of music and science into a single performance, while on December 13 and 14, from 3-4pm each day,

D'reesha attendees will be treated to performances from Banat Al Quds, a choir and instrumental ensemble comprising 38 young women whose family roots lie in Al-Quds.

Meanwhile, from 3.30-3.40pm on December 15, 13-year-old Palestinian rapper Abdulrahman ALSianti – better known as MC Abdul – will perform at D'reesha, with the teenage artist from Gaza demonstrating how he uses his music to spread a message of peace and unity; and at 5pm on 17 December, a Poetry Majlis will be held at Al Khater House, discussing topics relevant to Palestine and the Arab world through poetry and welcoming poets Rawdah AlHajji, Anas AlDoghmem and Dalal alBaroud.

More details about the D'reesha Performing Arts Festival, including where and how to buy tickets, can be found at

[www.org.qa/events/dreasha-performing-arts-festival](http://www.org.qa/events/dreasha-performing-arts-festival)

QF production Doha Debates is also holding a December 15 townhall event focusing on the lived reality of Palestinian national identity, and exploring it beyond a purely theoretical approach, with Palestinian activist Ahd Tamimi; Dr Tariq Dana, assistant professor of conflict and humanitarian studies at Doha Institute for Graduate Studies; and Palestinian American actress and comedian Maysoon Zayid. The event will be moderated by Palestinian-American journalist Dena Takruri, of Al Jazeera Media Network, with a number of Palestinian students and youth participating in the on-stage discussion.

During the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022, the Doha Debates Portal has been part of the FIFA Fan Festival in Doha, connecting fans and visitors with people



in locations including Gaza with the aim of sparking dialogue on key global issues.



Muna El Kurd

For more information about QF events and activities focused on Palestine during the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022, visit [www.qf.org.qa/world-cup/palestine](http://www.qf.org.qa/world-cup/palestine)

## Tunisian, Syrian cultures on show

The Ministry of Culture organised the Tunisian Community Day as part of the "Cultural Diversity of Communities" activities held on the sidelines of the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022. The day was marked by a rich programme reflecting the cultural diversity that characterises Tunisia.

The Tunisian community's celebration, which was hosted by the Al Sulaiti House in Al Hitmi area near the Qatar National Museum, included lyrical performances by the students of the Tunisian School in Doha, Tunisian classical, folk, heritage and folklore arts, and a show on Tunisian traditional dress in several states.

The Ministry of Culture also

hosted a similar event for the Syrian community, which included a rich programme reflecting the cultural diversity that characterises Syria.

The charge d'affaires at the Syrian embassy in Doha, Dr Bilal Turkiya, expressed his thanks to Qatar for what it provides to Syria and its people in various humanitarian, cultural and development fields.

He commended the Ministry of Culture's efforts for providing this opportunity and others to show the Syrian culture and rich heritage, especially in light of this beautiful atmosphere full of World Cup competitions, which reap success and praise from everyone. (QNA)



## Praise for success of Qatar World Cup

Observers abroad and at home continue to praise the success of Qatar in presenting an exceptional edition of the FIFA World Cup, stressing that the tournament is taking place in unparalleled festive circumstances and atmosphere.

Christoph Ehrhart, correspondent of the German newspaper *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, wrote in an article about the extent of the strategic mistake that his country made in terms of not investing in the World Cup, to strengthen its relationship and trust with Qatar and other Gulf countries, stressing that Doha has succeeded in achieving an important goal in organising the World Cup, which is to transform its World Cup into the World Cup for all Arabs.

He explained that this "Arab" version of the World Cup brought together Arabs, today, in one line rejecting "German arrogance in particular and Western in general" in dealing selectively with the human rights file.

He described what the German interior minister made, regarding the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022, as "damaging the relationship between the two countries, and did not contrib-

ute, near or far, to achieving its intended purpose," saying, that "the leadership will reorient its political compass after the World Cup."

Donata Hopfen, CEO of the German Bundesliga, said: "It is the largest football tournament in the world, and at the end of the day we always have to remember that it is about sport, and sport should be at its centre. We are here to play football. I am very happy, because now we focus on the sport side."

Andrew Spalding, a law professor at the University of Richmond in the US, said that Qatar acted completely differently from previous host countries, noting what has been achieved in Qatar in terms of amendments to labour laws, as well as its relations with important international bodies such as the International Labor Organisation.

Spalding said, in a report published by the German website *Deutsche Welle*, "If we want to make sport more in compliance with human rights, we must learn from what is happening so that we can develop such events," considering that the progress that has been made by Qatar has been "ignored". (QNA)

## Qatari embassies hold World Cup celebration

A number of Qatar's diplomatic missions abroad continue to organise activities to celebrate the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022.

In New York, the Permanent Mission of Qatar to the United Nations and the Qatari consulate held a party on the occasion. HE the Permanent Representative of Qatar to the European headquarters of the UN in Geneva Dr Hind bint Abdul Rahman al-Muftah said in her speech that Qatar has hosted many major sporting events over the past decade, which enabled it to show what it can offer the world, in addition to its commitment to development, sustainable development, social inclusion, community values, and mutual respect towards people of different cultures and nations.

She stressed Qatar's belief in the power of sport and the strengthening of unified universal values around the world.

HE Dr Hind highlighted the many challenges that Qatar faced and was able to overcome, saying that this is the beauty of the World Cup, bringing people of all backgrounds together to enjoy the most popular sport in the world.

She stressed that Qatar relies on the great potential of this event to promote values and principles such as equality, tolerance, co-operation and solidarity, and for it to be a great opportunity to promote better

understanding and respect for diverse traditions and cultures, which is the true essence of organising huge sporting events, such as the World Cup, in different parts of the world.

She expressed her true pride in this achievement and thanked all citizens and residents who spared no effort to turn this dream into a reality.

During the ceremony, a competition for attendees was organised, where they had to provide answers to general sports questions, with some being about sports in Qatar. The competition also included prizes for the winners, with some of the prizes being provided by Qatar Airways.

The Permanent Mission of Qatar, in co-operation with the UN Office in Geneva, organised a fan zone for UN staff and representatives of diplomatic missions and international and regional organisations to watch World Cup matches.

In Beijing, the Qatari embassy held a party which was attended by ambassador Mohamed bin Abdullah al-Dehaimi, as well as a number of senior Chinese officials, ambassadors of Arab and foreign states, in addition to a number of businessmen, media professionals, and heads of major Chinese companies operating in Qatar.

The attendees expressed their wishes for a successful World Cup, signing the tournaments mural.

On the sidelines of the celebration, an art exhibition for major Chinese artists' painting was held, whose paintings were specifically made for the World Cup 2022.

The exhibition also includes 3D models of World Cup stadiums, as well as a special corner for picture taking, in addition to Qatari cultural and heritage displays in the heritage tent, which includes 3D models of falcons, oryxes and traditional Qatari garments.

In Belgium, the Qatari embassy ceremony was attended by ambassador to the kingdom and the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg Khalid bin Fahad al-Hajri, as well as Ministry of Sports and Youth representatives, in addition to a number of members of parliament in Belgium and ambassadors.

The Qatari embassy in Kigali, Rwanda, held a party on the occasion of the World Cup.

The ceremony was attended by ambassador Misfer bin Faisal al-Shahwani, the embassy staff, and a number of heads and representatives of diplomatic missions.

In Tirana, Albania, the embassy of Qatar organised a ceremony to celebrate the World Cup 2022.

It was attended by ambassador Ali bin Hamad al-Marri and a number of heads and members of the diplomatic corps. The embassy also set up a special area



for fans to watch the World Cup matches in Skanderbeg Square in Tirana.

In Singapore, the Qatari embassy held a party which was attended by ambassador Saoud bin Jassim al-Jufairi, as well as a number of officials at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and government agencies in Singapore, heads and members of diplomatic missions, as well as prominent figures in Singaporean society.

In Pretoria, South Africa, the Qatari embassy held a party which was attended by ambassador Tariq Ali Faraj al-Ansari, together with a number of heads and members of diplomatic missions, and prominent personalities in South Africa. (QNA)





# Range Rover, Range Rover Sport awarded five-star Euro NCAP safety ratings

The New Range Rover and Range Rover Sport have both been awarded maximum five-star ratings in the latest Euro NCAP safety tests.

The luxury SUVs draw on more than 50 years of expertise in delivering exceptional breadth of all-terrain capability, refinement and safety.

