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Amir, UAE president review fraternal ties



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani and President of the sisterly United Arab Emirates Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed al-Nahyan held an official talks session at the Amiri Diwan yesterday.

At the beginning of the session, the Amir welcomed the president of the UAE and the accompanying delegation. The Amir congratulated Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed al-Nahyan on the 51st National Day of the UAE, hoping that this visit would contribute to the development of joint co-operation relations between the two brotherly countries, pushing it to a broader level.

The UAE president expressed his gratitude and appreciation to the Amir

for the warm reception and generous hospitality, congratulating Qatar's ongoing hosting of the 2022 FIFA World Cup, and its exceptional success in organising and hosting this world championship.

During the talks, they discussed the brotherly bilateral relations between the two countries and ways to support and consolidate them in various fields, especially regarding strengthening the bonds of co-operation for the good of the two brotherly people, in addition to strengthening joint Gulf action.

They also reviewed the developments of regional and international events and exchanged views on a number of current issues of common concern.

His Highness the Personal Representative of the Amir Sheikh Jassim bin Hamad al-Thani, HE the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohamed bin Abdulrahman al-Thani, HE the Chief of the Amiri Diwan Sheikh Saoud bin Abdulrahman al-Thani, and a number of Sheikhs and ministers attended the talks.

On the Emirati side, National Security Adviser of the UAE Sheikh Tahnoon bin Zayed al-Nahyan, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Presidential Court Sheikh Mansour bin Zayed al-Nahyan and a number of members of the accompanying delegation attended the talks.

His Highness the Amir hosted a

luncheon banquet in honour of the UAE president and the delegation accompanying him.

Upon arrival at the Amiri Diwan, an official reception ceremony was held for the UAE president.

Earlier, His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani led well-wishers to welcome his brother the UAE president upon his arrival at the Amiri Terminal of Hamad International Airport yesterday morning on an official visit to the country.

Also present to welcome the president were His Highness the Personal Representative of the Amir Sheikh Jassim bin Hamad al-Thani, HE the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister

of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohamed bin Abdulrahman al-Thani, HE the Chief of the Amiri Diwan Sheikh Saoud bin Abdulrahman al-Thani and a number of Sheikhs.

Later in the day, the Amir led the farewell of his brother UAE President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed al-Nahyan, upon his departure from the Hamad

International Airport, along with the accompanying delegation, following an official visit to the country.

His Highness the Personal Representative of the Amir, HE the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, HE the Chief of the Amiri Diwan and a number of Sheikhs were present at the farewell. (QNA) **Page 3**

Amir holds phone call with Scholz

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani held a phone call yesterday with Chancellor of the friendly Federal Republic of Germany Olaf Scholz. At the outset of the call, the chancellor congratulated the Amir for hosting and organising the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022, wishing the participating teams success in the tournament. The call also dealt with discussing bilateral relations and the means to enhance them in various fields, especially energy and economy, in addition to discussing the latest regional and international developments. (QNA)

Qatar World Cup is perfectly organised, says Ronaldo

Portuguese professional footballer Cristiano Ronaldo yesterday said that he was extremely impressed by the experience of the World Cup in Qatar, adding that everything is dazzling in the current tournament. In a press statement, he said the experience of World Cup in Qatar is superb and stunning, including the transportation, hospitality, stadiums, facilities and the easy movement, lauding the close distance between the stadiums where a person can watch more than one game a day, expressing his extreme admiration for the distinguished Qatari organisation of FIFA Fan Festival. Ronaldo indicated that the World Cup is perfectly organised and the weather is very perfect and suitable. He confirmed that it is a wonderful experience and anyone who came here will leave very happy. (QNA)

Brilliant Brazil storm into World Cup last 8, Croatia edge Japan

Today's schedule

Round of 16

Spain vs Morocco, 6pm
at Education City Stadium

Portugal vs Switzerland, 10pm
at Lusail Stadium

Yesterday's results

Round of 16

Croatia 1 (3) Japan 1 (1)
Croatia win 3-1 on penalties
Brazil 4 South Korea 1



Neymar celebrates with Richarlison and Lucas Paqueta. **Sport Pages 1-8**

in the 55th minute with an impressive header from Dejan Lovren's cross and a hard-fought match became the first of this World Cup to go into extra-time.

When neither side could break the deadlock, the tie also produced the first penalty shootout of Qatar 2022.

It continued a remarkable pattern - seven of Croatia's past eight knockout games at major tournaments have gone to extra time, the only exception being their 4-2 defeat in the final by France in Russia four years ago.

In nail-biting tension, Livakovic saved the first two spot-kicks before stopping Maya Yoshida's effort, and then Mario Pasalic struck the winning penalty to send Croatia through.

Later, World Cup favourites Brazil produced a performance to delight fans and terrify potential opponents as they ripped through South Korea with four first-half goals to secure a hugely impressive 4-1 victory in their last-16 clash at Stadium 974. **To Page 3**



Croatia's midfielder Ivan Perisic celebrates after scoring against Japan.

You better keep your mouth shut, German scribe tells DFB

By Jürgen Hogrefe

The German national team will only gradually realise the unbelievable damage they caused with their goofy gesture before the kick off against Japan - keeping their mouths shut as a sign of protest. Perhaps the least damage is that it robbed the German team of its concentration for the match against Japan.

Losing a game at the World Cup - it can happen. Being eliminated from the World Cup in Qatar in the preliminary round is a more serious matter for Germany. It is, after all, the third elimination in a row in an important international tournament. This did not happen by accident. There is something structural behind it. Germany, once a powerful football nation, has a real problem. It cannot only be explained by the fact that the players were unfocused or that the coach chose the wrong line-up or decided on the wrong tactics. The problem lies much deeper.

It lies in the mentality, in the attitude towards oneself and towards others.

In order to be successful in competition, you have to know where you stand, what role you play in comparison to others and how your opponent is to be assessed. The mentality problems of the German team and the German Football Association DFB are quickly named: colossal overestimation of oneself. Lack of seriousness towards themselves and towards the game. But above all, the German team and the German officials lacked respect. Respect for the opponent, for the international rules and for the host of the tournament.

The gesture of covering the mouth in front of the world's television cameras before the match is now coming back at the Germans like a boomerang. The damage the national team has done to the Germans' reputation in the world



Jürgen Hogrefe

will only gradually become visible, and it will last for a long time.

The least of the damage is that Germany is no longer the role model and favourite of many football fans worldwide. The German team playfully lousy football in Qatar and was rightly eliminated. That is sad and it is damaging to the image of German football. One can live with that. But the German team was covered with malice. That is bad.

Many people around the world are partly restrained and partly openly happy that the Germans had to go home. This has nothing to do with football, it is the result of the goofy gesture with which the Germans entered the tournament.

According to the national team and the officials, the gesture was meant to show that the national team stands up for human rights. It therefore considered itself to be particularly bold, particularly courageous, particularly exemplary. But in reality it was something else: it was haughty, it was condescending, and it was arrogant. They trumped up and thereby elevated themselves above everyone. They violated the rules of decency, the rules of international football and, above all, they violated the basic commandment of all hospitality: respect. **To Page 4**

REACHING NEW HEIGHTS: Qatari SMEs Contribute to the Success of FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022™

Through the support of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MOCI) and Qatar Development Bank (QDB), Qatari small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) have established a presence in many of the various sectors needed to host the world’s largest sporting event. Their contribution related to the development of the tournament stadiums and sports facilities around them, as well as public parks, streets in main tourist areas and urban facilities, including hotels and residential towers.



Coastal Qatar

Coastal Qatar was founded in 1979 and is one of the most prominent local companies that have contributed to the delivery of the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022™. Partnering with the Supreme Committee for Delivery and Legacy since 2017, Coastal has manufactured and installed seating at six of the tournament stadiums, covering a total of 250,000 seats.



Coastal’s team handles all aspects of the manufacturing process, from planning and design to implementation and installation. The company has successfully designed seats in a way which uses sustainable practices in the manufacturing operations, as part of its commitment to reduce plastic waste and promote recycling. The collection created by Coastal includes seats of various colors, luxury options, and those for people with disabilities.

During the project, Coastal leveraged the services provided by QDB, especially its support for manufacturing companies which includes several financial and guarantee programs. In addition, it also took advantage of its consultation and support to obtain international quality certificates – a crucial step to be taken. QDB also supported via its incubation and growth acceleration

programs, and provided access to local, regional, and international markets for further expansion.

Al Sulaiteen Agricultural & Industrial Complex (SAIC)

Al Sulaiteen Group left a significant mark on the national preparations to host the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022™, predominantly through entities such as the Al Sulaiteen Agricultural & Industrial Complex (SAIC). It supported through the production and provision of FIFA-approved turf for many of the stadiums, as well as the training sites for the participating teams. It also provided landscaping services for the stadiums’ outdoor gardens as well as logistical services and direct care for the stadium grounds throughout the tournament.



Under the supervision of the Supreme Committee for Delivery & Legacy, SAIC conducted maintenance works for five of the tournament stadiums, and 25 training sites, in accordance with FIFA-approved international specifications. Using state-of-the-art equipment and materials, the team are currently providing round-the-clock maintenance supervision at these venues.

SAIC and QDB have a strong relationship based on a long history of working together. SAIC has benefited from several of the services provided by QDB, particularly regarding the specialized programs for industrial and service companies, through which QDB gives access to opportunities for signing contracts with national partners, and international markets.

