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Amir sends message to Pakistan PM



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani sent a written message to Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, pertaining to bilateral relations and ways to support and develop them. The message was handed over by Qatar's ambassador in Islamabad Sheikh Saoud bin Abdulrahman al-Thani during his meeting with the prime minister. (QNA)

Amir attends 'CORE Diriyah E-Prix 2023'

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani yesterday attended the 'CORE Diriyah E-Prix 2023' Formula E race held at the Diriyah Street Circuit in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia in response to an invitation from Crown Prince and Prime Minister of Saudi Arabia Prince Mohamed bin Salman bin Abdulaziz al-Saud. The Amir attended the ceremony that accompanied the race and included artistic, cultural and sports activities. A lineup of Their Royal Highnesses, Princes, Sheikhs, heads of delegations and senior officials attended the race. (QNA)



Qatar backs international efforts to hold Syrian regime accountable for war crimes

Qatar expressed its support for the international efforts which aim to hold the Syrian regime accountable for the heinous crimes it committed against the brotherly people of Syria, including the use of chemical weapons in the city of Douma in the Eastern Ghouta region in April 2018, and to prosecute war criminals in Syria before the international justice.

In a statement yesterday, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs said that the Organisation for the Prevention of Chemical Weapons

(OPCW's) report, which concluded that the Syrian regime was responsible for the deadly attack on the city of Douma, reveals to the world once again the ugliness and brutality of this unscrupulous and inhuman regime, which is still continuing its horrific policy of mass killings, scorched lands and destroyed cities, crossing all the red lines imposed by morals and required by law.

In this respect, the ministry underscored that any political solution to the Syrian crisis will not lead to a successful

and sustainable result without holding accountable those involved in committing these atrocities.

The ministry also renewed Qatar's firm stance on the necessity of reaching a political solution, negotiated between all Syrian parties, in accordance with the Geneva Declaration (1) and the UN Security Council Resolution No 2254, in a way that preserves Syria's unity and sovereignty and realises Syrian people's aspirations for security and stability. (QNA)

Visitors eligible for on-arrival visas advised to buy health cover in advance

Visitors eligible for on-arrival visas in Qatar have been advised to purchase a health insurance policy in advance to ensure speedy completion of their procedures upon arrival in Qatar, according to information available on the Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) website.

The MoPH yesterday announced that the implementation of the first phase of the mandatory Health Insurance Scheme in Qatar will begin on February 1, with all visitors to the country required to have a health insurance policy.

This is in accordance with Law No. 22 of 2021 regarding the regulation of healthcare services within Qatar, which stipulates that all visitors shall be covered by the mandatory Health Insurance Scheme. The scheme will be implemented in phases to ensure a smooth rollout. The first phase will start with visitors to Qatar on February 1. The details of the procedures and list of MoPH-registered can be found at <https://www.moph.gov.qa/english/departments/policyaffairs/hfid/Pages/Health-Insurance-Scheme.aspx>

"Your health matters; there-

fore, we offer you health insurance that covers you during your stay in Qatar to provide you with excellent healthcare services. The health and well-being of visitors are our utmost priority; therefore, the government has established the necessary regulations to ensure that you are protected against accidents and medical emergency related conditions during your stay," the webpage states.

Visitors applying for a visit visa through the website of the Ministry of Interior (<https://portal.moi.gov.qa/qatarvisas/>), or via the Metrash2 app, will be directed to the website of the Ministry of Public Health where they can select one of the insurance companies registered with the MoPH to purchase the visitors' policy after completion of all other relevant visa requirements. The list of insurance companies are available at <https://www.moph.gov.qa/english/departments/policyaffairs/hfid/hirs/insurancecompanies/Pages/default.aspx>

Once the insurance policy is issued by the selected insurance company, the Ministry of Interior will issue the appropriate visit visa. The effective date of

coverage is the date of entry of the visitor at any border. If the visitor wishes to extend his/her stay in Qatar, then he/she must purchase a new health insurance policy.

Regarding visitors eligible for on-arrival visas at the border crossings of Qatar, the webpage says: "In order to ensure speedy completion of your procedures upon arrival at the various border crossings (airport, land and sea-ports), please purchase a visitor insurance policy before arriving at these ports from the MoPH link provided above (<https://www.moph.gov.qa/english/departments/policyaffairs/hfid/hirs/insurancecompanies/Pages/default.aspx>), and follow the same procedures mentioned."

The premium for the mandatory visitors' health insurance policy is QR50 per month. It covers emergency and accident services. The visitor can purchase additional coverage (top-ups) as desired for extra premiums to be determined by the insurance companies.

The webpage also explains what the policy covers:

Emergency medical treatment:
■ Up to QR150,000 for the

policy period and within Qatar.

Emergency medical assistance with a sub-limit of QR35,000, includes:

■ Emergency ambulance transportation within Qatar, and where necessary.

■ Medical evacuation to the individual's country of residence.

■ Covid-19 and quarantine:

■ Sub-limit up to QR50,000.

■ Covid-19 treatment for positive cases.

■ Quarantine expenses (for confirmed cases) are up to QR300 per day.

No waiting period is required under this document.

Repatriation: in the event of the visitor's death within Qatar, the cost of repatriation is covered up to an amount of QR10,000.

No copayment or deductibles required for any covered services as per the terms and conditions stipulated in the visitor's health insurance policy. Those with queries or seeking more information can contact the MoPH helpline, 16000 - Extension No. 1, dedicated to health insurance; or the international number, 0097444069963. They can also find answers to FAQs at <https://www.moph.gov.qa/english/departments/policyaffairs/hfid/Pages/FAQs.aspx>

ACTA promotes culture of integrity and transparency

The Administrative Control and Transparency Authority (ACTA), in co-operation with Qatar Finance and Business Academy (QFBA), concluded a three-day training programme on religious institutions and their role in promoting integrity and transparency at the QFBA headquarters.

The programme targeted the departments concerned with planning and mosques in the Ministry of Endowments (Awqaf) and Islamic Affairs, religious institutions, and those in charge of public speaking and preaching lessons.

Also, the programme introduced participants to the culture of integrity and transparency in its international aspect and

the role of religious institutions through the development of institutional building and community awareness in combating corruption and promoting integrity. The programme explained to the participants how to benefit from the UN Convention Against Corruption for the development of the state and building the human according to the best human standards in honesty, integrity, and transparency.

Also, it clarified the culture of anti-fraud and bribery and explained avoiding the abuse of influence for personal purposes and administrative and financial wrongdoing in daily transactions. The training programme comes within the framework of the ACTA development plan

to enhance the capabilities of public officials, raise their efficiency, and provide them with the knowledge that advances their scientific and practical capabilities in the areas of integrity, transparency, and prevention of corruption, in line with Qatar National Vision 2030, especially concerning human development.