The new models are the latest in a long line of Range Rovers to gain a five-star rating under the stringent Euro NCAP star rating safety protocols introduced in 2009, stretching back to the Evoque in 2011.

Both models are based on a new mixed-metal, flexible Modular Longitudinal Architecture, which provides solid foundations for a suite of state-of-the-art driver assistance technologies to work in harmony for a responsive and refined drive. The New Range Rover, which is available with four-, five- and seven-seat configurations, is up to 50% stiffer than its predecessor while the Range Rover Sport is 35% stiffer than before, a press statement notes.

The award-winning New Range Rover scored 87% for Child Occupant Protection and 72% for Vulnerable Road Users, while the Range Rover Sport achieved an 85% rating for Adult Occupant Protection. Both SUVs obtained 82% for Safety Assist.

Thomas Mueller, executive director - Product Engineering, Jaguar Land Rover, said: "These excellent Euro NCAP results are a direct result of the hard work and expertise that goes into designing, engineering and manufacturing vehicles that have combined safety, capability and luxury for more than five decades. Our strong, mixed metal MLA-Flex body architecture provides solid foundations for a suite of cutting-edge active safety systems such as Autonomous Emergency Braking (AEB) that combined, work in harmony to protect occupants



The New Range Rover and Range Rover Sport.

and other road users. These Range Rovers are a technological triumph."

The New Range Rover and Range Rover Sport share a range of Advanced Driver Assistance Systems (ADAS) designed to support the driver and protect occupants, including:

**Autonomous Emergency Braking (AEB)** - using forward-facing radars and cameras, AEB helps identify vehicles, pedestrians and cyclists ahead, or oncoming vehicles or cyclists from an adjacent lane while the host vehicle is turning left or right. AEB will identify imminent risks and apply the brakes to minimise the severity or avoid the impact.

**Lane Keep Assist** - monitors the road lane markings to detect unintentional lane departure. If the vehicle is about to cross a lane boundary, a rotational force is applied to

the steering wheel to counter the boundary-crossing movement.

**Emergency Lane Keep Assist** - helps to provide corrective steering inputs if it determines the vehicle is getting too close to road edges and is drifting towards an adjacent lane where oncoming vehicles are detected.

**3D Surround Camera and ClearSight Ground View** - the surround camera system provides a 3D, 360-degree view around the vehicle and can display several views simultaneously on the touchscreen display when manoeuvring - giving the driver detailed information about their surroundings. ClearSight Ground View allows drivers to see the hidden area directly ahead of, and beneath, the bonnet on the central touchscreen display.

**Driver Condition Response** - brings the vehicle to a halt and initiates the hazard warn-

ing lights if the driver fails to respond to a series of audio-visual prompts.

**Rear Collision Monitor with Occupant Protection Assist** - uses the front and rear corner radars to detect collision risks within 70m and warn occupants, sounding an audible warning and preparing the cabin for a potential impact. If required, the hazard lights will flash and the interior is primed by tensioning the seat belts, moving the head rests forwards, inclining the seats and closing the windows and panoramic roof.

**Pre-emptive suspension** - the suspension automatically switches to Dynamic mode when the Forward Collision Warning system detects a collision risk, assisting the driver if evasive manoeuvres are required by delivering the most agile responses.

**Adaptive Cruise Control and Steering**

**Assist** - Adaptive Cruise Control maintains a set cruising speed for the vehicle. The vehicle's speed automatically reduces if a slower-moving vehicle is detected in the lane ahead. Steering Assist helps the driver keep the vehicle in the centre of its lane by making minor steering adjustments.

**Park Assist** - detects available parking spaces and manoeuvres the vehicle into parallel and perpendicular spaces. Park Assist controls the vehicle during a manoeuvre using the steering, acceleration, gear selection and braking.

Alongside the active safety systems, the New Range Rover and Range Rover Sport make use of technologies that aim to improve driver alertness and reduce the potential for distraction.

Integrated Amazon Alexa provides the ability to control various settings and features using natural and intuitive voice commands, without the need to take hands off the wheel or eyes off the road.

Alexa is embedded in Pivi Pro and can be activated simply by saying 'Alexa' or tapping the Alexa button on the touchscreen. The clever voice AI even integrates Alexa devices at home, and works without a smartphone - all owners need to do is log in through their Amazon account for the vehicle's built-in eSIMs to provide connectivity.

Both vehicles are also available with Cabin Air Purification Pro, a pioneering system that takes interior air quality to the next level. Not only does the PM2.5 filtration and Nanoe-X technology help significantly reduce odours, bacteria and allergens, but it also enhances wellness and alertness by monitoring CO levels inside and automatically introducing fresh external air when required. High concentrations of CO contribute to drowsiness, so the system proactively contributes to optimum driver alertness.

# Qatar Charity's food convoy for affected, displaced in Sudan



From the initiative.

Qatar Charity (QC) launched a new food aid convoy for 20,000 affected and displaced people in Lagawa, a district of South Kordofan state, Sudan, and surrounding areas.

The launch of the food convoy was attended by Ali bin Jaber, the Chargé d'affaires at the embassy of Qatar in Sudan, and Dr Najim al-Din Musa, the commissioner for humanitarian aid in Sudan.

The convoy, which came within the framework of the Urgent Response Project for Affected Families in Sudan, in co-operation with Islamic Relief Worldwide, contained 157 tonnes of food items (3,400 food packages) for the affected, a press statement noted.

"Qatar Charity is doing great and honourable work in Sudan," said Dr Musa. He thanked QC for its continuous assistance to address the critical humanitarian situations in conflict-affected areas in Blue Nile and West Kordofan.

He also applauded the humanitarian role of Qatar, indicating that its preoccupation with organising the World Cup these days did not distract it from its humanitarian duty to help people in Sudan. He also praised the efforts of Qatar Charity and Islamic Relief Worldwide in addressing humanitarian crises in the country.

Salah Mohamed al-Hassan, representative of Islamic Relief Worldwide, said this assistance for the affected comes as a continuation of a decade-long relationship between Islamic Relief



and Qatar Charity. He added that the project aims to reduce the burden on those affected by the conflicts in West Kordofan.

Al-Hassan expressed hope that co-operation between QC and Islamic Relief Worldwide will continue to provide aid to all those in need in Kordofan and other regions of Sudan.

Qatar Charity has implemented, during the past three months, a series of relief interventions for those affected by the conflict and flood, as well as for the displaced, in Sudan. Nearly 12,500 food packages (575 tonnes of food items) have been distributed among the beneficiaries.



Participants of the forum. PICTURE: Thajudheen

# 'Football is a game of life'

Speakers and Qatar legacy ambassadors at Generation Amazing forum underpin the values of collaboration and social skills

By Ayman Adly  
Staff Reporter

Football can be a highly instrumental tool for motivation, experience and cultural exchange, as well as for uniting people with different backgrounds and perspectives across the world, a forum by the Generation Amazing Foundation (GA) concluded yesterday.

The forum featured speakers from the Ministry of Public Health and a number of Qatar legacy ambassadors, who explored and discussed the topic 'Generation Amazing and Football for Development: How football can support development and create positive social change.'

It was moderated by Michael Richardson, GA football for development experts, and the

participants at the discussion were Katja Warwick-Smith, assistant executive director of clinical services at Hamad Medical Corporation; Roland de Boer, Qatar legacy ambassador; Abeer Saad, GA coach; and Nour Loubani, GA coach and youth advocate.

De Boer pointed out that football is a team game that promotes the values of collaboration and reflects positively on the society. The game is a good opportunity to meet other people and exchange experience and learn from each other. Further, it promotes team spirit, which is important for youngsters in particular, who would learn how to value advice from others and older players.

Warwick-Smith explained that football can have a direct impact on well-being and mental health, not just physi-

cal fitness, as it helps participants engage with each other in a positive way and develop much-needed social skills, and that loss can be accepted but there is always a chance to do better next time. She explained that among the skills football players need to acquire and often learn through the game are self-control and how to overcome personal anxiety to take timely and proper decisions.

Loubani said after joining GA, she learnt a lot and gained much experience, and sees football as an excellent tool to impart such knowledge and expertise to others. She explained that there is a need to understand and concept of football and go beyond the physical and health aspects and also focus on personal well-being, lifestyle and the skills needed to address challenges.