Qinwan Dates

Qinwan Dates was founded in early 2017 as a small commercial dates project at the Gate Mall in Doha, before becoming what it is today – an award-winning multi-branch company, with multiple branches and international quality certificates. Although its primary product is still dates, Qinwan now offers many other foods and beverages. Qinwan’s identity as a brand was founded on authentic Qatari values, such as hospitality and heritage authenticity. As a result, Qinwan products also have a symbolic value and include luxury dates, Arabic coffee, various fillings, date paste, and creams.



Qinwan signed a historic agreement with FIFA to license its products, making it the

first licensed date company at a FIFA World Cup tournament. For the event, Qinwan’s products feature a Qatari visual identity as well as tournament and official FIFA logos. Under the agreement, Qinwan will oversee the production, design, and sale of licensed products, which will spotlight Qatar as the 2022 host country via a range of high-end quality dates, and therefore becoming the first Qatari company to obtain such a license in its category.

The company benefited from several QDB services throughout its development, such as the Jahiz 2 factories and its Franchise program to developing their franchise systems. The program enables entrepreneurs to license their successful brand, product, or service, and deliver it another geographical area. It also offers training, development, consulting, and other services.

Sponix Sports Technology Company

Sponix’s journey began in late 2019, with an innovative idea to create an interactive experience for the fans of the world’s most popular sport. Its competitive advantage is based on creating an integrated football viewing experience without the need to install technological equipment on the pitch.



Instead, it relies on visual feedback from TV channels to provide integrated views of important moments during matches. When a player scores a goal, Sponix’s qualitative technology, using Artificial Intelligence (AI) and machine learning, provides a complete view of the goal from all angles retrospectively, from the viewpoint of the player, goalkeeper, or referee, by determining its location in the overall image – all generated by the cameras on the pitch.

Over the past three years, Sponix has won ten awards: most recently the Entrepreneurship World Cup national qualifiers competition in Qatar. Sponix has also won Microsoft’s distinguished Best Start-up in Asia Award and was recognized as the Best Startup of the Year in the Sports Technology Awards in London. The company has several clients, including beIN Sports – which used its technologies for the first time when covering the 2021 Arab Cup – along with Benfica Lisbon, Sky Sports, and the European Champions League, in addition to other partnerships with the Italian League and other European and American federations.

The company took part in QDB’s accelerator, Qatar SportsTech, in early 2020. Sponix was part of the second cohort of the program and received financial and service support that helped it reach its status. In addition, QDB provides such companies with an infrastructure that allows them to reach new heights in their business development.

Qatar Aluminum Extrusion Company

Qatar Aluminum Extrusion Company (QALEX)’s success story includes many milestones and major challenges, which have led to it becoming a leading company in its field and capable of contributing to the State of Qatar’s preparations to host the largest football tournament in the world. QALEX used its products in the building of football stadiums across Qatar and equipped them with the best building and structural materials to do so.



These successes are the result of many years of experience, and today the company produces 30,000 tons of aluminum annually, at 0% operational waste, thanks to an impressive refining process. With a long list of international certificates and accreditations in recognition of the quality of its products, QALEX has become responsible for supplying aluminum goods for football stadiums in the State of Qatar and abroad, including in Cincinnati, Ohio, USA.

Today, QALEX has a substantial record of national achievements, outside of the World Cup stadiums, these include the construction of prominent towers and buildings in the country, the most recent being the Katara Towers in Lusail.

Throughout its journey, QALEX has significantly benefited from QDB’s range of services, namely when financing, obtaining international certificates and accreditations, and gaining access to participate in important international exhibitions through the help of QDB’s export arm, the Qatar Export Development and Promotion Agency, TASDEER.

Al-Aziziya Chemicals Factory

Al-Aziziya Chemicals Factory was established at the end of 2015 and specializes in the manufacture of chemicals used in urban construction and infrastructure, such as adhesives and insulators. The factory offers a wide range of products such as liquid/solid construction chemicals, adhesives, construction materials, insulation and adhesive foundations, decorative and flooring materials, interior decoration, waterproofing, protective lining materials for refrigerators, and sewage line coating and insulation.



Although relatively young, the company was able to compete strongly in the national market and challenge similar imported products from abroad. As a result, it won many contracts with various agencies and companies, such as hotels, commercial complexes, residential towers, metro stations – specifically in West Bay and Al Wakrah – and, crucially, the stadiums that will host the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022™ finals, namely Al Thumama and Lusail stadiums.

Al-Aziziya Chemicals Factory capitalized on QDB’s Jahiz 1 factory initiative to officially start its operations in 2018, up until its significant contribution to Qatar’s infrastructure to host the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022™.

A photograph showing three men in traditional Arab dress (white thobes and ghutras) shaking hands in a formal setting. The man on the left is wearing a white thobe with gold embroidery. The man in the middle is wearing a white thobe with gold embroidery. The man on the right is wearing a grey thobe with gold embroidery. They are all smiling and looking at each other. In the background, a man in a brown uniform and a red beret is visible.



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Shura reviews draft laws on real estate registration

QNA
Doha

The Shura Council held yesterday its regular weekly meeting in Tamim bin Hamad Hall under the chairmanship of HE the Speaker of the Council Hassan bin Abdullah al-Ghanem. At the outset of the meeting, HE the Secretary-General of the Shura Council Dr Ahmed bin Nasser al-Fadhala read out the agenda of the session, the minutes of the previous session were also ratified.

Afterwards, the Council reviewed draft laws on regulating real estate registration and documentation, referred by the esteemed government.

The Council decided to refer it to the Legal and Legislative Affairs Committee for study and to submit a report thereon to the Council. Additionally, the Shura Council reviewed the report of



The Shura Council in session

fairs Committee for study and to submit a report thereon to the Council. Additionally, the Shura Council reviewed the report of

Member of the Council Yousef bin Ahmed al-Kuwari's participation in the event 'Launch of the Preliminary Indicators for Demo-

cratic Parliaments' held via videoconferencing on June 9, as well as Badi bin Ali al-Badi's participation in the Parliamentary Dialogue Series: Food, Fragility, and Finance held via videoconferencing on the June 22.

On the other hand, HE the Speaker of the Council briefed the members on the recent meetings held with parliamentary delegations visiting the country.

HE the Speaker said that the country's parliamentary guests expressed their admiration for the distinguished organisation of the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022, the comprehensive renaissance the country is witnessing, and emphasised that Qatar has demonstrated its outstanding ability to organise international sporting events at an unprecedented level.

Sheikh Khalid elected honorary president of Arab sports body

QNA
Doha

Sheikh Dr Khalid bin Thani bin Abdullah al-Thani was elected by acclamation as Honorary President of the Arab Federation for Sports of People with Disabilities, in a federation's board meeting held recently in Cairo. Sheikh Dr Khalid received the first shield of the federation with its new name by the President Ihab Hassanein, who is currently visiting Doha.

He was informed of the Board of Directors' decision to choose him unanimously for this honorary position, as he is a distinguished sports figure and for remarkable sporting and human interest in the category of people with disabilities.

The federation will change for the better under the honorary presidency of Sheikh Khalid bin Thani bin Abdullah al-Thani; he showed a lot of support and enthusiasm for this category, and for all development plans in order to improve the work of the federation and implement its goals and vision, Hassanein said.

He added that the federation's first activities under its new name will be the Arab Wheelchair Basketball Championship in Kuwait from April 25 to May 2, 2023.

Sheikh Dr Khalid bin Thani bin Abdullah al-Thani expressed his pride in this confidence from the Arab member states who placed it in him.

In a statement, he said: It is a great pride to be unanimously elected for this position, stressing his relentless support for the federation's activities, plans and future programmes and added that his goal is to continue the achievements made by Arab people with disabilities, stressing the need for further hard work to proceed success and distinction of this important category and bring Arab champions to global competitions.

Qatar welcomes signing of political framework agreement in Sudan

Qatar welcomed the signing of the political framework agreement by stakeholders in Sudan, considering it a pivotal step to end the political crisis in the country.

In a statement, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs expressed Qatar's aspiration for the continuation of the dialogue between the Sudanese stakeholders to reach a comprehensive final agreement that represents all spectrums of the brotherly Sudanese people and establishes a transitional phase that paves the way for stability, development, and peace.

The ministry expressed Qatar's full appreciation for the international and regional efforts that contributed to reaching this agreement and renewed its full support for Sudan's unity, sovereignty, and stability. (QNA)

Al-Muraikhi meets EU official



HE the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Sultan bin Saad al-Muraikhi met Sunday with President of the Qatari-EU Friendship Group in the European Parliament Jose Ramon, who is visiting the country to attend parts of the activities associated with the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022. The meeting dealt with reviewing the bilateral co-operation relations between Qatar and the European Union, as well as a host of issues of common concern. (QNA)

Officials, media figures hail Qatar's World Cup hosting as role model

QNA
Doha

Qatar's impressive organisation of the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 continues to gain further recognition and acclaim worldwide as a role model in hosting major international sporting events in the future, with high-level political, media and sports figures hailing its high organisational competencies at all levels. International officials and media outlets said that Qatar has exceeded expectations and excelled in providing well-planned solutions, refuting all suspicious schemes since its World Cup bid to disparage its potential to host an exceptional World Cup.

Mayor of New York City, Eric Adams, said that his visit to Doha was an opportunity to draw lessons on the role that New York City will play as one of the World Cup 2026 host cities. Highlighting the visit, *The New York Times*, cited his statements that expressed great admiration for Qatar's advanced transportation infrastructure, including the Doha Metro and express bus services.

It is essential to have a real safe and reliable transport system; Qatar managed to get the vehicles off the road, given their newly built transport system, he said according to the report. Adams expressed his admiration for the World Cup atmosphere and the development in Doha. He added that he enjoyed attending Saturday's US-Netherlands clash in the round of 16, despite his country's loss. There

are many great restaurants and destinations that you can visit and enjoy in Doha, even after matches, he added.