ACTA has developed educational and training programmes to educate state employees, train them on the use of advanced methods to detect corruption, and prepare them to co-operate with the authority in this field. The authority, in co-operation with national training centres and institutions, has implemented programmes and training courses in many fields. (QNA)

Health cover mandatory for visitors from Feb 1

From Page 1

The ministry indicated that for visitors who hold international health insurance, the insurance policy must include Qatar, be valid during their stay in the country and issued by one of the

insurance companies approved in Qatar. The scheme aims to regulate health insurance and ensure continuous improvements and accessibility of the population to healthcare services, through an effective and sustainable healthcare system, and to

regulate healthcare expenditure, the statement adds.

For more information on the health insurance scheme and for the list of MoPH-registered insurance companies, one can visit <https://www.moph.gov.qa/english/departments/policyaffairs/hfid/Pages/Health-Insurance-Scheme.aspx>

For any enquiries, one can also contact the healthcare sector's unified call centre in Qatar at 16000. For international calls, the number 0097444069963 can be used.

'Mein Schiff 6' brings 3,319 passengers, crew members



Cruise ship 'Mein Schiff 6' yesterday arrived at Doha Port on its second call in the 2022/23 cruise season with 3,319 passengers and crew members on board, Mwani Qatar said. Operated by German-based cruise line TUI Cruises, 'Mein Schiff 6' sails under the flag of Malta and is one of the largest in the company's fleet, measuring 295m long, 35.8m wide, and 8m draft. It offers space for up to 2,534 passengers and boasts of 17,895sq m of outside decks along a variety of restaurants, cafes and various recreational facilities.

Padel championship kicks off today

Qatar Sports For All Federation (QSFA) announced the launch of the local padel tournament for men in co-operation with the Qatar Tennis, Squash and Badminton Federation and Al Sadd SC. The Platinum Stadiums in Al Sadd Club will host the tournament, which continues until Wednesday with the participation of 138 players representing 64 teams. The championship activities will witness a huge participation of padel players. Padel is gaining significant popularity among young athletes in Qatar. The teams are divided into four groups. The competitions will be held in six stadiums with 32 matches per day. QSFA's Director of Events and Activities, Abdullah al-Dosari, expressed hope that the new edition of the tournament will come out in the best possible way. He said that the previous edition in 2022 witnessed great participation and success, which reflects the great popularity of the padel in Qatar, pointing to the continuous growth of the number of players and followers.

How Israel forces are creating deep divisions through psychic annexation

By Tawfik Lamari
Staff Reporter

Legal consultant, researcher and educator Dr Zeina Jallad yesterday presented a paper on the topic of 'Identity annexation; Israel's non-territorial and psychic annexation of the West Bank Samaritans in the occupied Palestinian territories' at the Annual Palestine Forum. Speaking exclusively to *Gulf Times* on the sidelines of the forum, Dr Jallad spoke about how the Samaritans were being treated by the occupation.

"I think this is a timely question if we look at the type of strategies and technologies that the state of Israel is using in what some have defined as a creeping annexation. It is an annexation in detail, step by step until there is a full control — whether in terms of cultural, historical or legal presence on the land," she said.

"The way I view it, Samaritans are only less than 1,000 people in both parts of the country in total. They have so many differences (from the Israelis), their presence or the lack of it in the Israeli system does not change the demography.

"So, if we think about why they have been granted the citizenship... it was not to help them have the mobility or freedom of movement, access to health treatment, or the everyday code of rights. I think of it as a strategy of eraser. It is erasing that narrative of diversity and emptying it from the component of the Palestinian identity," Dr Jallad continued. "Step by step, we are losing our diversity, we are losing the Samaritans, the Jews, the Christians, may be at some point



Dr Zeina Jallad.
PICTURE: Thajudheen

the Druze, and it will become only one colour, a one tuned kind of crisis or conflict. No, the occupation is occupying the identity of the people, their psychology, their narrative, their story of belonging, their memory.

"This is where it is a very important and tricky way to analyse what goes beyond the acquisition of the land. Annexation and the legal appropriation of the land is one face to it, but there is something more that has to do with the psychology of the people, their way of self-perception. So, from the natives of the land, they become the 'other'. Someone who lives in Nablus today as a Samaritan is becoming an Israeli, so he is becoming an invader in his own homeland. This is the transformation sought of the native to the 'other'; and there resides the other angle of it, the appropriation of the language and the narrative of belonging and rootedness to the Israeli discourse and narrative."

"So, it is not only taking the land but also taking the narrative of the Palestinian people and appropriating it in the Israeli narrative, and this is where it is scary," Dr Jallad concluded.



Annual Palestine Forum to draw global attention to the 'cause'

From Page 1

In the last session, which was chaired by Abd al-Wahhab al-Afandi, Michael R Fischbach, Abdullah Musus, Nog Nyue Asanga Von, and Mona Awad Allah referred to the Palestinian issue in the international context from a comparative perspective, specifically with the United States, Kashmir, and Africa.

In the following three parallel sessions, Sanaa Hamoudi chaired a session that dealt with different aspects of security colonial techniques, in which Youssef Mounir, Pietro Stefani, Nour Arafa, and Areej Sabagh-Khoury spoke about the Israeli transnational network of repression, the unity of government actions, and programmes to enhance effectiveness, Localism in Counterinsurgency and Anticolonial Resilience in Jerusalem.

In the session titled "Patterns in the Palestinian Resistance" chaired by Salam al-Kawakibi, Tariq Radi, Khaled Anabtawi, Ahmed Asaad, Mustafa Sheta and Ayman Youssef presented the thoughts on the features of the gift of dignity and the experience of the national theater. Salam al-Kawakibi presided over this session.

Finally, in a session moder-



A section of the audience. PICTURES: Thajudheen

ated by Ibrahim Freiha, Ilan Pappé, Bilal Salaymeh, Abdullah Apoloz, and Saja al-Turman discussed the position of Palestine in the academic/knowledge discourse and the future directions of this discourse, and the achievements of the field of Palestinian studies and its future directions.

For his part, Faisal Abdulhameed al-Mudahka, Editor-in-Chief of the *Gulf Times*, attended the forum and expressed his support for the first session,

wishing the participants success. He said on the sidelines of the forum that "our newspaper has been paying substantial attention to the Palestinian cause for decades, and has been making every effort to advance it and assuming a position worthy of its Arab and international legitimacy through what it publishes on its columns.

He continued: "On the personal level, I grew up adopting the just Palestinian cause and the continuous struggle for it,

with our firm belief that the brutal aggression will be defeated and Palestine will inevitably be independent.

"The Palestinian brothers from the diaspora will return to their land and homes, God willing. This victory is not only for the Palestinians but for all Arabs because it is the cause of the entire Arab nation.

"It is no secret to you that we strengthen the struggle for Palestine by raising awareness among readers, community

members, and residents, and especially inculcating these values in our children so that we inculcate in them the spirit of Arab nationalism and commitment to defend the Palestinian cause without relenting until victory, God willing."

Two other workshops were held at the end of the first day of the forum. The first dealt with the issue of Palestine in opinion polls, and was chaired by Mahdi Mabrouk. Shibley Telhami spoke about the shift in the American position towards Palestine / Israel, while Mohamed al-Masri spoke about Palestine in Arab public opinion, according to the results of the Arab Index poll, which is implemented by the Arab Center.