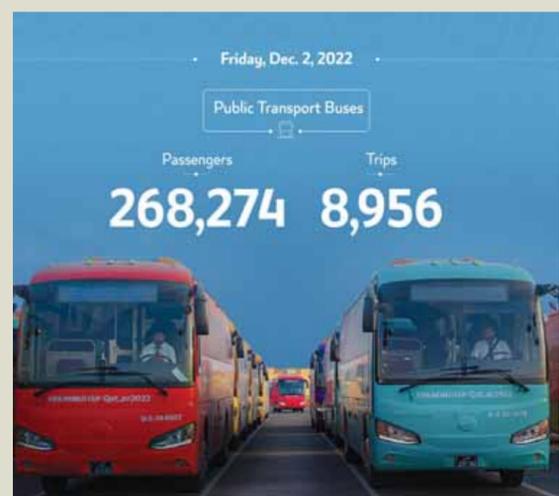
She added that football teaches youngsters how to adopt different roles that suites them in certain situations, as not everyone can be the leader at all times and the best way is to collaborate with others.

Saad noted that it is easy to impart skills among children through football, such as inclusion, equality and leadership, among other positive values. She said youngsters could learn through football, that they need to co-operate with the team to reach certain goals at certain stages and not everybody is a winner, and there is time to be a winner and accept losing on other occasions.

The forum stressed that football is a game of life, where different people could come together and learn and adopt positive values and approaches towards each other.

## Metro, Lusail Tram carry more than 800,000 passengers in a single day

Mowasalat (Karwa) transported 268,274 fans on Friday with 2,989 buses, the 13th day of the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022. The buses made a total of 8,956 trips, the Ministry of Transport (MoT) tweeted. Mowasalat has asked tourists and fans to install the Karwa Journey Planner App to explore the best ways to reach stadiums and fan zones. Meanwhile, a total of 9,208 passengers were transported by the Education City and Msheireb trams on Friday, the MoT said, while the number of passengers ferried by the Doha Metro and Lusail Tram stood at 802,730 on the same day. According to figures released by the MoT, 874 aircraft movements were recorded at Hamad International Airport and Doha International Airport on Friday.



### Culture minister tours Darb Al Saai



HE the Minister of Culture Sheikh Abdulrahman bin Hamad al-Thani, Chairman of the Organising Committee of the National Day Celebrations, toured an arts exhibition at Darb Al Saai yesterday. He also met some of the artists there and listened to detailed presentations about their paintings, Arabic calligraphy, Islamic decoration, and pottery.



### Oman minister at Darb Al Saai

Omani Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries Saud Hamoud al-Habsi during his visit to Darb Al Saai.



### No stranger to learning

Children are taking part in various activities held at Darb Al Saai, aimed at encouraging them to read and write, and enrich their knowledge and skills, with various books that cover topics such as the history of Qatar, Qatar National Day, and the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022.



## Qatar Scientific Club presents interactive shows at Darb Al Saai

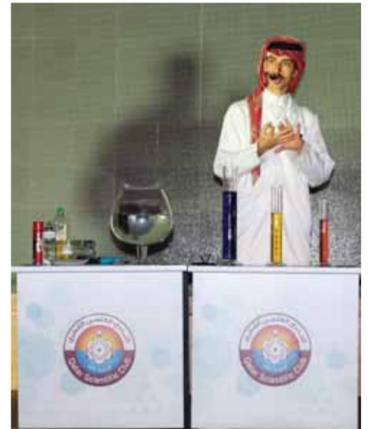
QNA  
Doha

The Qatar Scientific Club (QSC) is participating in this year's Darb Al Saai activities held to celebrate the National Day.

The club will present a series of interactive scientific shows. In a statement to the Qatar News Agency (QNA), QSC managing director Sheikh Ali bin Salman al-Thani said that the club, in co-operation with the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change (MoECC), will offer a range of shows and experiences combining learning and fun, such as dry ice shows, air cannon, liquid nitrogen shows, and some shows for the ignition triangle, in addition to cultural competitions of a scientific nature that have received interaction and approval from the public.

He said that the club will also participate in the events accompanying the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022, especially in the "D'reesha of Invention and Innovation", which will be held under the supervision and organisation of the Qatar Foundation (QF) from December 11-17, where it will present a number of events, such as scientific competitions, interactive scientific experiments, a meeting with an innovator, an exhibition on the inventions of Muslim scholars, the building World Cup stadiums, and the building Islamic and engineering heritage landmarks. The QSC will also participate in events accompanying the World Cup, which will be held in Kahramaa Awareness Park, starting from tomorrow (December 5) until the National Day.

Sheikh Ali added that the occasion of the National Day and its commemoration, in Darb Al Saai or in various places in the country, is a commemoration of the founding of Qatar by Sheikh Jassim bin Mohamed bin Thani. He said that the National Day represents an opportunity to introduce the works of the founders who endured hardships and paid a heavy price to achieve the unity of their nation. The National Day also emphasises the identity of the state and its history, and embodies the ide-



The QSC will offer a range of shows at Darb Al Saai.



als and hopes upon which the state was built, in addition to promoting loyalty, solidarity, unity and pride in the Qatari national identity.

### Qatar is making everyone happy with impressive World Cup, says Dominican artist

Dominican plastic artist Jeron Jimenez has said that Qatar has succeeded in organising an impressive FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022. In a statement to the Qatar News Agency (QNA), he said that he is very happy that Qatar achieved what it promised. "I lived in Europe, and came to Doha to prepare for my exhibition. I have witnessed and experienced some (criticism against) Qatar's organisation of the World Cup, especially in Germany, where some people raised issues unrelated to sports, which lacked logic," Jimenez said. "Everyone supported Qatar, because it did what it did for the whole world, and I saw how happy everyone was with this wonderful organisation, and I warmly congratulate all those who worked to achieve this great success," he added. This came on the sidelines of his

exhibition "Faces of the World", which was organised by Katara - Cultural Village Foundation in co-operation with the Dominican embassy in Qatar. It features 25 artistic portraits of the most prominent soccer stars in the world. On the relationship between art and sports, Jimenez said that the connection lies in the artist and athlete always striving to set an example, and to take effort to be the best in art and sports. He recounted that when he was a child in the Dominican Republic, he used to practice Olympic gymnastics, and has been practising drawing since he was 12 years old, and now sport and art are inseparable in his exhibition in Doha. Regarding his style of drawing, Jimenez told the QNA that he chose to depict feelings, not appearance, in his portraits of football stars, instead of the traditional method of drawing faces. - QNA

## Symposium highlights Qatari women's role in society

A cultural symposium, held on Friday evening as part of the Darb Al Saai activities, highlighted the role of Qatari women and their significant contributions to the development of various aspects in society. Director of the Mohamed Bin Hamad Al-Thani Centre for Muslim Contributions to Civilisation at the Hamad Bin Khalifa University's College of Islamic Studies, Dr Aisha Yousef al-Mannai, Qatari Forum for Authors director-general Dr Aisha Jassim al-Kuwari, and journalist Hessa al-Suwaidi participated in the symposium which was held under the title of *Qatari Women... Great Roles and Achievements in Society*. The symposium was moderated by journalist Ahmed al-Saadi. The participants spoke about the roles played by Qatari women in various fields, associated with their adherence to Islamic culture, as well as Qatari customs and traditions. Dr al-Mannai said that Qatari women make great contributions to society because of their broad Islamic culture, adding that Qatari women are keen to adhere to the customs and traditions of their society, just as they are keen



Dr al-Mannai, Dr al-Kuwari, and al-Suwaidi.

to raise their children while keeping to these virtues. She explained that women have been peers to Qatari men for a long time, contributing to the growth of women's role in different spheres, under the constitution that gave men and women equal rights and duties, and stressed that Qatari women have preserved their identity despite entering various fields.

Dr al-Kuwari drew attention to the success of Qatari women within and without the country, presenting many examples in this regard, and noted the presence of Qatari women writers who participate in introducing Qatari culture in various fields of creativity, and assuming responsibility for cultural affairs like men. Al-Suwaidi emphasised the ability

of the Qatari female intellectuals, who are proud of their beliefs and heritage, to courageously work and open up with various cultures in light of the "deep-rooted and solidly founded constants". She said that women can be ambassadors of local culture through opening up to the other world, in service of the work they do in entrepreneurship, culture or media. - QNA



# Prince William meets President Biden, awards Earthshot climate prizes

Reuters/AFP  
Boston

Prince William greeted US President Joe Biden at Boston's waterfront on Friday, the final day of a visit by British royals trying to focus attention on tackling environmental issues.

William and his wife, Kate, attempted to keep the spotlight on climate and other causes that they champion on their first overseas trip since taking on the titles of Prince and Princess of Wales after the death of Queen Elizabeth in September.