French writer Michael Leborgne highlighted in an article in *Ouest-France* newspaper the disinformation campaigns fuelled by Western media against Qatar and its World Cup 2022 hosting, dismissing the schemes as part of agendas aimed at undermining Qatar's successful World Cup hosting.

Leborgne slammed the lack of focus on the positives of the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 as very worrying and a tell-tale sign of the West's double standards. He also lambasted ignoring Qatar's efforts to host a carbon-neutral World Cup, and its newly adopted measures such as the introduction of the minimum wage, labour court, and the cancellation of the Kafala sponsorship employment system.

The electricity for the eight Qatari stadiums is fully provided by the solar power plant in Al Khar-saah (800 megawatts), allowing Qatar to be the first organising country to hold a carbon-neutral World Cup, he said. While Qatar is criticised for the solar-powered based air conditioning system, many stadiums in France and many other European countries are heated before matches in winter without solar energy, he added.

Slamming the handling of labour rights in Qatar as exaggerated and deliberate misinformation, the writer called on critics to highlight the poor conditions for dozens of thousands of unregistered foreign workers in France amid the

silence of the state and senior officials of the construction or services sectors.

A BBC Arabic TV report focused on the measures taken by Qatar to protect the security of World Cup data and thwart any potential cyber-attacks that might disturb this huge event, which is the focus of the attention of millions worldwide.

The report showed that Qatar provided a cloud data centre in co-operation with Microsoft to ensure the security and difficulty of hacking data and applications, boosted the capabilities of the National Agency for Cybersecurity, and conducted hacking simulations for many organisations while making sure to increase capabilities to deal with them.

The report said that Qatar has also provided the necessary training to deal with possible cyber-attacks, provide advice and early threat detection, and raise awareness of abiding by safety procedures for information security, highlighting the Qatar Computing Research Institute's efforts in this regard.

Saudi sports journalist Nawaf al-Aqeel said, in a statement, the World Cup atmosphere is felt everywhere in Doha. There is excitement and fun outside the stadiums, and there are many activities that you see on the way to the stadiums, al-Aqeel said. The World Cup in Qatar is really distinguished by lack of riots, and even the fan skirmishes in Souq Waqif or other places were peaceful and football-related without aggressive behaviour, he added.



Saudi journalist Nawaf al-Aqeel said, in a statement, the World Cup atmosphere is felt everywhere in Doha.

Amir sends cables of congratulations to Thailand king

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani and His Highness the Deputy Amir Sheikh Abdullah bin Hamad al-Thani sent yesterday cables of congratulations to King Maha Vajiralongkorn of Thailand on his country's National Day. HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Khalid bin Khalifa bin Abdulaziz al-Thani also sent a similar cable of congratulations to Prime Minister Prayut Chan-ocha. (QNA)

PM meets Croatian counterpart



HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Khalid bin Khalifa bin Abdulaziz al-Thani met at Al Janoub Stadium yesterday with Croatia Prime Minister Andrej Plenkovic and his accompanying delegation, who are visiting the country to attend the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 matches. At the outset of the meeting, the Croatian PM expressed to HE the Prime Minister his congratulations to the government and people of Qatar on the good organisation of the World Cup 2022, wishing success for the teams qualified for the tournament finals. The meeting discussed bilateral relations and ways to promote and develop them. (QNA)

Dy Speaker meets LatAm parliamentarians



HE the Deputy Speaker of the Shura Council Dr Hamda bint Hassan al-Sulaity met yesterday with President of the Latin American Parliament Elias Castillo and Member of the Panamanian Parliament Omar Elias Castillo, who are currently visiting the country. During the meeting, they reviewed several issues related to joint parliamentary co-ordination and ways to enhance the existing relations between the Shura Council and the Latin American parliaments. (QNA)

You better keep your mouth shut: German scribe

From Page 1

Have the Germans forgotten that the basic idea of major international sporting events is international understanding? The attempt to understand the other better – by meeting and exchanging friendly ideas and thus getting to know each other better? Should one judge before one knows and understands the specifics of the other? Should one place oneself morally above someone else if one wants to get along well with them and perhaps become friends?

But the Germans came to Qatar with a firm judgement: We are vastly superior! Seldom has a self-assessment been more wrong. This applies to football as well as to other things. A glance at the deaths on German building sites and the number of disenfranchised workers in the EU could have quickly taught them otherwise. Germany is no beacon there.

How can one explain this arrogance? As a German, I find it difficult to get an explanation other than ignorance and a moral arrogance that is hard to explain. The restraint that Germans imposed on themselves after the catastrophe of the Second World War no longer seems to exist. Suddenly we are world champions of morality.

German media have contributed significantly to the moral overheating. They have – for whatever reason, and sensationalism is one of them – been working for years on a moral pyre

for the host Qatar. Those who did not co-operate had to fear being burned themselves.

Not all German journalists played along with the game, there are laudable exceptions. But the large public broadcasters ARD and ZDF were at the forefront of the executioners, for whom the criticism of the host country Qatar could not be severe enough. And here it was above all the sports editors who were conspicuous for their nefariousness. Whereas sports programmes on German TV used to show mainly images of sport and only marginally dealt with sports politics, it is now the other way round: today it is mainly about politics and moving images of sport only play a marginal role. The political editorial departments of the broadcasters, who know more about foreign policy, have been pushed to the sidelines.

And then there were various NGOs that exerted considerable pressure. Their accusations were often baseless and, moreover, were often not legitimised by anything other than their presumption.

The German Football Association gave in to this pressure from the media and NGOs. As did many German politicians. One of the most embarrassing performances in this context was the appearance of the German Federal Minister of the Interior with a colourful armband at the Khalifa International Stadium in Doha. She speculated on the applause of the German media and apparently completely forgot what

problems Germany's domestic policy is currently responsible for. Above all, she did not notice that her provocative action seemed like an attack on the host Qatar and, moreover, against all Muslim countries. In this respect, she is a prime example of the cluelessness, lack of instinct and arrogance to which many in Germany have currently fallen prey.

The German Football Association misused the World Cup in Qatar for political purposes. The DFB has misused the national team for its political goals. It now turns out that the team was not united behind the gesture from the team photo. There were individual players who spoke out against it. But they had to go along.

It would do the German Football Association good to learn from its double failure. From the failure on the pitch and from the one off the pitch. It would do the DFB good to keep the mouth shut now. DFB should show some humility and the ability to learn. The same goes for the media and politics. The ability to learn is supposed to be one of the German qualities in general. In business, in politics and also in football. In this respect, many hope that at least this German virtue is still effective. As I suspect that many people in the world want to see good German football again. Or am I mistaken?

(Jürgen Hogrefe is based in Berlin. He is the former Middle East correspondent to German news magazine DER SPIEGEL.)

Scattered rain, followed by drop in temperature forecast

Scattered rain is expected in the country from tomorrow, followed by a shift in wind direction to Northwesterly and a noticeable drop in the temperature, the Qatar Met department has said. In a report yesterday, the weather office said it is expected that the country will be affected by rain of varying intensity, happening intermittently, from tomorrow until Saturday, which may turn thundery at times.

The winds will be mainly

Southeasterly-Northeasterly, with speeds ranging from 6-16 knots and gusts exceeding 25 knots during thundery rain. Then, it is expected that the winds will shift to Northwesterly on Saturday (December 10) and continue to be so until the middle of the week, accompanied by a noticeable decrease in the temperature.

It will feel cooler especially during the night and in the early morning hours. The maximum temperature is expected to range

from 19-26C and the minimum from 15-24C, and lower than that in the southern and outer areas, the report states.

It is worth noting that this period coincides with the arrival of Al-Marb'aannyeh, which indicates the beginning of the severity of winter and lasts about 40 days.

The Met department has called on everyone to receive information from its official sources and not to be led by rumours and unofficial social media accounts.

HE Sheikha Al Mayassa bint Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani officially opened the Maradona Fanfest at the Qatar Executive Premium Terminal, Hamad International Airport (HIA), which will welcome public visitors throughout the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 until December 18. Qatar Executive, which offers luxury jet services available for worldwide charter, Qatar Airways and financial technology company Give&Get are sponsoring the Diego Armando Maradona Give&Get Fanfest.

Qatar Airways Group Chief Executive HE Akbar al-Baker said: "As the Official Airline of the Journey of the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022, furthering the sport of football in the country is an important part of our growth and tourism ambition. Celebrating Maradona's legacy will inspire many next generation footballers and sports people, as well as, raise money for charity."

hie Auction House Qatar, will also feature unique items of Maradona memorabilia donated by his heirs, as well as articles of sportswear from all over the world. Twenty per cent of the proceeds of all auction sales will be donated to charity.

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World Cup fans join initiative to plant trees

The Public Gardens Department has organised a number of planting activities as part of 1mn trees initiative, with the participation of football fans of different nationalities who are here for the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022. A number of tree seedlings were planted at various sites across the country. Some seedlings were gifted to the visitors as part of celebrating the ongoing tournament.



Arab fans pin World Cup hopes on Morocco

By Shafeeq Alingal
Staff Reporter

Arab fans are upbeat and celebrating every moment with the Moroccan national team set to take on Spain at Education City Stadium today (Tuesday) at 6pm.

Lions de l'Atlas (Atlas Lions) is the lone Arab team still in the first World Cup in the Middle East.

This is also the first time since 1986 that a North African country has entered the last 16 stage.

The fans, most of them Moroccans, are thronging streets, fan zones and markets where they cheer for their team.

"We are hopeful that our team will enter the quarter-finals, beating Spain," Moroccan fan Issam Laabi told *Gulf Times*.