In the second workshop, chaired by Ghassan al-Kahlout, Mohamed Abu Nimr, Lord Habash and Tamer Qarmout talked about the Palestinian-Palestinian division and the prospects for reconciliation.

The work of the Palestine Forum will continue until January 30, as indicated in its agenda for the next two days, in a similar manner. The forum also coincides with the proceedings of the "Historical Writing in Palestine" symposium, which is organised by the Ostor periodical for historical studies.



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Glimpes from the ninth International Conference on Translation and Problems of Interculturalisation in Doha.





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S. No.	Tender No.	Description	Tender Bond QAR	Bid Closing Date & Tender Bond Validity Period
1	TC-CN-002-23-FM	Call-off Contract for Landscaping, Irrigation, and Indoor Plants Maintenance Services	136,500/-	01 March 2023 at 12.00 noon & 180 days

Companies wishing to register their interest and obtain Tender Document for the above Tender must pay a non-refundable registration fee and register with ORYX GTL as detailed below:

Tender Registration Fee	QAR 500/- (Non-refundable) per Tender
Payable to	ORYX GTL Limited
IBAN (29 Digits)	QA23QNBA000000000013010705001
Bank	Qatar National Bank – HQ or any branch (cash only)
Registration Dates	From 29 th January 2023 to 02 nd February 2023 8:00 am to 1:00 pm
Registration Process and Requirements:	<p>Write an e-mail to oryxgltenders@oryxgtl.com.qa with the following attachments:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Copy of Commercial Registration (CR) Copy of bank deposit slip of the Tender Registration Fee.

COMPANIES WHO HAVE PAID THE NON-REFUNDABLE REGISTRATION FEE BUT FAILED TO FORMALLY REGISTER AT THE DATE AND TIME STATED ABOVE WILL NOT BE CONSIDERED AS ACCEPTABLE TENDERER.

TENDER BOND SHALL BE ISSUED BY A BANK REGISTERED IN THE STATE OF QATAR.

For more information about ORYX GTL and its tenders, please visit our website: <http://www.oryxgtl.com.qa>



MANATEQ (Economic Zones Company)

مناقصة Tender

تدعو شركة المناطق الاقتصادية (مناطق) مقدمي الخدمات من ذوي الكفاءة في دولة قطر وخارجها للمشاركة في المناقصة التالية:

MANATEQ (Economic Zones Company) would like to invite competent local and/or international Service Providers to participate in the following Open Tender:

رقم المناقصة Tender No.	موضوع المناقصة Tender Subject	قيمة التأمين الابتدائي Tender Bond	رسوم المناقصة / غير مستردة Tender Fee / Non-refundable	موعد الإغلاق Closing Date
TC/01 /2023	<p>تعيين مقدم خدمات لتوفير «خدمات الأمن والمراقبة والجودة والصحة والسلامة» بالمناطق والمرافق التابعة لشركة «مناطق»</p> <p>Appointment of a Service Provider for providing "Security, Surveillance, Quality, and Occupational Health & Safety Services" at MANATEQ Managed and/or Controlled Areas/Facilities (Call-Off Based)</p>	100,000.00 QR	3,000.00 QR	Tuesday, Feb 28, 2023 12:00pm

Collection Date and Location:
Starting Thu 26th Jan 2023 until closing date (From 8:30am to 2:30pm)
MANATEQ (Operations Dept.),
The Gate Mall, Tower 2, 10th Floor
Email: opstendering@manateq.qa

Document Collection/Submission Process:
To be eligible to collect tender documents (RFP) and participate in this tender, Interested Parties (Bidders) must satisfy the following:

Step1:-
Bidder's Commercial Registration (copy) and an Authorization Letter (original) addressed to MANATEQ are required; in addition to the tender fees (non-refundable).

Tender Fees could be paid through a cheque, payable to "Economic Zones Company QSC (Manateq) ~ or electronically as per below:

Account Name : Economic Zones Company - Manateq
Bank : Qatar National Bank Account No. : 0013-026499-001
IBAN No. : QA19QNBA000000000013026499001 SWIFT CODE : QNBAQAQA

Step2:-
Satisfy and submit the tender documents along with a tender bond, by the tender closing date, (Tuesday, 28 Feb 2023).

تحتفظ شركة المناطق الاقتصادية بكامل حقاها في تعديل شروط المناقصة في أي وقت بدون إيداع أسباب و / أو إلغاء المناقصة بدون إيداع أسباب وبدون أدنى مسؤولية عليها في هذا الصدد أيا كان نوعها أو مصدرها

Economic Zones Company reserves its right in modifying terms of the tender at any time and/or cancelling the tender at any time without need of providing reasons and without any responsibility on its part whatever its kind

Gain in translation: stress on transferring Arab and Islamic cultures to world

International Conference on Translation and Problems of Interculturalisation begins

The 9th International Conference on Translation and Problems of Interculturalisation kicked off in Doha yesterday, organised by the Forum for Arab and International Relations, after having been held virtually in the previous two years due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Director of the Forum for Arab and International Relations Dr Mohamed Hamed al-Ahmari in the opening speech introduced the conference and stating its objectives, noting Qatar's role in supporting translation and translators, through its Sheikh Hamad Award for Translation and International Understanding.

Director of the Forum for Arab and International Relations underlined the important role of intellectual-translators who convey global languages and cultures to the Arab and Islamic worlds, equally as they transfer Arab thought into world languages, noting that the Arab and Islamic worlds encompassed, protected and translated from foreign languages and cultures in the past, giving the world some great names in translation who transferred the works of Greek, Persian and Indian cultures, and whose works gained fame even in foreign cultures.

Al-Ahmari also valued the translators' efforts in transferring Arab and Islamic cultures to the rest of the world.

The conference's first session was



dedicated to the topic of Arabic/Turkish translation.

The session started with a study conducted by Dr Mehmet Celik, translator, researcher, and member of the Faculty of Islamic Studies at the Fatih Sultan Mehmet University, Turkiye, on the Ottoman translation movement from Arabic into Turkish and its most important characteristics. On the other hand, Dr Aysel Ergul Keskin, head of the Department of Arabic-Turkish Translation at Istanbul Aydin University, overviewed the Arabic literary works translated into Turkish during the period 2013-2023.

The research of the translator, Dr Burhan Koroglu, dean of Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences at Ibn Haldun University, Turkiye, and professor of Islamic philosophy, shed light on the role of translation from Arabic in the framework of strengthening links with Islamic culture and thought in Turkiye.

The session concluded with a

study done by Saut Yusuf Akyuz, translator, Ottoman and Arab-Turkish relations history researcher, and lecturer at Ankara Yildirim Beyazit University, on the reality and challenges of the translation movement from Turkish into Arabic, and the role of Turkish institutions.

Several of the research papers were discussed in the second session of the conference, which revolved around the topic of self-translation.

The research paper on "Self-translation and identity" by the Director of Programmes in the Unesco Chair at the University of Kufa in Iraq, Dr Ahmed Basem Saadoun, indicated that self-translation may give identity a cultural diversity that makes it more open to the world.