In the middle of their US visit, however, Netflix Inc released a trailer for an upcoming documentary series about William's younger brother, Harry, and his American wife, Meghan, reviving talk about rifts in the royal family.

Buckingham Palace also was dealing with a new racism controversy.

On Friday afternoon, William smiled as he met Biden outdoors in cold weather along Boston's waterfront.

The two men took a brief stroll before a private meeting at the John F Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum.

The pair were expected to discuss "shared climate goals" and "prioritisation of mental health issues", White House spokeswoman Karine Jean-Pierre told reporters before the meeting.

Later on Friday, William and Kate honoured winners of the Earthshot Prize, an award William established to recognise people working on solutions to problems caused by climate change.

Britain's heir to the throne rewarded five entrepreneurs with £1m (\$1.2m) each as part of his Earthshot Prize initiative to support efforts to save the planet from warming temperatures.

"By supporting and scaling them, we can change our future," William said on stage at the black-tie ceremony.

Annie Lennox and sisters Chloe x Halle were among singers to perform at Boston's MGM Music Hall.

Actor Rami Malek and ex-footballer David Beckham presented awards.

British naturalist and television presenter David Attenborough and actress Cate Blanchett



US President Joe Biden with Prince William at the John F Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum in Boston.

were among the judges.

Winners included a female-founded start-up providing cleaner-burning stoves to women in Kenya and a British company that crafts biodegradable packaging from marine plants.

"I believe that the Earthshot solutions you

have seen this evening prove we can overcome our planet's greatest challenges. And by supporting and scaling them we can change our future," William told the audience.

The ceremony, now in its second year, was trailed by royal insiders as William's "Super-bowl moment" and came at the end of his and wife Kate's first visit to the United States in eight years.

The couple's three-day trip to Boston focused on the environment, as they discussed rising sea levels with local officials and toured a laboratory specialising in green technologies.

The Earthshot Prize, launched in October 2020, was inspired by US president John F Kennedy's "Moonshot" project in the 1960s to put a man on the moon.

Mukuru Clean Stoves of Kenya won the Clean our Air category for its biomass stoves made from charcoal, wood, and sugarcane that burn 70% less pollution than traditional stoves and cost just \$10.

London-based Notpla scooped the Build a Waste-Free World prize for its packaging products made of seaweed.

The Protect and Restore Nature award went to Indian firm Kheyti whose greenhouses protect small-hold farmers' crops from unpredictable weather and destructive pests.

The Queensland Indigenous Women Rangers Network won the Revive our Oceans category for training more than 60 women in techniques to preserve Australia's Great Barrier Reef.

The Fix Our Climate award went to Oman-based 44.01, which removes carbon dioxide from the atmosphere by turning it into peridotite rock stored underground.

Kate and William last visited the United States in 2014, when they were guests of then-President Barack Obama at the White House.

Their current trip came just days before Harry and Meghan looked set to steal the limelight at an awards ceremony in New York.

For many in the British media, Harry and Meghan have become the royal villains, turning their back on duty while using their royal status to forge out lucrative careers.

In contrast, William and Kate are usually portrayed in the British media as dutiful and earnest, reflecting the style of the late queen.

## UK agency arrests 'wealthy Russian'

Reuters  
London

Britain's National Crime Agency (NCA) said yesterday that it had arrested a "wealthy Russian businessman" on suspicion of money laundering and other offences as part of a crackdown on corrupt oligarchs.

The NCA said the 58-year-old was among three men arrested by officers from the Combating Kleptocracy Cell (CKC) on Thursday at a "multi-million pound residence" in London.

The Russian embassy in London has demanded information from Britain's Foreign Office on the reasons and circumstances of the detention of the unidentified businessman and the conditions in which he was being held, Russian news agencies said.

The man was detained on suspicion of money laundering, conspiracy to defraud the Home Office (interior ministry) and conspiracy to commit perjury, the NCA said.

A 35-year-old man was arrested at the premises after he was seen leaving with a bag which contained thousands of pounds in cash.

A former boyfriend, 39, of the businessman's partner was also arrested at the property, police said.

All three have been released on police bail.

NCA director-general Graeme Biggar said that the CKC, which was set up earlier this year to tackle attempts to evade sanctions and to disrupt corrupt elites, was having a significant impact on oligarchs' criminal activity, the professional service providers that supported them and those linked to the Russian government.

"We will continue to use all the powers and tactics available to us to disrupt this threat," he said in a statement.

The NCA said it had so far secured nearly 100 "disruptions" - described as actions that demonstrably removed or reduced a criminal threat - against elites linked to Russian President Vladimir Putin and their enablers.

These included a number of asset freezing orders on accounts held by people linked to sanctioned Russians.

Britain has so far sanctioned more than 1,200 individuals and over 120 entities following the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

## Indian state will proceed 'no matter what' with protest-hit Adani port

India's Kerala state will proceed "no matter what" with a \$900m port project and is open to deploying federal police if needed to protect it from protesters blocking construction, a government minister told Reuters yesterday.

The local fishing community, led by Catholic priests, has blocked construction of Vizhinjam port by Adani Group for almost four months, erecting a makeshift shelter at the port's entrance.

The protesters say that the huge project causes coastal erosion that has undermined their livelihoods, calling for a complete halt on the construction.

Adani Group, led by Asia's richest man Gautam Adani, and the Kerala government, which is shouldering two-thirds of

the project cost with the federal government, have denied such accusations.

Clashes between police and protesters last weekend injured more than 100 people, including 64 police.

Although the protesters have refused to budge, Kerala's minister of ports, Ahammed Devarkovil, said the government of the southern state was hopeful of resolving the deadlock but there was no chance it would halt construction.

"We want to complete the port project no matter what. No compromise can be made on that," he said in an interview. "Because these are civilians protesting, the government's position is to take this forward without inflicting any harm" on protesters.

Asked for comment on Devarkovil's remarks, a protest leader, Frey Solomon, said that protests would continue as "houses and livelihoods of thousands of fishermen are at stake".

Adani Group did not immediately respond to an e-mail request for comment. The conglomerate has repeatedly urged a state court to authorise the federal police guard the project so work may resume, saying local police were "mute spectators".

Minister Devarkovil said Kerala remains open to the idea of deploying the federal Central Reserve Police Force.

Adani wants to complete the first phase of construction by December 2024, but Devarkovil said his government is hopeful of getting the first vessel to the port by

September next year, even as construction continues.

It wants to make up for lost time by deploying workers to work extra hours and putting more industrial equipment to use.

"Adani Group is willing to do that," Devarkovil said.

Gautam Adani, whose empire spans gas and power projects as well as ports and logistics business valued at some \$23.5bn, has described Vizhinjam as an "unmatched location" on the critical east-west shipping route.

"The possibilities being opened up by Vizhinjam port are unmatched by any other in India," Devarkovil said. "We will be set to grab business from Sri Lanka port" - Reuters

# Beijing, Shenzhen loosen more Covid curbs

Reuters  
Shanghai

Beijing residents cheered yesterday the removal of coronavirus (Covid-19) testing booths, while Shenzhen said it would no longer require commuters to present test results to travel, as an easing of China's coronavirus curbs gathered pace.

Although daily cases are near all-time highs, some cities are taking steps to loosen Covid-19 testing requirements and quarantine rules as China looks to make its zero-Covid-19 policy more targeted amid a sharp economic slowdown and public frustration that has boiled over into unrest.

The southern city of Shenzhen announced it would no longer require people to show a negative Covid-19 test result to use public transport or enter parks, following similar moves by Chengdu and Tianjin.

Many testing booths in Beijing have been shut, as the capital stops demanding negative test results as a condition to enter places such as supermarkets

and prepares to do so for subways from tomorrow.

Many other venues, including offices, still require testing.

A video showing workers in Beijing removing a testing booth by crane onto a truck went viral on Chinese social media on Friday.

"This should have been taken away earlier!" said one commentator.

"Banished to history," said another. Reuters could not immediately verify the authenticity of the footage.

At some of the remaining booths, however, residents grumbled about hour-long queues for the tests due to the closures.

Three years after Covid-19 emerged in central China, the nation has been a global outlier with a zero-tolerance approach of lockdowns and frequent testing.

The authorities say the measures are needed to save lives and avoid overwhelming China's healthcare system.

China began tweaking its approach last month, urging localities to become more targeted.

Initial reactions, however, were

marked with confusion and even tighter lockdowns as cities scrambled to keep a lid on rising cases.