Moroccans in Qatar are feeling the love from all over the Arab world ahead of their match against Spain.

Most of the fans of teams Qatar, Saudi Arabia and Tunisia are supporting Morocco after their squads exited the World Cup during the first round.

"Our country is representing the whole Arab world in the second round," said Nouredine Ameur. "And we feel the love and support of our Arab brothers in Qatar and across the world. Our players will achieve what we want while meeting our expectations in the tournament."

For many Moroccans, PSG player Achraf Hakimi and Chelsea star Hakim Ziyech are the favourites.

"Indeed, both players are in good form and the duo will take our team to



Moroccan fans celebrating at Souq Waqif.

PICTURE: Thajudheen

the next level. We support our team with our soul and body," Laabi said.

Fans said that Morocco is making steady progress while improving their performance after every match.

"We have a good team of strikers, midfielders and defenders, whose performance level is going up," said Dina Illies. "Being Arabs, they have a feeling of being home."

Yesterday Souq Waqif, Katara - the Cultural Village and fan zones across Qatar witnessed Moroccan fans who celebrated with songs, dancing and cheering.

"We got every reason to celebrate since our team has added an incredible achievement to its credit," Laabi added.

The Qatar News Agency (QNA) reported yesterday that the Moroccan squad is entering the match with high spirits, after having topped Group F with seven points, surpassing Belgium, Croatia and Canada, to repeat their 1986 World Cup achievement.

"Being the only Arab representative in the knock-out stage, the Moroccan



Moroccan fans Issam Laabi and Nouredine Ameur.

PICTURE: Shafeeq Alingal

squad is looking tomorrow for their fifth victory in World Cup finals," the QNA said. "Morocco's first victory in the World Cup came in the 1986 edition in Mexico, when they defeated Portugal 3-1."

"Then it was 12 years before they achieved their second victory by defeating Scotland 3-0 in the 1998 edition in France," the QNA added. "And now they have defeated Belgium and Canada in the current World Cup edition."

More than football: Fans sample Qatar's diverse food scene

By Joey Aguilar
Staff Reporter

While many football fans continue to enjoy the wide variety of Arabic food in Qatar, the FIFA World Cup 2022 is also showcasing the diverse culinary scene across the country.

"The food I have eaten until now is mostly burgers and pizzas, because I am from Saudi Arabia and I haven't eaten traditional food here since it's the same," Mishal Alsabti told *Gulf Times*, adding that he finds it easy to look for the cuisines he likes in Qatar since arriving two weeks ago.

He said he also spent time visiting places in the country such as the Katara - the Cultural Village, Lusail city, Msheireb Downtown Doha, and Souq Waqif, which have been attracting a large number of football fans since the start of the international tournament on November 20.

Like Alsabti, it is learnt that many visitors from neighbouring GCC countries such as Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, Oman, and the UAE have been spending a longer period in Qatar to experience the tournament and try the numerous food offerings.

Mohamed F from Oman said that while he prefers Italian food such as pasta and pizza over other international cuisines, he still craves for American burgers and is thankful that it is widely available in Qatar.

"I love to visit Souq Waqif and Msheireb because I can just dine anywhere ... you can't go wrong," he said. "Everything is authentic but restaurants are always full."

"Of course there are a lot of international restaurants and coffee shops at the malls and shopping centres," he added.

Travellers who just visited other countries in the Gulf, like Cathy from Estonia, said she has tried Indian food, shawarmas, Arabic hummus, and falafels "and other kinds of stuff".

"But the choices here are very diverse, with a lot of different cuisines on offer, so I don't have



A variety of food offerings in Qatar. PICTURES: Joey Aguilar



Alsabti from Saudi Arabia.



Cathy from Estonia.

enough time to try everything," she said.

About her experience in Qatar in general, Cathy noted that "with the Hayya card, everything is easy, it is working perfectly well".

She cited Qatar and the region's high level of safety and security, saying that "there are no issues so far".

Many football fans find it convenient to visit popular dining destinations across Doha via public transportation, particularly the Doha Metro, connecting one location to another.

Choi from South Korea said

she enjoyed riding the metro while exploring Doha, having lunch at City Center Doha, and dinner at Villaggio Mall with her compatriot.

"For Arabic food we head to Souq Waqif because it is highly recommended based on the discussions online, and many fans are celebrating there in the evening after a match," she said.

Whether the South Korean team wins or not, she said she will be spending a few more days in Qatar to visit other places and try other cuisines and beverages, especially Indian and Filipino food.



One of the workshops in session.

QRCS holds workshops for workers

The Qatar Red Crescent Society (QRCS) has launched a series of workshops for workers during the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022, under the joint educational campaign on occupational safety and health announced in October by the QRCS, the Ministry of Labour (MoL), the Ministry of Public Health (MoPH), and

the International Labour Organisation (ILO).

Under the supervision of specialists from the QRCS's Volunteering and Local Development Division and Training and Development Centre, the programme involves eight public workshops during weekends for three weeks. Visitors of World Cup fan zones at the Labour City of the Industrial Area will receive health education, first-aid training, and information about health and safety standards at workplace.

Volunteering and Local Development Division director Muna Fadel al-Sulaiti said: "The launch of this joint awareness campaign is part of the efforts made by Qatar to ensure a safe and secure work environment, as well as to raise awareness among employers and workers about the best conditions that must be observed at worksites and worker housing."

She described this joint campaign as an "example of integrated work between the government and humanitarian sectors".

According to al-Sulaiti, concerted efforts and exchange of experience have had a significant impact the outcomes, through good co-ordination.

"Launching such campaigns is among the QRCS's strategic priorities, which are centred upon supporting vulnerable groups and building their capacity," she noted.

Head of Community Development at the QRCS, Noora Issa al-Fadala, said that the occupational safety and health campaign focuses on promoting awareness among employers and workers about what can and cannot be done at the workplace and worker accommodation, improving workers' ability to deal with emergencies, equipping them with basic information they need to know and practice in their everyday lives, and educating them on how to avoid work-related and crowd-related risks for ensure their own safety.

Al-Fadala considered this joint campaign as a "manifestation of sectors complementing each other, and the QRCS's developmental role to support government authorities during the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022, especially in relation to workers". - QNA

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Healthcare facilities across Qatar, in collaboration with the Healthcare Quality and Patient Safety Department's National Infection Prevention and Control and Antimicrobial resistance (IPC/AMR) Unit at the Ministry of Public Health (MoPH), celebrated World Antimicrobial Awareness Week (WAAW) 2022, a global campaign celebrated annually during the third week of November.

The aim of the campaign is to improve awareness of AMR and encourage best practices among members of the public and One Health stakeholders and policymakers, who all play a critical role in reducing the emergence and spread of AMR.

This year, the slogan for this campaign is *Handle Antimicrobial with Care*, and the theme was *Preventing Antimicrobial Resistance Together*.

Activities to celebrate the WAAW at healthcare facilities included conducting a special ceremony to kickstart the campaign, with physicians sharing personal experiences about the importance of proper antimicrobial use, conducting live lectures with medical staff, decorating the facilities with WAAW material, utilising monitors across facilities flashing short clips and messages to increase awareness among patients and their families, placing posters and flyers with key awareness mes-

sages across the facilities, playing AMR word games, and competitions for best antimicrobial awareness posters and best decorations, with prizes offered as incentive.

To increase the visibility of the global campaign, healthcare facilities participated in the "Go Blue" colour campaign for AMR Awareness by wearing blue when participating in WAAW events, adjusting social media profiles to blue, and sharing with friends, family, and colleagues, and on social media when Going Blue.

The MoPH has also conducted an extensive social media campaign.

In addition to healthcare facilities, the invitation to celebrate the WAAW was also sent to the animal health sector, the food safety sector, the environmental health sector, and academic institutions.

The National Action Plan (NAP) for tackling AMR is due for an update by 2023.

For this occasion, the MoPH's Healthcare Quality and Patient Safety Department conducted a two-day workshop on November 6-7 to update the plan for next phase of implementation, in line with the Qatar National Health Strategy 2023-2030.

The first NAP was developed in 2017 after consultation and input from stakeholders.



The MoPH and healthcare facilities celebrate World Antimicrobial Awareness Week.

Vodafone Qatar has officially launched its digital "Fan Academy" as part of its ongoing "We Fan Together" campaign.

Partnering with four of the most popular international superfans – El Fil from Tunisia, Birdman from Colombia, Caramello from Mexico, and Mohamed Saadoun al-Kuwari from Qatar – the Vodafone Fan Academy, an online campus, allows football fans to enrol in mini-courses that teach them how to "be the best fan".

Registered fans will have access to various educational video tutorials under several course modules.

Each tutorial is led by the superfans, who lend their

expertise and share tips as participants progress through the course.

Once fans have completed the tutorials, they will take a short test to show what they have learned in the academy.

Upon "graduating", they will receive an official certificate and an e-badge to verify their "Best Fan" status and share on

their social media profiles.

Giveaways will also be presented to three lucky winners who have completed the tutorials and will be chosen via an electronic random draw, once the courses are complete.

Vodafone Qatar's Fan Academy will run until December 18.

To register and take part, visit <https://www.vodafone.qa/fans>



expertise and share tips as participants progress through the course. Once fans have completed the tutorials, they will take a short test to show what they have learned in the academy. Upon "graduating", they will receive an official certificate and an e-badge to verify their "Best Fan" status and share on their social media profiles. Giveaways will also be presented to three lucky winners who have completed the tutorials and will be chosen via an electronic random draw, once the courses are complete. Vodafone Qatar's Fan Academy will run until December 18. To register and take part, visit <https://www.vodafone.qa/fans>

The L.U.C Time Traveler One – Qatar Edition perpetuates this proud tradition while enriching it with the contemporary convenience of the worldtime function.