Meanwhile, Chief Translator of Dar Al-Mamoun for Translation and Publishing at the Ministry of Culture in Iraq, Ishraq Abd al-Adel's paper touched on self-translation from and into Spanish.

It dealt with the topic of personal translation or self-translation, while shedding light on a number of experiences of some Iraqi translators who have translated their writings into Spanish. The paper of the Moroccan translator and academic Abd al-Salam Ben Abd al-Aali, explained that its not enough for self-translation to reconsider what is called the mother tongue, but rather it raises the question of distinguishing between the author and the translator, between creativity and translation,

and between the source and target text. Academic, translator and Italian language professor at the University of Upper Alsace in France, Moawiya Abdel Majeed, presented a research on self-translation in Italian culture, in which he talked about the history of self-translation in Italian culture, the reasons for self-translation, and the Arab contribution in the field of self-translation between Arabic and Italian.

The third session of the first day of the conference, in which several research papers were discussed, was about translation and digitisation.

The first day of the conference concluded with a discussion of a number of research papers, the most important of which was that of Egyptian translator Dr Shukri Mujahid's research entitled "Muhammad Anani is a teacher and translator", and Arabic language professor at University of Siena in Italy and translator Aqil al-Mara'i's paper on Dante's Divine Comedy.

The activities of the conference will recommence tomorrow, Sunday, where two sessions will be held.

The first session is about the problems of translating philosophical concepts, and the second is about translating religious texts.

At the end of the conference, the closing ceremony of the 8th Sheikh Hamad Award for Translation and International Understanding will be held, and the award winners will be announced.(QNA)

Qatar Charity completes first phase of housing project for displaced people in Syria

Qatar Charity (QC) has completed the first phase of the housing project for internally displaced persons (IDPs) living in the camps of Ain-Aara and in other camps located in northwest Syria.

The project aims to preserve the human dignity of the expected beneficiaries by improving their living conditions, QC has said in a statement.

The project is funded by OCHA's Syria Cross-border Humanitarian Fund (SCHF), and works on the construction of 250 housing units, each consisting of two rooms, a kitchen, and a bathroom, replacing the tents with homes. The project also seeks to build 54 other housing units for IDP families in other camps.

Besides, this project will build water and drainage infrastructure to ensure a better life for the beneficiaries, which will contribute to improving the situation in the targeted camps.

The residents of Ain-Aara and other camps in northern Syria live in problematic humanitarian conditions, especially in the winter, when pedestrians are unable to move because of the mud caused by waterlogging. "We came to this camp from more than 13 different villages," said the director of Ain-Aara camp, Abu Mustafa. "We were displaced from our homes and found ourselves at the foot of this hazardous mountain occupied by snakes, scorpions, and stray animals."

He noted that the people suffer here under the scorching sun and in the blistering winter. Further, seven school tents were provided to replace the old ones, which were about to




The project aims to preserve the human dignity of the expected beneficiaries by improving their living conditions.

collapse. The grounds of the new tents have been rehabilitated to make them suitable for the children. All school supplies have been provided to the students, in addition to equipping an administrative caravan next to the school. Qatar Charity is expected to deliver the housing units under this project during the third quarter of the current year.

Alamal City, a housing project, is expected to be completed this year. This is a full-service residential city, the largest housing project for the IDPs in northern Syria, and one of the most important qualitative projects of QC in the humanitarian field.

It aims to provide safe and sustainable homes for 1,400 displaced families, in addition to providing necessary social and service facilities for the people, especially in the fields of education, health, water and sanitation. Some 13,800 Syrian IDPs are expected to benefit from the city and its facilities.





مؤسسة قطر
Qatar Foundation

INVITATION TO TENDER

Tender Reference	Description	Tender Bond Value	Tender Fee	Bid Closing Date
QF/2023/PPMD-SC/0056	Operational Technology (OT) Vulnerability Assessment & Penetration Testing Services - 2023	Not Applicable	QAR 500	19 February 2023

Qatar Foundation (QF) Procurement & Program Management Directorate is inviting companies to participate in the above listed public tenders.

Tender Fee : Interested bidders shall first deposit the respective non-refundable Tender Fee as mentioned above into the following Qatar Foundation bank account:

Account Name	: QATAR FOUNDATION
Account Number	: 0 0 1 3 - 0 2 4 1 7 1 - 0 0 1
Swift Code No	: QNBAQAQA
IBAN	: QA19 QNBA 0000 0000 0013 0241 7100 1
Bank Name	: Qatar National Bank

Tender Fee Payment Dates : From 29 January 2023 until 02 February 2023 between 9:00 AM - 02:00 PM except Friday and Saturday. The tender fees should be paid to QF account before 02 February 2023, 02:00 PM. Tender documents will not be issued if fees are paid after the specified deadline.

Interested bidders shall request the tender document by providing clear copies of the following documents to Qatar Foundation's email qftenderfee@qf.org.qa via a single email.

- Bidder's tender fee receipt clearly highlighting "QF Tender reference number" and "bidder's name".
- Authorization letter on company's letterhead detailing the Commercial Registration number, full name, telephone, and email id of the company's focal point for all tender communications.

QF Tender Committee will verify all the above documents and issue the tender documents via email to all bidders who have fully complied with above requirements.

The commercial bid must be valid for 120 days from bid closing date.

The commercial bid must be accompanied by a bank guarantee (tender bond) issued by a local bank in Qatar and should be valid for 120 days from the bid closing date.

The successful tenderer will be required to submit a performance bond as prescribed in each of the above tender documents.

Qatar Foundation tendering qualifications, terms and conditions shall apply as stipulated in the tender document.

Rayan Travel & Tours' new branch opens at Yacht Club tram station in Lusail



Snapshots from the opening of the new Rayan Travel & Tours outlet at the Yacht Club tram station, Lusail.



As part of strategic network expansion in the region and efforts to reach out to more customers, Rayan Travel & Tours recently opened its new branch at the Yacht Club tram station, Lusail, where it is providing various travel and tour services.

The opening ceremony was attended by Rayan Travel & Tours and Al Darwish United Holding Group chairman Yousuf Jassim al-Darwish, vice-chairman Mohamed Jassim al-Darwish and director Abdulrahman A D al-Darwish, in the presence of general manager Zaheer Yousuf and his team, as well as industry partners.

The fifth branch of the IATA-approved and ISO 9001:2015-certified travel management company is one of the business divisions of Al Darwish United Holding Group, which was founded in 1935.

The travel division was established in 1998, and offers a vibrant and dynamic approach to corporate and leisure travel services with the new outlet at the Yacht Club tram station. This is achieved "through ensuring the complete satisfaction of each of our valued customers through unique, distinctive and tailored services", a press statement noted.

"We are pleased to introduce the new branch while offering the services that customers want. Rayan Travel & Tours is proud of going above and beyond industry benchmarks and customer expectations. We consistently strive to set new standards, demonstrate our commitment to excellence

and improve ways to enhance the travel experience." Group chairman Yousuf Jassim al-Darwish said.

Vice-chairman Mohamed Jassim al-Darwish noted that the group is looking forward to developing future business relations while tapping the potential of customers within and outside Qatar.