Then a deadly apartment fire last month in the far western city of Urumqi sparked dozens of protests against Covid-19 curbs in over 20 cities in a wave unprecedented in mainland China since President Xi Jinping took power in 2012.

Authorities detained several people who participated in the protests and police in cities such as Shanghai have been checking commuters' phones for apps or virtual private network software that protesters used to communicate, according to protesters and social media posts.

Yesterday police kept a heavy presence around Liangmaqiao junction in east Beijing, as authorities sought to put off any potential follow-up to last weekend's unrest.

A similarly large police presence could be seen on streets close to Shanghai's Wulumuqi Road, which is named after Urumqi and was the site of a vigil for the victims of the fire that turned into protests last weekend.

China is set to further announce a na-

tionwide easing of testing requirements as well as allowing positive cases and close contacts to isolate at home under certain conditions, people familiar with the matter told Reuters this week.

Xi, during a meeting with European Union officials in Beijing on Thursday, blamed the mass protests on youth frustrated by years of the pandemic, but said the now-dominant Omicron variant of the virus paved the way for fewer restrictions, EU officials said.

Officials have only recently begun to downplay the dangers of Omicron, a significant change in messaging.

On Friday, some Beijing neighbourhoods posted guidelines on social media on how positive cases can quarantine at home, a landmark move that marks a break from official guidance to send such people to central quarantine.

Still, the relief has also been accompanied by concerns, especially from people who feel more exposed to the disease.

Many analysts say they still do not anticipate a significant reopening until at least after March, as China must first achieve results in a just-launched vac-

cination drive targeting the elderly. Estimates for how many deaths China could see if it pivots to a full reopening have ranged from 1.3m to over 2m, though some researchers said the death toll could be reduced sharply if there was a focus on vaccination.

"None of this should be interpreted as a fundamental shift away from the zero-Covid-19 policy but rather an effort to make it more streamlined and less costly. The goal is still to get cases back close to zero," Capital Economics said in a note, referring to the recent fine-tuning of policy.

"The alternative of letting the virus spread widely before more of the elderly are vaccinated and healthcare capacity has been ramped up would result in a higher death rate than in many Asian countries that reopened earlier, undermining China's zero-Covid-19 success," they said.

China reported 32,827 daily local Covid-19 infections yesterday, down from 34,772 a day earlier.

As of Friday, China had reported 5,233 Covid-related deaths and 331,952 cases with symptoms.



## Disabilities Day marked

The Palace of Westminster in London (above) lights up purple for International Day of Persons with Disabilities.

Right: India Gate in New Delhi is illuminated with purple light.

Left: Children take part in an event yesterday at a school for disabled children in Lambaro, Aceh province, Indonesia.



## Former S Korea security chief held over border killing

South Korea has arrested a former national security chief on suspicion of covering up events surrounding the 2020 murder of a fisheries official by Pyongyang. President Yoon Suk-yeol is expanding an inquiry into the highly politicised case following accusations that his predecessor mishandled the probe to curry favour with North Korea.

Suh Hoon is the first top official from the presidential office of former leader Moon Jae-in to be arrested over the case. He is accused of ordering that intelligence reports be destroyed to conceal the killing of fisheries official Lee Dae-jun, who died near the sea border separating North and South Korea. The former top security official also faces allegations that he manipulated evidence to support the Moon government's controversial claim that the late fisheries official had sought to defect to the North. - AFP

## Strong earthquake hits Indonesia's Java island

A strong earthquake hit Indonesia's main island of Java yesterday, injuring at least one person and shaking the same town devastated by a tremor last month that left more than 330 people dead.

The 5.7-magnitude quake struck on land at a depth of 112km, with the epicentre located 18km southeast of the West Java city of Banjar, according to the United States Geological Survey (USGS). Indonesia's meteorological agency, known as BMKG, gave a higher magnitude of 6.4 for the quake, which shook buildings in the capital Jakarta, according to an AFP journalist.

It was felt in capital Jakarta, around 200km from the epicentre. At least one person was injured and was taken to hospital, the country's national disaster mitigation chief Suharyanto, who like many Indonesians goes by one name, told broadcaster Metro TV. There were no reports of other casualties or major damage.

The BMKG said the quake caused buildings to shake in the West Java town of Garut and it warned residents near the epicentre to beware of potential aftershocks.

However, there was no threat of a tsunami, it said. Budi Satria, the local rescue chief in Garut, said there appeared to be no significant damage.

A Reuters witness in Bandung, the capital of West Java province, said guests of a hotel ran out of the building but had since returned inside.

Indonesia experiences frequent seismic and volcanic activity due to its position on the Pacific "Ring of Fire", where tectonic plates collide.

Last month a shallow 5.6-magnitude quake hit the town of Cianjur in West Java, killing 331 people, injuring thousands and leaving tens of thousands homeless.

Many were found buried under rubble in the days following the quake with few successful rescues reported.

A 6.2-magnitude quake that shook Sulawesi in January last year also killed more than 100 people. - AFP/Reuters

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**GULF TIMES**

# FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 sets new benchmark for future hosts

As FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 entered the Round of 16, the great sporting spectacle on earth has set new benchmarks for future hosts.

Qatar's investment in state-of-the-art sport stadiums and advanced facilities has ensured that players and fans have world class experience during the World Cup.

The compact nature of the tournament in Qatar means everything is close by – whether it is a stadium, training site or tourist attraction. While fans immerse themselves in the action, players are able to totally focus on football as there is no requirement for travel between matches.

This year's tournament is the 22nd edition of international football's showpiece event – and the first to take place in the Middle East.

Qatar is hosting the most compact edition of FIFA World Cup in modern history. All eight stadiums are within one hour's drive of central Doha, meaning fans and players will always be in the thick of the action.

And uniquely in modern times, fans have had the chance to attend more than one match a day in the preliminary stages of the tournament.

**Qatar is hosting an outstanding edition of the FIFA World Cup - one that will leave an important legacy for our country, the Middle East and globally**

Doha Metro has already become an "instant hit" with thousands of football fans from abroad and those residing in Qatar. Excellent crowd management has ensured that football fans have a safe and smooth travel experience.

Also, the world class facility is being provided to Hayya

card holders, absolutely free.

Many football fans who spoke to Gulf Times were all praise for Qatar, for its excellent event and crowd management.

Since starting operations in 2019, Doha Metro's state-of-the-art driverless system was specifically designed and built to handle large numbers of passengers and major events. Doha Metro underwent significant tests during several large events held previously.

As many as 110 trains are now operating 21 hours a day and more than 10,000 staff are manning the Doha Metro. From three cars, the Red Line is now running with six cars.

The FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 has clearly raised excitement around the world.

After the first round of FIFA World Cup group stage matches were completed, official figures released by FIFA showed that the average overall match attendance in stadiums across Qatar stands at an impressive 94% compared to stadium capacities for the event.

With all 32 nations having taken to the field – and more than 3mn tickets sold for the tournament – the strong attendance figures also follow the recent news that the preliminary comparable television viewing figures are up in nations across the world from the previous FIFA World Cup edition.

FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 has become a sporting spectacle to remember for everyone who has already made it and will make it to Qatar – as well as the billions glued to their TVs and smartphones around the world.

For decades, hosting the World Cup was a distant dream – but now it has become a reality. Qatar's hard work has indeed come to fruition and the country is now hosting an outstanding edition of the FIFA World Cup – one that will leave an important legacy for our country, the Middle East and globally.



# Messi takes on Ronaldo in fan coin World Cup

**The broader crypto market malaise is partly to blame for price drops, according to researchers who said the flighty assets were wilting as investors shunned risk**

By Medha Singh and Lisa Pauline Mattackal  
Bengaluru

The market for fan tokens, a volatile cocktail of crypto and sport, is heating up.

Interest in this niche breed of cryptocurrencies, typically linked to sports teams like Barcelona or Brazil, has been charged up by the football World Cup which began on November 20.

Average daily trading volumes for these tokens have risen to around \$300mn in November from \$32mn the month before, according to Kaiko, a Paris-based crypto data firm.

"So we have 10-fold increase in volume which is huge for these tokens," said research analyst Dessislava Aubert.

For some buyers, these tokens offer the chance to engage with their side and gain perks such as the chance to win prizes and vote on songs played at matches. For others, the tradeable coins provide a new investment opportunity.

It's a brave investor who'd seek to divine any sensible link between erratic coin prices and real-world events, though.