Qatar’s deserts delight tourists

A considerable number of tourists and fans have flocked to the Qatari deserts during the ongoing FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022, stressing that it has been an immensely interesting and unique experience. Some of them told local Arabic daily *Arrayah* that they enjoyed in particular the sense of serenity, open stretches of sands and the sunset over the dunes, in addition to rides on camels and quad bikes. They pointed out that experiencing the Qatari desert was very different from other places as they enjoyed the good weather and bright sunlight over ample spaces of sands and dunes. Some enjoyed camping near the beaches with open air dinner and swimming in the sea.



Dan from Brazil stressed that he and his family enjoyed a completely unique and different experience in the Qatari deserts that exceeded their

best expectations, as the trip organiser gave them a feeling of how the older generations used to live in the deserts. He said his trip was very comfortable and



convenient as all the amenities and services were provided. Olivia from Ecuador said she lived a new adventure in the Qatari deserts. She pointed out

the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 has been an eye opener for people from around the world to this region and its magic and beauty.



Michael from the US had an amazing experience and he took some good photos of the sunset over the Qatari dunes. He said that he enjoyed the beaches of Qatar as they surround the



deserts, which make the place really distinct. Barak from Russia said he liked the Sealine and Khor Al Udaid as they offer tourists an excellent location and wide variety of activities.



The ELIE SAAB store at 21 High st, Katara.

Ali Bin Ali Fashion opens ELIE SAAB boutique at Doha’s 21 High st

The ELIE SAAB universe continues its expansion with a new boutique opening in Qatar in collaboration with Ali Bin Ali Fashion. The store is located in Doha's Katara – the Cultural Village at 21 High st – Qatar's fashion hub -- facing the main entrance of Galeries Lafayette Doha. This strategic move comes at a time when the region, and Qatar in particular, is becoming a major travel destination, a press statement notes. Elie Saab Jr, CEO of ELIE SAAB Group, said: "Opening a Doha boutique cements our regional influence and our mission to personally cater to our diverse clientele. Qatar has quickly become a global terminus and an imperative fashion location, which is why we have strategically partnered with the country's leading luxury fashion reference, Ali Bin Ali Fashion, with whom we have a very long-standing relationship, in order to optimise our reach as we continue to expand the ELIE SAAB universe."



lighting the brand's signature aesthetic with soft femininity and enduring allure. Visitors are welcomed through proud Roman columns into an expansive 340sq m interior elevated with warm wood and lavish marble. The new showroom features Ready-to-Wear collections, a dedicated kids' area, a private bridal salon and a VIP wing to cater to the varied clientele. Regarding the new collaboration, Kevin Gerard Pender, general manager of Ali Bin Ali Fashion, said: "We are proud that ELIE SAAB is now a part of Ali Bin Ali Fashion. This collaboration yet again allows us to support our vision of bringing the best of international fashion to Qatar. I am sure that together, ELIE SAAB and Ali Bin Ali Fashion will offer enticing designs to satisfy the refined taste of our clients." ELIE SAAB Boutique in Doha is designed to expand the brand's presence in the region and provide a more personalised shopping experience that meets the needs of loyal clientele. With flagship stores in Paris, Beirut, New York, London and the UAE, ELIE SAAB continues to expand a vision for more meaningful connections by launching additional global boutiques in the near future.

Souq Waqif restaurants a huge hit among fans

The alleys of Doha's Souq Waqif are abuzz with the World Cup fans and tourists flocking to the restaurants. The most important tourist and heritage attraction in Qatar, Souq Waqif has eateries serving traditional Arab cuisines as well as dishes from across the world. Many are drawn by the aroma of Arabic and Turkish coffees while some come to try Arabic meals and dishes. "Souq, indeed, is a melting pot of cultures and it's a place that reflects the vibe of the World Cup. We came here to embrace the local culture and enjoy the traditional culinary richness," said Daniel Harvey, a US fan, who visited the Souq along with his friends and enjoyed Arabic coffee and Shisha at a restaurant. Karak tea is on the top of the sought after list. The eateries at Souq Waqif also serve the traditional sweets Baklava, Maamoul, Shaabiyat, Namoura, Arab ice cream, Kunafa and Barazek. Restaurant owners said they focus on the Gulf and Arab dishes with most of the tourists going for them. "We get many takers for Machboos, Khubs regag, Thareed and Madrouba. Various options are available for tourists as per their demands and tastes,"



Doha's Souq Waqif is abuzz with the World Cup fans and tourists flocking to the eateries. PICTURES: Thajudheen



a restaurant owner said. The eateries that serve Yemeni meals including Mandy, Tess, Salta and Fahsa and some desserts, such as maasob and arika also receive many food

lovers. Fans also flock to the kebab restaurants which offer varieties of Afghani and Irani kebabs. "We have multiple options which are pocket-friendly. And we have recorded



a good flow of customers after the World Cup started," said another restaurant owner. "We tried Mandy at one of the restaurants and it was yummy. The lamb is well

cooked and tasty," said Senegal fan Sara John. In order to woo the fans, the restaurants in Souq Waqif have also installed big screen TVs to show the World Cup matches.

300,000KWh clean energy ‘generated during World Cup’

The Ministry of Municipality said the solid waste recycling project produced 298,937KWh of clean energy in the first two weeks of the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022. Director of Waste Management Department Hamad Jassim al-Bahar said in a statement to Qatar News Agency (QNA) that the project is part of efforts to achieve sustainable development and reduce carbon emissions, leading to an exceptional carbon-neutral World Cup, and to treat waste rather than dumping it in landfills. The tournament contributed to providing national recycling factories with about 1,103 tonnes of basic raw materials required for the project, including cardboard, plastic,



metal and glass materials, al-Bahar said. The recyclable materials of the total waste received exceeded 51% (568 tonnes), while 536 tonnes (49%) was diverted to clean, environmentally friendly energy, he added. This contributed to the production of about 406

tonnes of fertilisers, 95 tonnes of plastic materials, 36 tonnes of paper and cardboard, as well as 30 tonnes of mineral materials and about 2 tonnes of glass materials, al-Bahar said. The total waste collected from the tournament stadiums amounted to about 480 tonnes, led by Lusail Stadium with 105 tonnes, he told QNA. Al-Bahar added that the General Cleanliness Department removed about 28,000 tonnes, including about 109 tonnes of recyclable materials. About 1,148 trucks and cleaning equipment and 2,738 workers participated in collecting and removing them in the first week, compared to 405 trucks and 3,727 workers in the second week, he said. (QNA)

Arabian Oryx numbers grow at nature reserves

The Sealine Reserve within Khor Al Udaid Reserve and Al Reem Biosphere Reserve has seen the birth of a number of Arabian Oryx, the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change (MoECC) said yesterday. While the first birth was recorded at Khor Al Udaid Reserve, the Arabian Oryx newborns this month in the area of Barouk - Al Reem Reserve, reached 15, it was explained. The resettlement of Arabian Oryx in their natural habitats contributes to the balance of the environment, the enrichment of biodiversity and their preservation from extinction. This success is an outcome of the continuous efforts of the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change to maintain biodiversity at the local environment and restore the necessary ecological balance, the statement added.



‘You are our voices abroad’, Palestinian activist tells Arab youth at QF talk

Palestinian activist Muna El Kurd has emphasised the importance of storytelling and "spoken heritage" in driving positive change and defending the rights of Palestinians during a talk at Qatar Foundation (QF), which is showcasing the culture and stories of Palestine and its people during the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022. The event, held during the GOALS exhibition at Education City where storytellers are providing their perspectives on the FIFA World Cup, football in Qatar, community, and culture, saw El Kurd narrate her story as a prominent Palestinian activist together with her twin brother Mohamed, who have helped draw the world's attention to the illegal annexation of Palestinian homes in the Sheikh Jarrah neighbourhood of Jerusalem.

"While watching FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 matches, I see the flag of Palestine everywhere, and this means a lot to us in Palestine, because we are deprived of raising the flag in Jerusalem or the occupied territories, and this may expose us to imprisonment or martyrdom by the occupation," she said. "You are our voices abroad, and you give us energy to keep going. Do not underestimate any small initiative you offer, even if it is through the distribution of Palestinian flags or the Palestinian 'captain' sign. We care so much about seeing this Arab and international solidarity with us. The important thing is that we continue talking about Palestine as Arab people, whether digitally or on the ground." El Kurd explained that document-



Muna El Kurd speaking at the event.

ing the forced displacement of Palestinians in Sheikh Jarrah is "one of the most important mechanisms we use to publish our stories," saying: "Today, people want to see what is happening so they can live our reality with us, and we were aware that this is an important

issue that must be communicated to the world. "Our fathers and grandfathers fought this struggle to talk about Palestine, and we built on that. We were aware of the importance of documentation and that we ourselves must re-

flect the true picture of events, rather than relying on foreign media." El Kurd spoke about how she studies media to equip herself with the tools that help her to convey her message, and spoke about her ambition to become a filmmaker, saying: "As Palestinians, we are always keen to continue our education despite the difficulties in reaching Palestinian universities, especially for the people of Jerusalem and the occupied interior, so that we can use what we learn to serve the Palestinian cause." Speaking about conveying the situation in Sheikh Jarrah to the Arab world, she said: "I always watched what was published through the media from journalists about our situation, and I felt that the news was incomplete due to media ideologies and policies.