"Qatar is turning out to be the tourist destination of many after the country successfully hosted the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022. We are looking to meet their travel and tours requirements," he said.

General manager Zaheer Yousuf noted that Rayan Travel & Tours offers reliable and valuable service in corporate and leisure segments while lending the customers an opportunity to enjoy the personalised service to its best. "The new branch will further boost our business while helping us reach more customers who can avail of various services that range from holiday packages to visa services," he noted.

Established in 1998, Rayan Travel & Tours provides a unique blend of customer services and tailored holiday packages, which drives exceptional value at every step of the journey. Also, it provides the first-rate flexible service in a professional and personalised manner, adding a real value to its services.

The services include corporate travel, leisure travel, incentive travel, air tickets, worldwide hotel booking, worldwide holidays packages, Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and

Exhibitions (MICE), safari and tours packages, travel insurance, cruise packages, private jets and car rental.

"A diverse range of business and leisure travel solutions are available at the best address for all travel requirements. Also, we offer tailored luxury services for VIP clients with partnerships with premier organisations. We have multilingual employees to support multicultural business habitats," Yousuf said.

Magdy Aly ElMenshaw, regional commercial manager, Qatar Airways; Siddique F S Mohamed, Retail BDM Qatar Rail; Jagadishwar Gamango, sales & marketing manager, Air India; Mohamed Samir Sayed, sales manager, Air Canada; Mohamed Waqas, country manager, Pakistan International Airlines; Nawaz Hussain, sales manager, Salam Air; Asif Ahmed, sales manager, Air Arabia; Denver Wodehouse, sales manager, IndiGo; Jooby T James, country manager, Galileo Travelport; Shady Olayan, senior account manager, Galileo Travelport; Lawrence Mathiyalagan, B2B sales, Qatar Airways Holidays; Denisse Mitrol, cluster sales manager, Gold Bay Hotels Group; Ajla Katana, sales executive, Gold Bay Hotels Group; Shafraz Cader, key account manager, RwandAir; Zulfikar AlZadajali, area manager, Oman Air; Agnes F Pagaduan, area manager, Philippine Airlines; Raymond Mira, sales & marketing, Philippine Airlines; Wafiq AlWahidi, general manager, Amadeus; Balaji Sundaram, director of sales, Amadeus; Shameer Koyappathody,

senior sales representative, Kuwait Airways; Mohamed Irfan, Sales executive, Salam Air; Nihal Shan, sales executive, Air Arabia; Sunny Verma, senior executive, sales, IndiGo; Kabir Khan, senior sales officer, Pakistan International Airlines; Issam Hashwa, sales executive, Royal Jordanian Airlines; Joby K Joseph, senior account manager, Qatar Airways, and other officials from Qatar Rail and various airlines attended the opening event.

Malabar Gold & Diamonds launches 'Heart to Heart' jewellery collection

Malabar Gold & Diamonds has launched a special collection of diamond and 18K gold jewellery, named 'Heart to Heart', to celebrate the season of love.

The 'Heart to Heart' jewellery collection showcases exclusive heart-shaped jewellery that will cater to the increasing demand for such jewellery during this period. "With over 150 designs symbolising love in various ways, this unique jewellery collection serves as a perfect gift to express love to dear ones," the leading jeweller said in a statement.

With prices starting from QR880, there is "something to fit everyone's budget", it added. To make the occasion more special, customers can also get a free Anne Klein or Coach watch with this limited-edition diamond jewellery. Apart from pendants in diamonds and 18k, customers can choose heart-shaped, beautifully crafted bangles, bracelets and rings to gift their loved ones. Additionally, the brand has launched heart-shaped solitaire rings, which are available in different centre stone sizes and specifications.

The diamond jewellery featured in the collection includes designs studded predominantly with red and multi-coloured stones as well. This offer will be available across all outlets of Malabar Gold & Diamonds until February 14. Customers can also buy this unique collection online through www.malabargoldanddiamonds.com "It is the season of love and there is no gift more thoughtful than jewellery to be given to your loved ones as it is the most preferred gift by women and its charm lasts for a lifetime. Additionally, the special 'Heart to Heart' collection we have launched in diamond and 18k gold jewellery are classic designs that can be used at any point in time, serving as an heirloom that can be passed onto generations and an ideal investment as well," said Shamlal Ahamed, managing director - International Operations, Malabar Gold & Diamonds. 'Love needs no reason' is the key message of the campaign, with all communication reflecting the concept that although there may be a million reasons to love someone, there needn't be any particular reason to make them feel special. Apart from these, Malabar Gold & Diamonds showcases a collection of unique designs in gold and diamond jewellery to suit the tastes and budgets of its different customers.



Lusail City District Cooling Company Fully owned subsidiary of Marafeq Qatar

TENDER NO. MQ-LCDC/TDR/LD/NORTH DCP#09/RFP/23/10006 dated 29.01.2023

TENDER TITLE: North District Cooling Plant at Lusail City Development in Qatar.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE WORKS

- The tender as mentioned above under Tender No. and Title for the North District Cooling Plant with water-cooled centrifugal chillers and associated equipment (the "Plant"). The Plant shall be constructed in Lusail City, Qatar. The work involves civil, architecture, process equipment and a Thermal Energy Storage tank as per the scope of work.
- The Successful tenderer shall
 - Be responsible for the Design, Engineering, Procurement, Construction, Testing, And Commissioning of the complete Plant including Thermal Energy Storage (TSE) on an EPC basis in a timely manner as per the requirements mentioned in the Tender Documents.
 - Ensure that the Plant & equipment are supplied in accordance with applicable international standards & codes, good industry practices and Owner's requirements.
 - Comply with all applicable laws in the State of Qatar.

TENDER BOND – QAR 6,500,000/- which should be valid for 180 days from the date of Tender closing.

SITE VISIT - On 12th February 2023 at 10:00hrs local Doha, Qatar Time.

TENDER CLOSING DATE – On 27th March 2023 at 15:00hrs local Doha, Qatar Time.

ELIGIBILITY OF TENDERERS

- EPC Contractor with sound financial capacity. The last three (03) years audited financial statements should show reasonable profits.
- Registered EPC Contractor in Qatar who can engage Grade A Contractor for electrical works and Grade A lead Consultants registered in Qatar (Local regulations shall be followed).
- EPC experience in undertaking similar projects and at least 5 years of GCC experience, preferably in Qatar.
- Successful track record of completion of large District Cooling Plants of minimum 20,000 TR capacity or more, with at least Two (02) plants built and commissioned in the last 5 years.
- Successful track record of execution of large thermal storage tanks of 30,000 TR-hr or more with at least One (01) such installation built and commissioned in the last 5 years.
- Successful track record of execution of reverse osmosis plants of capacity 3,000 m3/day or more with at least Two (02) such installations built and commissioned in the past, either directly or through specialist sub-contractor, in industrial applications, preferably in treating Treated Sewerage Effluent (TSE) water in District Cooling Plants. Preference will be given to tenderers in the following order:

A. Experienced in Qatar B. Experience in GCC Countries and C. Experience internationally.

- Fabrication, and assembling facility in GCC, preferably in the State of Qatar.
- ISO Certification for Quality, Health, Safety, and Environment.