The token of Lionel Messi's Argentina side slumped 25% to \$5.26 following the team's shock defeat by Saudi Arabia in their opening World Cup game. Yet it has dropped

a further 22% since the team's subsequent victory over Mexico brought fan relief.

The coin of Cristiano Ronaldo's Portugal rallied 119% to \$7 in the 10 days leading up to the tournament but then proceeded to lose almost half its value even though it was unbeaten and top of its group heading into its clash with Uruguay, which it won to reach the knock-out stage.

Similarly in club football, Arsenal's token has fallen 12.5% since the start of the season to \$1.68 despite their glittering run to the top of the English Premier League.

The broader crypto market malaise is partly to blame for price drops, according to researchers who said the flighty assets were wilting as investors shunned risk.

The overall market cap for fan coins jumped to \$401mn on the opening weekend of the World Cup, from \$256mn about 10 days earlier, according to data from CoinGecko, but it has since fallen back below \$300mn.

Siddharth Jaiswal, founder and CEO of Sportzchain, which mainly issues tokens for the Asian market, said people shouldn't buy the coins primarily to make money.

"The cherry on the cake is that it's a tool, available on the blockchain that can be easily traded in the future, so there is a financial connotation attached to it," he added.

"But the first perception should

never be that you're buying the fan token from a profit-generating standpoint."

**Brooding Bitcoin**  
Socios, which is promoted by Messi, is the biggest player in this slice of the crypto industry. It facilitates trading of most fan coins, describing buying such tokens as joining a loyalty scheme with exclusive benefits and prizes.

Some of the world's biggest football clubs have launched tokens supported by Socios including Paris Saint-Germain, Manchester City, Inter Milan and Atletico Madrid, as well as the Portuguese and Argentinian national teams, with market caps of tokens ranging from about \$7mn to \$21mn.

Trading volumes for the Socios-linked token Chilliz, which users buy in order to trade with their team tokens, hit a seven-month high in early November ahead of the World Cup but have since retreated 40% from that peak.

When looking at the breakdown of trading in the Chilliz token by fiat currency, the Korean won dominates with its total fiat volume exceeding 87% in early November followed by Turkey's lira, according to data from Kaiko.

The growth spurt in fan tokens comes at a time of tumult in the crypto market, which is reeling from the collapse of major exchange FTX

earlier this month. Bitcoin is brooding near two-year lows at around \$16,245.

While the FTX fiasco has raised serious questions about the lack of regulation in digital assets, fan coins – which some issuers say fall under the utility token category – remain a grey area.

"Tokens which do not offer sufficient utility could face some regulatory scrutiny, because this would infer that the token is an investment into the club," said Marcus Sotiriou, analyst at digital asset broker GlobalBlock.

"However, if the token offers exclusive benefits and focuses on the utility it provides to its fans, then I do not think there will be regulatory issues."

Socios said it believed in regulation to give fans trust and transparency.

In August, Britain's advertising watchdog upheld a ruling against Arsenal over two adverts about fan tokens posted on the club's website and Facebook that it deemed were misleading and irresponsible, although the club denied this.

Markus Thielen, head of research at digital assets platform Matrixport, said interest in these tokens among soccer fans could be short-lived.

"Companies and teams that are selling those tokens must now offer more value at regular intervals, otherwise users will lose interest after the World Cup quite quickly."

– Reuters



IN THE FRAME: Portugal's Cristiano Ronaldo (left) and Argentina's Lionel Messi. (AFP, Reuters)

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# US unveils high-tech B-21 stealth bomber

AFP  
Palmdale

The United States has unveiled the B-21 Raider, a high-tech stealth bomber that can carry nuclear and conventional weapons and is designed to be able to fly without a crew on board.

The slickly choreographed ceremony at B-21 manufacturer Northrop Grumman's facility in Palmdale, California opened with the US national anthem as older bombers roared over a crowd that included top US officials.

Dramatic music played and lights flashed as the doors of a hanger holding the new aircraft slowly opened, and the crowd applauded as the cloth covering it was pulled away to reveal a sleek grey bomber that is on track to cost nearly \$700m per plane.

"The B-21 Raider is the first strategic bomber in more than three decades. It is a testament to America's enduring advantages in ingenuity and innovation," US Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin said in remarks at the ceremony.

Many specifics of the aircraft are being kept under wraps, but the plane will offer significant advances over existing bombers in the US fleet, which Austin highlighted in his remarks.

He hailed its range – "no other long-range

bomber can match its efficiency" – and its durability, saying it is "designed to be the most maintainable bomber ever built."

Like the F-22 and F-35 warplanes, the B-21 features stealth technology, which minimises an aircraft's signature through both its shape and the materials it is constructed from, making it harder for adversaries to detect.

"Fifty years of advances in low-observable technology have gone into this aircraft," Austin said. "Even the most sophisticated air defence systems will struggle to detect the B-21 in the sky."

The plane is also built with an "open system architecture," which allows for the incorporation of "new weapons that haven't even been invented yet," he said.

Amy Nelson, a fellow at the Brookings Institution think tank, told AFP ahead of the unveiling that the B-21 is "designed to evolve."

"The 'open architecture' allows for the future integration of improved software (including for autonomy) so the aircraft doesn't become obsolete as quickly," she said.

"The B-21 is much fancier than its predecessors – truly modern. Not only is it dual-capable (unlike the B-2), which means it can launch nuclear or conventionally armed missiles, it can launch long- and short-range missiles," Nelson said.



The B-21 Raider, a new high-tech stealth bomber developed for the US Air Force, is seen in an undated photograph in Palmdale, California. (Reuters)

Not mentioned during the ceremony was Air Force spokesperson Ann Stefanek told AFP the plane's potential for uncrewed flight. US the aircraft is "provisioned for the possibility,

but there has been no decision to fly without a crew."

The first flight by a B-21 – "the backbone of our future bomber force" – is expected to take place next year, and the Air Force plans to buy at least 100 of the aircraft, Stefanek said.

Northrop Grumman said six of the planes are currently in different stages of assembly and testing at its facility in Palmdale.

The bomber will be a key part of the US "nuclear triad," which consists of weapons that can be launched from the land, air and sea.

"For nuclear deterrence, the bomber fleet provide flexibility to US nuclear posture, and redundancy should any of the other legs fail," Nelson said.

The "Raider" portion of the aircraft's name honours the 1942 US bomber raid on Tokyo led by then-lieutenant colonel James Doolittle – the first American strike on Japan's homeland following the surprise attack on Pearl Harbour the previous year.

"On a cold and rainy April morning, four months after Pearl Harbour, 16 US Army bomber planes took off from an aircraft carrier in the Pacific," Austin said.

They "flew more than 650 miles to strike distant enemy targets, and the Doolittle Raiders, as they came to be known, showed the strength and the reach of American air power," he said.

## UK, Greece in 'secret talks' on Parthenon Marbles

AFP  
Athens

The British Museum and the Greek prime minister are in the "advanced stage" of "secret talks" over the "possible return" of the Parthenon Marbles, local media reported yesterday.

The ancient sculptures, also known as the Elgin Marbles, were taken from the Parthenon temple in Athens in the early 19th century by British diplomat Lord Elgin and have been held by the British Museum ever since. Greece wants them returned.

The behind-the-scenes talks between British Museum chair George Osborne and Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis "have been taking place in London since November 2021", daily newspaper *Ta Nea* reported.

It said the latest discussions took place at a hotel this week, while Mitsotakis was in the British capital to promote Greek business interests.

The "delicate" negotiations between Osborne, a former British finance minister, and the Greek leader were at an "advanced stage" but Greek officials cautioned they could still "hit a stalemate at the eleventh hour", the paper said.

"It is possible that a mutually beneficial solution can be found. The Parthenon Sculptures can be reunited and at the same time the concerns of the British Museum can be taken into account," ANA-MPA news agency reported

Mitsotakis as saying on Monday.

"I understand that there is momentum. I am consciously talking about 'reunification' of the Sculptures and not about a 'return'."

The British Museum issued a statement yesterday saying it wanted "a new Parthenon partnership with Greece" and was prepared to talk to Athens about that.

"(But) we operate within the law and we're not going to dismantle our great collection, as it tells a unique story of our common humanity," it stressed. The Greek prime minister's office did not reply to AFP requests for comment.

The Parthenon temple was built on the Acropolis in the 5th century BCE to honour Athena, the patron goddess of Athens.

In the early 19th century, workmen stripped entire friezes from the monument on the orders of the British ambassador to the Ottoman Empire, Lord Elgin.