"As young people, we had a different narrative to deliver to the world, so we focused on the stories. And when people heard our personal stories, they began to know us more, and linked our stories to the Sheikh Jarrah neighbourhood and forced displacement. This made them feel that they are part of our life. "The Sheikh Jarrah neighbourhood case has been with the occupation courts for more than 50 years, but people did not know about it until a year ago through social media and the solidarity of the Arab people with us." El Kurd highlighted the importance of the spoken heritage of Palestine, which is embodied in stories, novels, and poetry, and about her personal experience with her family, who instilled in her the spirit of resistance through literature.

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GULF**TIMES**

Ghana overhaul is a test for \$1bn World Bank-backed debt

Ghana’s debt restructuring plans are set to test a \$400mn World Bank guarantee which was designed to provide extra security if the West African country failed to pay.

Like other smaller, riskier emerging market countries including Sri Lanka and Zambia, Ghana faces a debt overhaul after its already strained finances buckled under the economic fallout from Covid-19 and Russia’s invasion of Ukraine.

While Ghana’s troubles came as no surprise to investors – its overseas bonds have tumbled to a third of face value and the cedi suffered the world’s worst currency plunge this year – the way the World Bank guarantee will work out is not clear.

Legal experts and investors are now scouring the contract of the \$1bn bond involved, which is due to mature in 2030 and has a guarantee equivalent to interest payments due in the next four years, to figure out Ghana’s options.

Ghana’s Ministry of Finance did not reply to a request for comment on its plans.

“If Ghana decides to use the guarantee, it has to pay back immediately to the World Bank,” Mitu Gulati, a law professor at the University of Virginia and debt restructuring expert, said.

“And it’s hard to do so if its debt is unsustainable.”

The World Bank said at the time it was issued that the so-called credit enhanced bond was designed to allow Ghana to sell bonds in 2015 under “challenging market conditions”

“This is a highly protected instrument that was issued with the logic that Ghana would never default on the World Bank,” Gulati said.

Ghana would be in a difficult spot if it cannot repay the World Bank, a multilateral lender with preferred creditor status, while holding talks with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to obtain financing aid.

Syria, Eritrea, Somalia and Zimbabwe are on a very short list of countries in arrears to the World Bank, which cuts off their access to a multitude of multilateral lenders.

Ghana has not yet said whether the 2030 issue will be part of its debt restructuring.

Rodrigo Olivares-Caminal, professor of banking and finance law at Queen Mary University of London, who advises investors on such issues, said the bond would probably be excluded due to “multilateral debt implications”

“The guarantee was designed to kick in when there is a temporary liquidity issue, not a structural debt problem,” he told Reuters.

Also, the guarantee cannot be accelerated “under any circumstances,” according to the bond’s contract, so that amount would not become immediately due and payable for the creditors.

If the bond were included in the restructuring, it is unclear if the guarantee would still be in place, Gulati added.

Luis Costa, head of CEEMEA strategy at Citi, also expects that a “special treatment of this bond will be provided”

Prices of the bond, which has a 10.75% yield, seem to reflect some optimism. They have fallen less than any other Ghanaian sovereign debt so far in 2022, and outperformed short-term bonds maturing in 2025 and 2026 since end-September, when an IMF staff mission began talks for a lending programme.

Credit enhanced issues, including multilateral guarantees on all or part of the bonds or a link to high quality sovereign collateral such as US government bonds, are rare.

However, discussions about them became more prominent again in early 2020 as a tool to help lesser developed countries cope with the economic fallout from the coronavirus crisis.


In September 2020, JP Morgan’s prominent bond index division allowed these structures to form part of its benchmarks.


But take up has been limited. Ecuador is one of the few examples, issuing a bond with the help of the Inter-American Development Bank.


Polina Kurdyavko, head of emerging market debt at BlueBay Asset Management, said she expected Ghana’s bond could be excluded in the same way Ecuador decided to keep paying the IDB backed bond in its 2020 debt restructuring.

“There is not much upside in defaulting this bond,” Kurdyavko said, adding it could create “a more challenging precedent for the World Bank or any multilateral lending guaranteed instruments” – Reuters

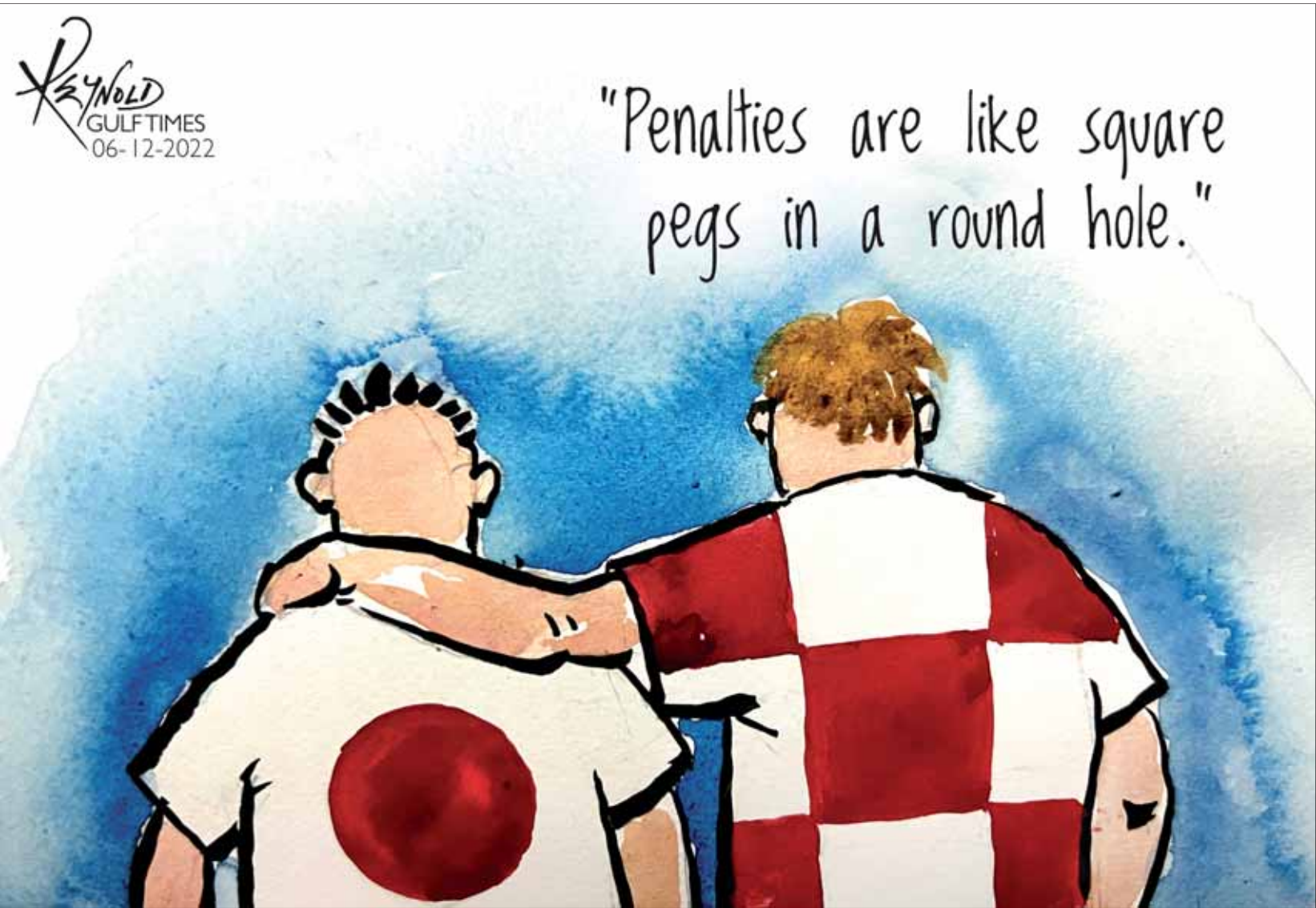
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Expelled Uganda Asians fight for seized properties 50 years on

By Liam Taylor
Kampala

Amin Visram remembers the joy of his childhood in Uganda: games of marbles, badminton, the laughter of his friends.

And he remembers seeing his breath condensing in the cold air when he and his family landed in Canada as refugees after being thrown out of the country they called home.

That was in 1972, when Uganda’s former dictator Idi Amin expelled 55,000 South Asian residents from the East African country. Almost all of them scrambled to flee the country, with only a few hundred well-connected Asians staying on.

The 9,000 or so properties they left behind, which were expropriated by the state, were some of the most valuable real estate in the country – and are still being fought over, 50 years on.

Lawyers, officials and Ugandan Asians described a tangle of forged documents, corruption and endless court cases. There are even conflicting accounts of exactly how many unclaimed properties remain.

Visram, who was 13 at the time of the expulsion, is still chasing money he was promised for his family’s three houses, including his childhood home.

He said that in the 1990s his family gave power of attorney to a businessman in Uganda to recover and manage the properties.

The family received \$5,000 for one house, which they consider inadequate, and nothing at all for the other two, and the businessman was accused of large-scale fraud by a parliamentary inquiry published last year.

“Between Canada, the United States and (the) UK, I would say there are hundreds of families in this situation,” said Visram, who now runs a hotel group in Canada. “Somebody has unjustly gotten rich off the back of these refugees.”

The property saga highlights endemic corruption in Uganda, which was ranked 144 out of 180 countries in Transparency International’s 2021

Corruption Perceptions Index.

Amin was ousted in 1979. The abandoned Asian properties – some taken over by soldiers, others occupied by tenants who paid rent to the state – were a crumbling reminder of his rule, lying at the historic heart of Uganda’s cities.

In 1983, a new government enacted a law allowing former owners to reclaim their properties, handing stewardship of the process to the Departed Asians Property Custodian Board, a government agency.