TENDER DOCUMENT FEE

A non-refundable Banker's Cheque | Bank Demand Draft | Cash for the amount of Three Thousand Qatari Riyals (QAR 3,000/-) shall be made in favor of Marafeq Qatar L.L.C. and submitted at the time of tender collection.

TENDER DOCUMENT COLLECTION

The Tender Document can be collected from the "Procurement Department" of Marafeq Qatar L.L.C., 7th Floor, Katara Hospitality Building, Marina District, Lusail City, Doha, Qatar any day (Except Friday, Saturday & Public Holidays) from 29th January 2023 to 9th February 2023 (both days inclusive), between 09:30 Hours to 15:00 Hours. Tel.: 00974 - 4012 0113 | 120. Fax: 00974 - 4012 0121.

The interested parties must present the following in order to collect the Tender Documents:

- Copy of the Company's Commercial Registration.
- Company's authorization letter must include contact persons' details (e-mail ID, Phone No. etc.) for correspondence and an ID copy of the person who is collecting the Tender Documents.
- Presentation of the receipt for the tender document fee submitted to the Finance Department of Marafeq Qatar L.L.C.

**SALE OF USED CONTAINERS, PORTACABINS & OFFICE FURNITURE
DETAILS AS BELOW**

All buyers are requested to inspect the items as it will be sold "As-Is Where-Is"

DESCRIPTION

03 Nos. Steel Container - 40 Ft (Intact)
01 No. Steel Container - 20 Ft (Intact)
10 Nos. Steel Container - 40 Ft (with cutouts for aircon, exhaust etc.)
03 Nos. Steel Container - 40 Ft (joined together)

03 Nos. Office Porta cabins (With toilets)
02 Nos. Office Porta cabin (without toilet, joined together)
11 Nos. Office Porta cabins (without toilet)
04 Nos. Porta cabins Toilet / Ablution block
13 Nos. Single Portable Toilet

01 No. Meeting Table 600x180x75
02 Nos. Executive Office – Low credenza
02 Nos. Executive Office – Coffee Tables
02 Nos. Executive Office – L Shape Desks 90x40x75
02 Nos. Executive Office – Glass / Wood Bookcase
02 Nos. Executive Office – Small round Meeting Table
40 Nos. Office Desks: various sizes
02 Nos. 4 pax Workstations – 160x80
86 Nos. Swivel chairs: high & medium back
20 Nos. Visitor chairs
13 Nos. Filing cabinets: various sizes
08 Nos. Bookcase (glass/wood)
22 Nos. Split Type Air Cons in working condition
14 Nos. Window AC in working condition

Interested parties may be able to inspect the above at our Zekreet / Dukhan yard between 9am to 2pm (Sun– Wed).

All offers must be submitted on or before 10/02/2023 by email on designated email address or in a sealed enveloped at the designated office.

For visit and inquiries please contact mob: 55934549

'Dadu on Tour' to reach communities beyond Doha

From Page 1

As part of the 'Play, Learn, Explore' activation, children can take part in the short following engaging activities, including:

■**Zesty Za'atar**: Explore the ingredients of Za'atar and blend your own version of this classic Middle Eastern spice mixture. ■**Story Picnic**: Enjoy picnic baskets with a twist – a feast of books published by Qatar Museums and beautiful props to bring the stories to life.

■**Kashta**: Qatari Camping: Design and build your own tent to experience the Qatari way of camping.

■**Wobble Workout**: Practise balancing, stretching and exercising using the balance wobble board during a facilitator-led workout session.

■**Early Years Scavenger Bingo**: Keep an eye out around the park for certain features of objects and flowers, like colours and shapes and cross them off your Bingo card.

■**Blind Contour Drawing**: In this drawing session with a difference, draw other people's wonderful faces

with fun and quirky lines. You will be amazed with your drawing outcome!

■**Archaeology in the Sand**: Dig through the sand to find and collect artefactual pieces. It's fun to get our hands dirty.

The activities are aimed at honing children's physical and intellectual skills, such as problem-solving, observation and reading skills, while building a deeper understanding of the local culture, history and heritage.

Dadu, Children's Museum of Qatar provides innovative spaces and resources for child development, so as to support the efforts of families and teachers in building a sustainable and prosperous future. The museum focuses on each child's unique needs and development stage, using various forms of games aimed at stimulating learning.

Dadu Garden, home to the first 'Play, Learn, Explore', is currently developing new programmes that will launch soon to the public with the garden's reopening. For more information, visit <https://qm.org.qa/en/about-us/dadu-childrens-museum-qatar/>



Carnegie Mellon University in Qatar held an event to welcome the first students of the Class of 2027.

CMU-Q welcomes first Class of 2027 students

The first students of the Class of 2027 received a warm welcome at Carnegie Mellon University in Qatar (CMU-Q), a Qatar Foundation (QF) partner university.

The 31 students were admitted to the CMU-Q through the Early Decision round of admission.

The students represent 18 schools and 10 nations, and more than half are Qatari nationals.

CMU-Q dean Michael Trick encouraged the new students to seize the many opportunities that will come their way during their undergraduate years.

“A university education is about more than academics: it is a time for you to develop your skills and passions,” he said. “Over the next four years, you are on a path of self-discovery. Try new things, learn new skills, and discover how

you can change your world.”

The CMU-Q Early Decision application deadline is three months before the regular deadline of February 1.

Students who have attended a CMU-Q outreach programme are invited to apply for Early Decision if the CMU-Q is their first choice in universities.

Successful applicants are then offered acceptance pack-

ages before the winter break.

The CMU-Q will continue to accept applications until the regular admission deadline of February 1.

Students can apply for top-ranked undergraduate programmes in biological sciences, business administration, and computer science and information systems for studies beginning in August.



The Arab Media Forum kicked off yesterday in Amman.

Qatar participates in Arab Media Forum

QNA
Amman

The activities of the Arab Media Forum, which is organised by the General Secretariat of the Arab League, kicked off yesterday in Amman.

Qatar Media Corp (QMC) Director of Planning, Quality, and International Co-operation Ahmed Ghasab al-Hajri, and Abdul Aziz al-Yafei, the director of the Information Systems Department at the QMC, represented Qatar at the forum.

Addressing the forum, Assistant Secretary-General and Head of the Media and Communication Sector of the Arab League, Ahmed Rashid Khattabi, said that this forum falls within the context of the continuous efforts of the Arab League to implement the goals of the UN Agenda 2030.

He said that they look forward to the forum being a starting point for launching a regular space for dialogue between all partners and stakeholders to develop advanced

forms of media co-operation, and building productive capacities.

Khattabi said that this forum aims to discuss the most effective communication policies that contribute to achieving the requirements of development goals such as fighting poverty and exclusion.

He also called for the adoption of a development media that includes the widest segments of society, especially in the rural areas, and can mobilise the audio, visual, written and electronic media.

Khattabi praised in this regard the launch of an Arab initiative to protect the Arab child from inappropriate media content.