Elgin sold the marbles to the British government, which in 1817 passed them on to the British Museum, where they remain one of its most prized exhibits.

Athens insists the sculptures were stolen.

Successive Greek governments have failed to make significant headway in the dispute.

In March 2021, the then UK prime minister Boris Johnson told *Ta Nea* he understood the "strength of feeling of the Greek people" on the issue.

## Ukraine detains 8 over Banksy mural theft

Ukraine has detained eight people over the theft from a wall in the Kyiv suburbs of a mural painted by elusive British street artist Banksy, the authorities said.

The stencil image of a person in a nightgown and gas mask holding a fire extinguisher next to the charred remains of a window in the town of Gostomel went missing on Friday, they said.

"A group of people tried to steal a Banksy mural. They cut out the work from the wall of a house destroyed by the Russians," Kyiv governor Oleksiy Kuleba said in a post on Telegram late Friday. He attached the image of a gaping hole in the wall where the image once stood.

"Several people were detained on the spot," he said. "The image is in good condition and in the hands of the authorities."

Other works in the area thought also to be the work of Banksy are under police protection, he said. Kyiv police chief Andriy Nebitov said "eight people had been identified" as possibly involved, and a preliminary inquiry had been opened into the matter.

"All were aged between 27 and 60 years old. They are residents of Kyiv and Cherkasy" some 200km southeast of the capital, he said.

Last month, Banksy posted an image of the stencil of a gymnast performing a handstand on the wall of a wrecked building in Borodyanka, another suburb of the capital.

He then posted a video of several more of his artworks, including the person in a gas mask holding the fire extinguisher. Others included the portraits of a bearded man scrubbing up in a bathtub, and a young boy in a karate outfit slamming his adult opponent to the ground. Together with towns such as Bucha and Irpin, Borodyanka and Gostomel were severely hit by Russian bombardment after Russia invaded Ukraine in February.

## Scandal-hit Ramaphosa 'not resigning': spokesman

AFP  
Johannesburg

South Africa's President Cyril Ramaphosa, embroiled in scandal and threat of impeachment, has no intention of resigning and will fight both politically and judicially, his spokesman said yesterday.

Pressure mounted this week for Ramaphosa to quit or be forced from office over the burglary of more than half a million dollars in cash from his farm, which he allegedly covered up.

On Wednesday, a three-member parliamentary panel, including a former chief justice of the country's highest court, said Ramaphosa "may have committed" acts contrary to the law and the constitution, paving the way for impeachment proceedings.

"President Ramaphosa is not resigning based on a flawed report, neither is he stepping aside," his spokesman Vincent Magwenya said.

Ramaphosa has been under fire since June, when a former spy boss filed a complaint with the police alleging that the president had hidden a February 2020 burglary at his farm in northeastern South Africa from the authorities. He allegedly organised for the burglars to be kidnapped and bribed into silence.

Ramaphosa, who is head of the African National Congress (ANC) ruling party, has denied any wrongdoing.

The president has not been charged with anything at this point, and the police inquiry is ongoing.

But the scandal, complete with details of more than half a million dollars in cash be-



In this file photo taken on July 29, 2022 South Africa's President Cyril Ramaphosa laughs as he addresses African National Congress delegates at the National Recreation Center. (AFP)

ing hidden under sofa cushions, comes at the worst possible moment for the president.

On December 16, Ramaphosa contests elections for the ANC presidency – a position that also holds the key to staying on as national president.

"The president has taken to heart the unequivocal message coming from the branches of the governing party who have nominated him to avail himself for a second term of the leadership of the ANC," Magwenya said. Ramaphosa understood that "to mean he must continue with both the state and economic reforms," he added.

"The president has with humility and with great care and commitment accepted that call to continue being of service to his

organisation the ANC and to the people of South Africa."

The ANC leadership met briefly in Johannesburg on Friday, before telling journalists it would look more closely at the facts of the case against the president.

The party said earlier yesterday its National Executive Committee would hold a special session today morning.

Magwenya also said the president would challenge the parliamentary report in court.

"It is in the long-term interest... of our constitutional democracy, well beyond the Ramaphosa presidency, that such a clearly flawed report is challenged, especially when it's being used as a point of reference to remove a sitting head of state," he said.

Even the head of the South African Anglican Church warned that, if Ramaphosa resigns, the country would be in danger of falling "into anarchy".

Ramaphosa said the vast sum of cash stashed at the farm was payment for buffaloes bought by a Sudanese businessman.

But the incriminating report questioned why the identity of Mustafa Mohamed Ibrahim Hazim, said to have bought the cattle, could not be verified, and why the buffaloes remained on Ramaphosa's Phala Phala estate, a two-hour drive from Pretoria.

"There are serious doubts as to whether the stolen foreign currency actually came from their sale," the report concluded.

The scandal has cast a shadow over Ramaphosa's bid to portray himself as graft-free after the corruption-stained era of his predecessor, Jacob Zuma.

The report will be examined by parliament tomorrow.

## 3 police officers killed in ambush in northern Pakistan

The Pakistani Taliban yesterday claimed responsibility for a gun ambush that killed three police officers in northern Pakistan, the second attack claimed by the group just days after it announced an end to a ceasefire with the government.

Police carrying out a patrol in Nowshera, a district of northern Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province which borders Afghanistan, came under fire yesterday evening, a regional police deputy

inspector, Mohamed Ali Gandapur, told Reuters. He said three police officers were killed on the spot and the identity of the attackers was unknown. The militant group Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) claimed responsibility for the attack in a statement.

On Monday the TTP announced an end to a months-long ceasefire, claiming a suicide attack in the southern Pakistani city of Quetta two days later, which killed four people and wounded more than 30.

The TTP wants to overthrow Pakistan's government to replace it with a governance system that subscribes to their own harsh interpretation of Islamic laws. The Afghan Taliban have been facilitating peace talks between local militants and the government since late last year.

The Pakistan Army has conducted several operations against the militants in their strongholds in lawless districts along Afghan border in recent months.

## US hoax trials spotlight misinformation profiteer

AFP  
Washington

American radio host Alex Jones reaped millions spouting conspiracy-laden falsehoods that helped drive up sales of products, exploiting an Internet ecosystem that experts say makes misinformation a lucrative business.

Jones, a serial provocateur who founded the far-right website InfoWars, has been ordered to pay nearly \$1.5bn in damages for calling a 2012 mass shooting in an elementary school – which left 20 first graders and six adults dead – a "hoax."

Defamation cases in Texas and Connecticut against Jones have spotlighted the challenge of curbing misinformation on the Internet, where false and inflammatory content often spreads faster, generates more engagement – and more revenue – than the truth.

"The modern Internet business model consists of building an audi-

ence and then monetising that audience, either through ads, merchandise sales, or direct donation," Danny Rogers, cofounder of the nonprofit Global Disinformation Index, told AFP.

"Alex Jones perfected that model by peddling the most adversarial narratives in the form of virulent conspiracy theories and unbridled anger, building a receptive audience, and then soaking that audience for profit."

Jones, who was back in the spotlight this week when rapper Kanye West declared his admiration for Adolf Hitler on his show, has amassed what experts call a fortune by successfully merging the conspiracy theories with merchandise and dietary supplements from his InfoWars store.

He accused the government of deliberately putting fluoride in drinking water, while his store peddled fluoride-free toothpaste.

His audience, he claimed, can survive various doomsday scenarios with other products that his store can supply – storable food, body armour and even components for homemade guns.

The extent of his wealth is opaque but a forensic economist testified during the Texas trial that the combined net worth of Jones and Free Speech Systems – the parent company of Infowars – likely fell between \$135m and \$270m.

But while bashing the trials as an assault on free speech, Jones has said he has little money to pay the damages and has repeatedly implored his audience for donations.

As he battled the defamation cases, an anonymous bitcoin donor sent Jones cryptocurrency worth \$8m, the nonprofit Southern Poverty Law Center reported in May.

This week, Jones declared personal bankruptcy in his home state of Texas, saying his liabilities far exceeded his assets that were worth between \$1m and \$10m. InfoWars declared bankruptcy in April and Free Speech Systems filed for bankruptcy in July.

Last month, the *Washington Post* reported that Jones had transferred millions of dollars out of Free Speech Systems to firms that he or his family



Infowars founder Alex Jones speaks to the media after appearing at his Sandy Hook defamation trial at Connecticut Superior Court. (Reuters)

members controlled, citing financial records.