But restitution only really got going in the 1990s, when the World Bank made it a condition of lending and President Yoweri Museveni – who remains in power – began courting Asian investment. The properties were worth an estimated \$1bn at the time.

In 1991, the World Bank wrote that the expropriated buildings “represent a substantial component of Uganda’s capital stock (including) shops, warehouses, motor garages, office and apartment complexes, residences, manufacturing and over 400 agro-processing plants, agricultural estates and other farms”

Yet in the rush to return the properties, some “crooks” crept in, said Dan Wandera Ogalo, a lawyer who has represented the Custodian Board in court.

Many of the Asians expelled in 1972 never returned to Uganda after Amin’s ouster, granting power of attorney to others to reclaim properties on their behalf.

Some of them used those powers to build property empires while remitting only a fraction of the income to the original owners, according to four prominent Ugandan Asians.

Much of that depended on “rampant corruption” at the Custodian Board during the 1980s and 1990s, said Mahmood Mamdani, a Ugandan Asian academic at Columbia University.

He added that “Custodian Board officials and several unscrupulous Asian lawyers” turned the repossession process “into an opportunity to make a huge amount of money”

The unruly scramble for the

properties drew in opportunists from across the Ugandan elite, said Ibrahim Kasozi, an opposition politician who led the parliamentary inquiry.

He said a “mafia” of lawyers, judges, officials, business people and government ministers had conspired to grab properties and obstruct justice.

“The government is not committed to give (back) those (properties) because individuals within the system, they are benefiting.”

The parliamentary report found “massive deliberate errors committed by impostors and fraudsters, with the aid of office bearers in the (Custodian Board)”

The board’s current executive secretary, George William Bizibu, told the Thomson Reuters Foundation he would not comment on the report “because that’s at the level of parliament”

Among those named in the parliamentary report is an Asian businessman called Mohamed Allibhai – the same man that the Visram family gave power of attorney over their home.

The report said Allibhai had fraudulently repossessed nearly 1,000 expropriated properties “and went on to manage or even own the properties ... to the detriment of the real owners”

Allibhai did not respond to a request for comment, but his lawyer Eddy Okumu said some people were trying to reopen decades-old cases for selfish ends.

“The genesis of those allegations of fraud is to find a way of grabbing these properties and sell them,” he said.

In July, a judge ruled that the parliamentary committee had “exceeded its mandate” and acted “illegally” by investigating cases that had already been settled in court.

Dog-eared files are stacked on cabinets and piled on the floor at the Custodian Board offices in Kampala, the Ugandan capital.

“This is just a drop in the sea,” said Bizibu, the board’s head since 2017.

He said 4,063 properties have been reclaimed and another 1,500 sold by the government. More than 2,000 properties remain unclaimed.

“Everyone has a right to come and

claim his or her property, even today” he said. “Currently I have around 10 claims which we’re working on.”

But 50 years after the expulsion, verifying claims is no easy task.

The biggest challenges, he said, are “impersonators,” “forgeries,” and “loose ends” in the archives.

“If I meet a hundred (people) there could be only 10 who are genuine,” he said, as a queue formed outside his door.

Nobody can agree on how many properties have yet to be reclaimed.

The Thomson Reuters Foundation spoke to lawyers, former officials and Asian community leaders who challenge Bizibu’s figures, with estimates ranging from just 200 unclaimed properties to as many as 4,000.

Benard Shaw Tumwesigire, an army officer who was appointed executive secretary of the Custodian Board in 2009, said he had processed data on about half of the unclaimed properties before he was “arbitrarily” forced out in 2017.

“Those who did not wish me to finish capturing the data decided to lock me outside the office,” he said.

His replacement, Bizibu, is a former ruling party activist who had close ties to the finance minister at the time of his appointment.

Bizibu was arrested by the president’s Anti-Corruption Unit earlier this year over suspected fraud at the entity.

A unit spokesperson said had not been charged in the ongoing investigation, and Bizibu denied wrongdoing, saying his arrest was not related to Custodian Board matters.

Museveni, who has said the battle against graft was one of his main priorities for his current term as president, has expressed exasperation with the property saga.

Last December, his influential brother Salim Saleh – who has extensive business interests of his own – launched an initiative called Operation Harmony with the stated aim of resolving the issue.

Ogenga Otunnu, a historian at Chicago-based DePaul University and the chairman of Operation Harmony, said that it is seeking a “harmonious settlement of this issue”

A resolution cannot come soon enough, said Mumtaz Kassam, a Ugandan Asian lawyer and diplomat who was heavily involved in expropriated property cases.

“Please let’s wind up the Custodian Board once and for all so that we can all move on to develop the country,” she said.

That idea has been under discussion since the 1990s, according to board minutes reviewed by Context.

But Tumwesigire, the former executive secretary, said some of those pushing for the Custodian Board’s closure are trying to keep a lid on a “Pandora’s box” of corruption.

More than 7,000 miles (11,300km) away, in Canada, Visram is exasperated by the failure of the Ugandan government to right a historic wrong.

“It’s just a frustrating process for 50 years: it’s almost like you want to put your hands up in the air and say to hell with it,” he said. “And I think that’s what the government wants us to do.”

– Thomson Reuters Foundation



An old Indian building is pictured in Jinja District, Uganda, on October 1, 2022. Most properties of the Asian community in Uganda were taken illegally after the then Ugandan president ordered the expulsion of all Indian Minorities in early August of 1972 from the country.

World football celebrates the event’s ‘biggest team’ on International Volunteer Day

Legends and ambassadors deliver special messages of gratitude and encouragement

In a tournament of firsts, the first FIFA World Cup in the Middle East and Arab world saw International Volunteer Day fall for the first time ever on a match day on Dec 5.

The rare occasion provided fans and Qatar 2022 organisers with the opportunity to pause and recognise the immeasurable contribution of the 20,000 volunteers who support in delivering the greatest show on earth.

To celebrate and honour those seen as the heart of the tournament, tournament organisers paid tribute to tournament volunteers on their social media platforms and during yesterday’s matches at Al Janoub Stadium and Stadium 974. In addition to that, the FIFA World Cup Winner’s Trophy that will be taken home by the 2022 champions on Dec 18 will be available for the thousands of volunteers expected to gather for pictures and a range of activities at the Volunteer Hub located at the Doha Exhibition Centre (DEC).

Since the tournament kick-off on November 20, the volunteer force has been at full deployment across eight stadiums and 25 official and non-official sites across Qatar, serving in roles as varied as ticketing, hospitality, language services and media operations. The easy-to-recognise volunteer colours of purple, teal



Volunteers at a match.

and black have become ubiquitous throughout Doha as a convenient first point of contact for inquiries, providing visitors a comforting human face for the tournament.

Workforce and Administration director for FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 LLC Rasha al-Qarni said, “We are so proud of all our volunteers. Not only the ones at the stadiums, but also the ones behind the scenes, helping away from people’s eyes. Their generous spirit can be felt in the positive atmosphere around the city and I’m certain their impact will create a lasting legacy for the culture of volunteerism in the region as volunteers from abroad have had the chance to see what it’s

like to be part of a major global event in Qatar, and those from Qatar and the region have witnessed the heights that can be achieved together.”

As another gesture of appreciation, 10 FIFA World Cup ambassadors – including David Beckham, Marcel Desailly and Yaya Touré – paid a surprise visit on November 20 to the Volunteer Hub in the DEC to meet, engage and exchange stories with a lucky group of volunteers. The video of the event will be shared through the volunteer’s digital hub to coincide with International Volunteer Day ceremonies.

The day was split into three different engagements which brought some teams face-to-



As a gesture of appreciation, 10 FIFA World Cup ambassadors – including David Beckham, Marcel Desailly and Yaya Touré – paid a surprise visit on November 20 to the Volunteer Hub in the DEC to meet, engage and exchange stories with a lucky group of volunteers.

face with Mexican football star Luis Hernandez, former Iraqi captain Younis Mahmoud, decorated Omani goalkeeper Ali al-Habsi and Jordanian comedian Wessam Qutob to participate in fun, football-themed games and activities.

Other participants were led to an auditorium space where they were treated to a panel discussion between a select group of specialist volunteers and former

England captain Beckham, Danish footballing sensation Nadia Nadim, and Qatari entrepreneur, philanthropist and public speaker Ghanim al-Muftah. The inspirational talk touched on teamwork, sustainability and accessibility and included heartfelt messages of encouragement for the volunteers on the eve of the tournament kick-off.

Accessibility volunteer Aisha Tanvir said, “There’s so many

rewards to being a volunteer, but to know that people like David, Nadia and Ghanim have taken the time to come and share their experiences and to give us their encouragement really reminds us we are part of something much bigger. They’re role models for us who really embody the volunteer spirit and it’s a big inspiration to have them here and to know they support us as volunteers.”