He noted the adoption by the Council of Arab Information Ministers of the Arab media strategy and the preparation of the Arab media map for sustainable development adopted by the 2018 Arab Summit in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia, which called on the concerned Arab government agencies and institutions to co-operate with the General Secretariat of the Arab League in this regard.

QU holds introductory meeting for new postgraduate students

Qatar University (QU) held an introductory meeting yesterday for postgraduate students (Spring 2023).

The meeting shed light on the various academic programmes and services provided by the university to students enrolled in the diploma, masters, and PhD programmes in various colleges and departments.

This meeting was attended by 200 new students, who were introduced to the university, its various academic and advisory facilities and services, and inform of the rules and policies that regulate life on campus.

In a statement to the Qatar News Agency (QNA), Vice-President for Research and Graduate Studies Prof Mariam al-Ali al-Maadeed said that the meeting aimed to introduce students to the academic journey of the postgraduate stage in all its details.

She added that this meeting was the first step for students in their academic career at the postgraduate level, enhancing their ability to resume academic and practical life in steady steps, and with insight into the policies, services, and rules followed in this important academic stage.

Al-Maadeed also said that admission to the Spring 2023 semester was open to several programmes, including all master's and PhD programmes in the College of Engineering, some programmes in the College of Arts and Sciences, a PhD degree in the health sector, and to PhD programmes in the College of Sharia and Islamic Studies.

Dean of Postgraduate Studies Dr Ahmad al-Own said that the introductory meeting was an important platform for introducing students to the policies followed and the services provided, as well as presenting the experiences of students previously enrolled in postgraduate programmes.

Dr al-Own spoke about postgraduate studies and what distinguishes them from the bachelor's stage and gave an overview of the postgraduate studies office, the services it provides to students, research



Snapshots from the QU introductory meeting yesterday for postgraduate students (Spring 2023).

grants and their importance to them, and various service activities and facilities.

Assistant Dean for Student Affairs at the Office of Graduate Studies Ghada al-Kuwari gave a detailed explanation of some important policies for postgraduate students, and the dates that students should consider for the Spring 2023 semester.

The services that are provided at the Postgraduate Education Centre were also highlighted, such as workshops for writing thesis, services that focus on training students to write a thesis, the various experiences that students go through, and other group workshops and individual support sessions.

QU Library gave a brief overview of its various sources to support the student with research while two postgraduate students presented their study experience.

The number of programmes available for postgraduate studies at the QU



amounts to 52 major programmes, and up to 70 sub-programmes in different colleges, which have many links to industry and the local community.

The QU offers a wide range of inter-

nal research scholarships to students to contribute to national research priorities that cover important vital sectors such as health, energy, environment, cyber-security, and others.

Second Asian Arabic Debating Championship begins today

The second edition of the Asian Arabic Debating Championship organised by QatarDebate, a member of Qatar Foundation (QF), starts today in Muscat under the patronage of Basel bin Ahmad Alrawas, undersecretary of Oman's ministry of culture, sports and youth, with representatives of different youth organisations.

After the immense success by the first edition of the championship held in Kuala Lumpur, this edition includes the participation of 165 debaters representing 42 teams.

Debaters will compete for five days from January 29 until February 2.

The championship includes training sessions prior to its commencement, in addition to competitive rounds that supports the increasing number of participants,



mentement, in addition to competitive rounds that supports the increasing number of participants,

judges, volunteers in this edition.

Eighteen countries – Qatar, Oman, Australia, Azerbaijan, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Malaysia, Pakistan, Palestine, Saudi Arabia, North Korea, Thailand, Vietnam and Yemen – are participating in the tournament.

About 75 judges, mostly Oman graduates of the training academy, are part of the tournament, and QatarDebate has conducted many training sessions to qualify them to participate in this championship.

QatarDebate aims to bring together speakers to debate in Arabic regardless of their mother tongues, promoting dialogue and constructive discussions.



The HMC's lipedema programme leaders.

HMC holds programme to raise awareness of lipedema



Participants of the awareness programme.

The Hamad Medical Corporation (HMC) continues to raise awareness about lipedema causes, symptoms and the available treatment options to patients and their families.

Lipedema is a condition caused by an abnormal buildup of fat in the upper and lower parts of the body but does not cause a fat buildup in the feet or hands.

It usually affects women who must live with this chronic disease and manage with treatment throughout life.

To highlight this condition, the HMC's Physiotherapy Department for Lipedema Patients, the exclusive facility that provides specialised treatment for lipedema locally, organised the first awareness programme for patient and family education in lipedema on January 24 at the Qatar Rehabilitation Institute, with the participation of various HMC departments to design a treatment and rehabilitation programme for patients with lipedema.

The programme was launched by chair of the Corporate Cancer Programme, Dr Mohamed Salem al-Hasan, who is also the medical director and chief executive of the National Centre for Cancer Care and Research (NCCCR), in the presence of Rumailah Hospital medical director Dr Hanadi

al-Hamad, who is also Qatar Rehabilitation Institute medical director and chairperson of the Geriatrics and Long Term Care Department; Dr Hareth al-Khater, deputy medical director of medical oncology at the NCCCR; and Noora Rashid al-Mudahka, assistant executive director of physiotherapy at the HMC.

During the opening ceremony, Dr al-Hassan welcomed patients with lipedema and their families and to express his appreciation to the organisers of this important awareness event.

He thanked lipedema patients for their participation in speaking about their experience with the disease and living with it.

“The lipedema awareness programme is the first of its kind in Qatar and witnessed a participation of significant healthcare professionals at the HMC,” said Mohamed Shafi, head of the HMC's Lipedema Rehabilitation Department. “The programme provided clear understanding and management of the disease for patients and families through lectures delivered by different department such as vascular surgery, plastic surgery, rehabilitation and nutrition.”

“The group discussions between pa-

tients and healthcare providers and the sharing patients experience with lipedema disease were significant in the programme,” he said.

“We continue to encourage our patients and provide them with the information and support through the programme and our representatives of lipedema patients who act as support groups for other patients with lipedema,” Shafi added. “Patients will receive an understanding of the conditions and the available treatment options and their benefits which are usually unclear to patient.”

“Patients with lipedema have many concerns related to diagnosis, treatment and predictions of the disease,” said Anita Sondrasikan, physiotherapist and LANA (Lymphology Association of North America)-certified lymphedema therapist. “The patient awareness is low as the disease is still not properly highlighted.”

“Lipedema is characterised by pain to the affected parts such as touching the affected area, hypersensitivity, easily bruised, the body becomes a barrier and body image for people with lipedema can lead them to becoming insecure which causes functional barriers and reduced social communication and some mental issues,” she added.

ANNOUNCEMENT
I, MOHAMMED ASIF BEDSHEET
holder of
INDIAN Passport No. S6248828
QID No. 29935604898

hereby change my name
from
MOHAMMED ASIF BEDSHEET
to
MOHAMMED ASIF SHAIK

Any objection, please contact
THE PERMANENT COMMITTEE FOR NATIONALITY AFFAIRS
within 15 days from the publication of this notice.