Families of the victims in the 2012 shooting in Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Connecticut, have alleged that Jones was trying to hide his wealth to avoid paying the damages. A jury in Connecticut

awarded \$965m in October to relatives of eight Sandy Hook victims and an FBI agent. The judge later tacked on an additional \$473m in punitive damages.

In a separate trial, a jury in Texas ordered Jones to pay nearly \$50m damages to a couple whose six-year-old son was killed in the shooting.

Free Speech Systems and Jones did not respond to a request for comment.

The families of the school shooting victims say they were harassed and threatened for years by Jones's fans, with strangers showing up at their homes to confront them and hurling abuse online. Some even reported receiving rape and death threats.

"Their children got slaughtered – I saw it myself," Bill Aldenberg, the FBI agent, said in an emotionally charged testimony during the Connecticut trial in September.

"And these people (Jones and company) made millions upon millions. They've destroyed everybody and they don't give a damn."

InfoWars sales data presented dur-

ing the Connecticut trial showed a major spike in revenue after Jones peddled a new lie about the school shooting.

On September 25, 2014, when he falsely claimed that an FBI report showed that "no one died in 2012 in Sandy Hook" his site's daily revenue jumped to more than \$230,000, according to the data published by the *Huffington Post*.

On the previous day, before he peddled that claim, the site made only \$48,000.

That underscores, what experts say, is the financial incentive of content creators to push out conspiratorial material that has potential to go viral.

"The fundamental problem is larger than Jones and is really the business model itself and its toxic externalities," said Rogers.

"This creates an entire world of Alex Jones polarising the global discourse, sowing fear and anger for clicks and cash. Until this changes, we'll simply go from one Alex Jones to the next and little will change."



A show at Katara.

## 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.

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 artistes 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 wonderful 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 1am. 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 Arabian 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. Located next to Al Wakra 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

☞ **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](http://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 today, from 4pm-9pm, at the Qanat Quartier Boardwalk. Visitors can enjoy several other attractions at The Pearl and Ge-wan 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.



Marking the one millionth visitor milestone.

# FIFA Fan Festival at Al Bidda Park draws more than 1mn fans

- Milestone of 1mn visitors achieved after 14 days of football, music and entertainment
- Football fan Haytham Mokhtar gifted two tickets to World Cup final
- Official FIFA Fan Festival anthem *Tukoh Taka* was number one music video on YouTube

The FIFA Fan Festival in Doha has welcomed more than 1mn fans since it opened its door on November 19 - one day before the World Cup kicked off, FIFA has announced.

To celebrate 1mn visitors at the venue, FIFA has given away two tickets to the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 final at Lusail Stadium on December 18.

Football fan Haytham Mokhtar is the one millionth visitor to the FIFA Fan Festival and the lucky recipient of match tickets to the final, as well as an official match ball signed by legends of the game.

"I still cannot believe that I am so lucky to be the one millionth guest at the FIFA Fan Festival," he said. "Sara and I were coming here to have a good time, and shortly after I was standing on the main stage in front of thousands of people with a football signed by Cafu and Ronald de Boer, and with tickets to the final."

"It is just unbelievable," a thrilled Mokhtar shared. Mokhtar and his best friend Sara, originally from Egypt, now live in Qatar, and though disappointed that their home nation failed to make it to the finals this year, he knows what match-up he wants to see in person at Lusail Stadium on Dec 18.

"Apart from my team, Egypt, I also cheer for Brazil," Mokhtar said. "But, this time, I wish for a Argentina vs Portugal final so that the two great legends, Messi and Cristiano Ronaldo, can play against each other in a World Cup final."

After spending the day at the FIFA Fan Festival, he commented: "My best FIFA Fan Festival highlight so far has been the FIFA Museum. I enjoyed seeing the outstanding collection of World Cup shirts dating back to the first tournament."

"In general, there is a great atmosphere, with many people from all over the world, and so many different activities and music," Mokhtar added.

Fans from every nation are descending on Al Bidda Park, situated within walking distance of Doha's waterfront, to meet, have fun and celebrate their passion for the beautiful game.

The 145,000sq m and 40,000-capacity venue has welcomed an average of 70,000 visitors per day.

The FIFA Fan Festival screens every FIFA World Cup game on giant screens and provides free entertainment with some of the most famous names from music scenes around the world.

The multi-national and multi-cultural



Haytham Mokhtar and Sara.



Marking the one millionth visitor milestone with Haytham Mokhtar.

festival of football is the perfect place for bringing fans together.

A first-time visitor from England spoke of his impressions of the venue, "seeing all the other nationalities come together is awesome!"

"There's a really good party atmosphere and everyone's friendly, having a good time," he said.

The festival is open every day, from 4pm-2am, catering to every fan - from avid or casual football enthusiasts to lovers of music, food and culture - with its unique football and entertainment programme featuring local and international artistes such as Diplo, Kizz Daniel, Nora Fatehi, Trinidad Cardona and Calvin Harris.

In addition, for the first time ever, FIFA Fan Festival has an official anthem, *Tukoh Taka* by music stars Nicki Minaj, Maluma and Myriam Fares.

FIFA Sound - the game-changing initiative that combines the universal languages of music and football - collaborated with Universal Arabic Music and Republic Records on the hit song.

The week of its release, the record debuted as #1 iTunes song in the US as well as #1 on the YouTube list of global top music videos.

*Tukoh Taka* is available to download at <https://fifa.lnk.to/TukohTaka>, and fans can watch the music video at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rB0bjyt1OD0&feature=youtu.be>

## Qatar 2022 continuing to create new records

### From Page 1

Many matches have attracted the best audiences of the year in their respective countries, with England vs US becoming the most watched men's football match on US television ever.

"The outcome of the group stage shows the extent to which more countries have acquired the tools to compete at the highest level," said FIFA's chief of Global Football Development Arsene Wenger.

"This is the result of better preparation and analysis of the opponents, which is also a reflection of a more equal access to technology," he said. "It is very much in line with FIFA's efforts to increase football's competitiveness on a global scale."

### A world gathering in Doha

As the group stage wrapped up last night, the FIFA Fan Festival welcomed its one millionth visitor (see lead story on this page).

Besides the official tournament venues, Doha's seaside promenade - the Corniche - has attracted more than 2mn people since the start of the tournament, with the traditional Souq Waqif market becoming another hotspot for fans from around the world.

Uruguayan and Korean fans can be proud of having reached a mighty 131 decibels at their match at Education City Stadium - a noise akin to that heard at a live rock concert.

The most compact FIFA World Cup since the inaugural edition in 1930 is also benefiting fans, teams and media representatives, with the option of attending several matches and entertainment



activities per day, while operations continue to run smoothly.

During the group stage, the Doha Metro and Lusail Tram networks notched up 9.19mn trips, with a daily average of 707,032 passengers.

The two international airports are comfortably accommodating the influx of fans and teams - so

far, 2mn Hayya (Fan ID) applications have been received, with fans from Saudi Arabia, India, the US, the United Kingdom and Mexico at the top of the list for tournament attendance to date.

In spite of the unprecedented condensed footprint, with 24 teams staying within a 10km radius of each other, players and

officials have also smoothly transferred 3,321 times in and around Doha.

"It's been a fantastic World Cup, with groundbreaking figures and memorable moments both on and off the pitch," said FIFA World Cup chief operating officer Colin Smith. "Fans are having an amazing time in Doha,

and the whole world is following with excitement on TV as new records are set every day."

"What some saw as a challenge, we saw as an opportunity," he said. "Teams, media and spectators are enjoying more matches, more festivals, more football, more fun - the compact footprint is comfortably addressing the influx of visitors through state-of-the-art infrastructure and thorough operational plans."

"Together with the host country, we are constantly monitoring and addressing any situation that arises, but the figures already achieved and the fans celebrating together in a joyful and peaceful way throughout this group stage speak for themselves - we are on track to deliver a successful and unforgettable FIFA World Cup," Smith added.

Sixteen matches remain and the hosts fully intend the global party to continue in and around Doha.

"The fans who have joined us in Qatar for the tournament are enjoying a carnival atmosphere," added FIFA World Cup Qatar chief executive Nasser al-Khater.

"The cultural exchange through football has been heartwarming for everyone," he said. "We are now looking forward to the exciting knockout rounds and welcoming thousands of more fans from across the globe as they support their favourite teams all the way through to the final at the majestic Lusail Stadium on December 18."

For a full overview of the group-stage facts and figures, go to <https://digitalhub.fifa.com/m/588f70e99a18a29f/original/FIFA-World-Cup-2022-Group-Stage-by-the-numbers.pdf>