To really understand the vol-

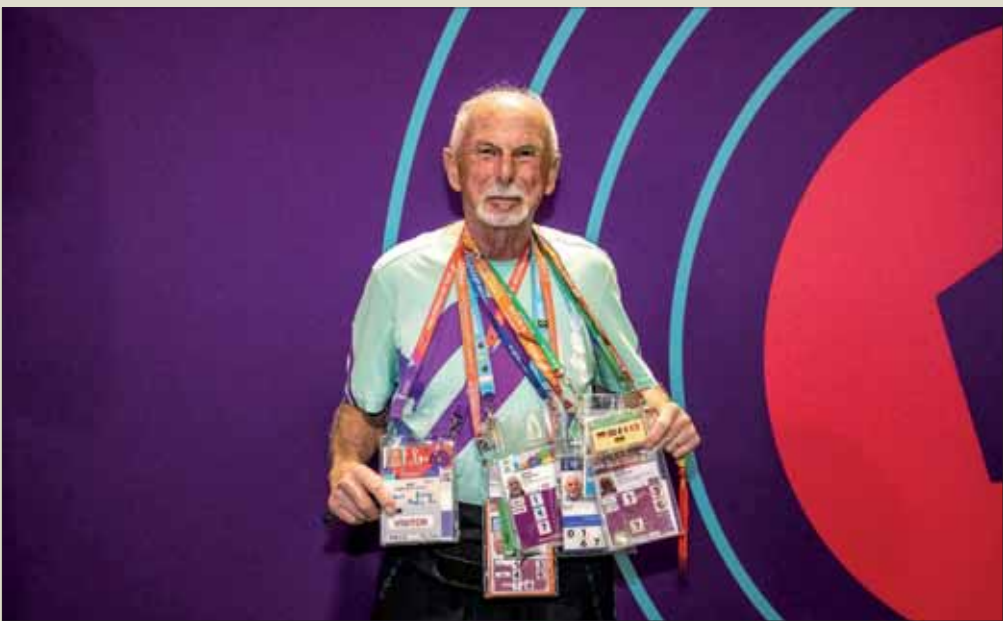
unteer experience from a first-hand point of view, French 1998 FIFA World Cup winner Marcel Desailly, Manchester City and Ivorian superstar Yaya Touré, and Qatari World and Olympic high jump champion Mutaz Essa Barshim went the extra mile and agreed to become volunteers for the day at the busy uniform distribution centre. The three ambassadors were given official volunteer uniforms and briefed in their duties to help distribute uniforms to FIFA World Cup workforce staff and volunteers.

Asked how he enjoyed spending “A Day in the Life of a Volunteer,” Desailly replied: “It was a great experience to understand the dedication, the passion and the commitment of the volunteers. Now we know and we want each of the 20,000 volunteers to know that all their amazing hard work is fully recognised and appreciated. The tournament could not be delivered without them.”

Unsuspecting folks who had arrived to pick up their uniforms were no doubt surprised and delighted to find Desailly, Touré and Barshim behind the counter. Workforce uniform volunteer Wan Nizam said, “Having these amazing sportspeople volunteering with us was a fantastic experience that I will cherish for life. It was an honour and pleasure to explain our role and guide them.”

SC thanks volunteers for commitment, enthusiasm

On International Volunteer Day, some of the 20,000 volunteers for the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 had their photographs taken with the Winner’s Trophy. “We thank all our volunteers for their outstanding commitment and enthusiasm,” the Supreme Committee for Delivery & Legacy (SC) said in a tweet.



‘I am beyond proud to be a volunteer at the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022’

Abdulla al-Qahtani shares details of his enriching experience

Football fanatic Abdulla al-Qahtani applied to volunteer at the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 as he was determined to take part in the biggest event ever to be held in the Middle East and Arab world.

The 30-year-old from Al Kharaitiyat enjoys everything about the beautiful game and is supporting the tournament as a protocol volunteer at Al Bayt Stadium.

The Supreme Committee for Delivery & Legacy caught up with Abdulla, who works for QatarEnergy, during the England vs USA match to learn more about his journey, along with his pride at supporting the delivery of the first FIFA World Cup in the region.



Why did you become a volunteer?

I’ve always wanted to have a role in my country’s achievement and success. So, when volunteer registration began, I knew I had to sign up. I want to give something back to my country – even if it is just a small percentage.

What is your volunteering experience?

I began volunteering almost six years ago. Each volunteering experience teaches me a new skill. I previously volunteered during the FIFA Arab Cup at both Education City Stadium and Al Bayt, so I managed to pick up skills through these experiences, which helped me secure a volunteering role at the World Cup.

Tell us about your volunteering role at Al Bayt Stadium.

My team is responsible for protocol management of hospitality, VIP and VVIP guests at the stadium. We are expected to manage the crowd flow and ensure that everyone has a seamless experience entering and leaving the lounge and stadium.

How proud are you for being involved in this tournament?

I am beyond grateful and proud of myself for having a role in the biggest sporting event ever to be held in our country and region. Ever since Qatar won the bid 12 years ago, I hoped to have a role in the success of the tournament.

What skills have you acquired from this experience?

I have learned to communicate with fans from different parts of the world. Another skill is multi-tasking. I have also learned time management skills, which will undoubtedly help me in future volunteering experiences.

What are your thoughts on Qatar hosting the World Cup?

I speak on behalf of all Qataris and Arabs.



The 30-year-old from Al Kharaitiyat enjoys everything about the beautiful game and is supporting the tournament as a protocol volunteer at Al Bayt Stadium.

We are all proud to host an exceptional edition of the tournament here in Qatar, where everyone is welcome. We are all helping to host the most successful and memorable edition of the World Cup.

What would you say to people who are thinking of volunteering in future?

I encourage everyone to consider volunteering. The world of volunteering is huge. So, even if you tried a specific role and didn’t like it, there are other roles you can try. With time, you will learn more about what you like and dislike when it comes to

volunteering.

What message do you hope Qatar 2022 will send to the world?

I want the World Cup to show everyone that despite Qatar’s small geographical size, it can host the biggest sporting event. I also want the world to learn about our culture and heritage, and explore our history and religion.

I know for most tourists, this is their first time in Qatar, so I try my best to give them a warm welcome, and I really hope they have the best time here.



Unity and strength

Activities at Darb Al Saai in Umm Salal Mohamed continued to draw many visitors. The activities are organised in the lead-up to Qatar National Day on December 18, which will be held this year under the slogan *Our Unity Source of Our Strength*.

Symposium held on the journey of the Qatari song

A symposium reviewed the journey of the Qatari song at Darb Al Saai as part of a programme of cultural seminars accompanying the activities and celebrations of the Qatar National Day, which is held this year under the slogan *Our Unity Source of Our Strength*. Academic and novelist Dr Ahmed Abdel-Malik, writer and researcher in media and drama Dr Marzouq Bashir, artiste Mohamed al-Moqdam, and Mohamed al-Kuwari, the director of the Publications and Translation Department at the Ministry of Culture participated in the symposium, which was moderated by media host Amal Abdel-Malik. - **QNA**



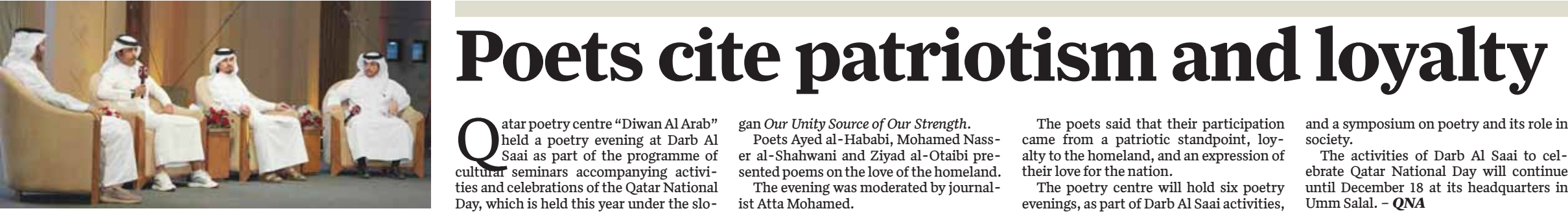
Poets cite patriotism and loyalty

Qatar poetry centre "Diwan Al Arab" held a poetry evening at Darb Al Saai as part of the programme of cultural seminars accompanying activities and celebrations of the Qatar National Day, which is held this year under the slogan *Our Unity Source of Our Strength*.

Poets Ayed al-Hababi, Mohamed Nassar al-Shahwani and Ziyad al-Otaibi presented poems on the love of the homeland. The evening was moderated by journalist Atta Mohamed.

The poets said that their participation came from a patriotic standpoint, loyalty to the homeland, and an expression of their love for the nation. The poetry centre will hold six poetry evenings, as part of Darb Al Saai activities,

and a symposium on poetry and its role in society. The activities of Darb Al Saai to celebrate Qatar National Day will continue until December 18 at its headquarters in Umm Salal. - **QNA**



Brazil fans get taste of Qatari culture and heritage

'The hospitality is amazing ... the Qataris took care of every detail, no matter how small. We really feel as if we are at home'

Representatives of a Brazilian football fans association visited the Darb Al Saai headquarters at Umm Salal Mohamed on Saturday, where they learned about various aspects of Qatari culture and heritage. During the visit, according to a press statement from the National Day Celebrations Organising Committee, the



representatives toured the numerous attractions and activities there, and enjoyed a camel ride. They expressed admiration for the National Day activities at Darb Al Saai. Fernando Pontes, the leader of the Brazilian fans' group, noted that "Darb Al Saai is a wonderful place and we are happy to be here." "We have seen and experienced the hospitality since we arrived here," he said. "And this visit is a unique opportunity to enhance the exchange of cultures between the Qatari and Brazilian people." "We got to know the nature of life of the people of Qatar in the past and the professions in which they worked, and experienced camel riding while enjoying Arabic coffee in the traditional tents," Pontes said. "The hospitality is amazing ... the Qataris took care of



Snapshots from the Brazilians' visit to Darb Al Saai. every detail, no matter how small." "We really feel as if we are at home," he added, expressing great admiration for the diversity in Qatar. Pontes noted that Qatar has built the most luxurious stadiums and sports facilities and provided the best roads and means of transportation. Fellow representative Paulo Machado praised the Darb Al Saai activities that highlight the Qatari heritage, saying that he thoroughly enjoyed the visit. He said Qatar has presented a dis-



tinguished edition of the FIFA World Cup and was able to communicate its culture to the people of the world through the tournament.