ANNOUNCEMENT
I, SHEFEENA
holder of
INDIAN Passport No. M4811634
QID No.28235605339

hereby change my name
from
SHEFEENA
to
SHEFEENA AHAMED SHERAFUDEEN

Any objection, please contact
THE PERMANENT COMMITTEE FOR NATIONALITY AFFAIRS
within 15 days from the publication of this notice.

Morocco embassy reopens in Iraq



A handout picture released by Iraq's Foreign Ministry yesterday, shows Iraqi Foreign Minister Fuad Hussein (left) and his Moroccan counterpart Nasser Bourita during an inauguration ceremony reopening Rabat's embassy in Baghdad after 18 years of closure.

Eritrea troops 'still on Ethiopian soil'

Reuters
Nairobi

A senior US official said yesterday that Eritrean troops are still in Ethiopia although they have moved back the border, contradicting Ethiopian authorities who say the Eritreans have already left.

Eritrean troops fought alongside the Ethiopian military and allied militias in the two-year conflict that pitted the Ethiopian government against rebellious forces in the northern region of Tigray.

In November, however, the Ethiopia government and the Tigray forces signed an agreement to end the hostilities.

That agreement mandated the withdrawal of all foreign forces from Tigray.

"With respect to Eritreans we understand they have moved back to the border and they have been asked to leave," US ambassador to the United Nations, Linda Thomas-Greenfield, said at a news conference during a visit to the Kenyan capital Nairobi.

She did not provide any evidence or source for this assessment. Eritrea's information minister Yemane Gebremeskel did not respond to a Reuters' request for comment.

The Tigray war, which begun in November 2020, resulted in tens of thousands of deaths and forced millions to flee their homes. The possible continuing presence of Eritrean troops in Tigray thus has been seen as a key obstacle to effective implementation of the deal.

A senior Ethiopia military

officer briefing foreign officials yesterday denied there were any Eritrean troops in the country. "There is no other security force in the Tigray region except the FDRE Defence Forces," Major General Teshome Gemechu said, using an acronym for the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia.

A spokesperson for the Tigrayan forces, Getachew Reda, dismissed claims that the Eritrean troops had left Tigray and said "thousands" were still there. Ethiopian government spokesperson Legesse Tulu, Redwan Hussein, national security adviser to the prime minister, and Colonel Getnet Adane, spokesperson to Ethiopian Army also did not respond to requests for comment on claims by Thomas-Greenfield and Getachew.

World urges restraint after violence in West Bank, Jerusalem

AFP
Paris

World leaders yesterday condemned the escalating violence in Israel and the Palestine territories and called for calm after a series of deadly incidents in the West Bank and Jerusalem.

An Israeli raid in the Jenin refugee camp on Thursday killed nine Palestinians.

This was followed by a deadly shooting outside a Jerusalem synagogue on Friday and a gun attack by a 13-year-old Palestinian boy that wounded two in the city yesterday.

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said the "attack" outside the Jerusalem synagogue that killed seven was "particularly abhorrent" as it occurred at a place of worship on Interna-

tional Holocaust Remembrance Day, according to his spokesman.

The UN human rights office on Friday urged an end to the "endless cycle of violence" in the occupied West Bank. It said it was "very concerned" by the rise in Palestinian fatalities following one of the deadliest Israeli army raids in years.

President Joe Biden spoke with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to underscore that the synagogue shooting "was an attack against the civilised world", the White House said in a readout of their telephone call.

US State Department spokesman Vedant Patel condemned the "absolutely horrific" attack and underlined Washington's "ironclad" commitment to Israel's security.

EUROPEAN UNION

The bloc's foreign policy chief Josep Borrell strongly condemned "acts of insane violence and hate" after the "appalling attack" outside the synagogue.

Reacting to the Jenin raid, he said the EU recognised Israel's "legitimate security concerns" but stressed that "lethal force must only be used as a last resort when it is strictly unavoidable in order to protect life".

He said Israeli forces had killed 30 Palestinians in the West Bank since the start of the year, calling on all parties to "reverse this spiral of violence and engage in meaningful efforts to restart peace negotiations".

EGYPT CONDEMNS

Egypt said it "strongly condemned" the synagogue attack and "any attack against civilians".

The foreign ministry urged

Palestinians and Israelis to exercise restraint and cease provocations and aggression "to avoid sinking into a spiral of violence".

The United Arab Emirates denounced "criminal acts" and all "violence aimed at undermining security and stability in contravention of human values and principles" following the synagogue shooting.

The foreign ministry said it expressed its condolences and sympathy with the Israeli people and the victims' families over the "heinous crime".

Regional power Saudi Arabia warned against "further dangerous escalation between Palestinians and Israelis".

Chancellor Olaf Scholz said the "terrible" Jerusalem attacks "deeply shocked" him.

The German foreign ministry condemned Friday's "abomi-

nable" attack and emphasised that "dialogue and co-operation between Israel and the Palestinian authorities are more necessary than ever".

French President Emmanuel Macron condemned the "hateful" attack on Twitter.

RUSSIA CALLS FOR RESTRAINT

The Russian foreign ministry called on all parties to show "maximum restraint" and said it observed the latest events "with deep concern".

President Volodymyr Zelensky said his country shared Israel's pain after the Jerusalem attacks and that a Ukrainian woman was among the victims of the synagogue shooting.

Oman condemned "all forms of violence that target civilians and undermine security and stability", referring to both Palestinian and Israeli victims.

Hundreds pay tribute to slain Eswatini political activist

AFP
Manzini

Hundreds of people, including foreign diplomats and activists, paid homage yesterday to a human rights lawyer who was shot dead in Eswatini, sparking alarm over political violence in Africa's last absolute monarchy.

Thulani Maseko, a political activist and fierce critic of authorities in the tiny landlocked nation, was gunned down through the window of his home last Saturday by unknown attackers.

Hours before his murder, King Mswati III had warned activists who defy him not to "shed tears" about "mercenaries killing them". Diplomatic envoys from the US, European Union, the United Kingdom and the United Nations attended a sombre memorial service on the outskirts of the commercial capital, Manzini.

Lawyers and rights activists from several other African countries, as far afield as Kenya, also travelled to the country - sandwiched between South Africa and Mozambique - to pay their tributes.

A portrait of Maseko was displayed in front of a cream-coloured wooden podium with a spray of white, yellow and red flowers laid out at the bottom.

The UN representative George Wachira said Maseko's killing was a "loss not only to Eswatini but to the world and humanity."

We cannot avoid bitterness because Thulani didn't de-

serve to die in this manner".

"His death shall not be in vain. Thulani was at the core of that theory that through dialogue this country can be fixed," he told mourners.

Maseko, who died aged 52, had spent most of his life fighting state repression and representing opposition activists in court.

In 2014, he was jailed for contempt of court over articles critical of the government and judiciary, but he was acquitted on appeal and released a year later.

At the time of his death, Maseko led a broad coalition of political and civic rights and religious groups created in November 2021 to foster dialogue with the king and seek a way out of the political crisis in the country of 1.2mn people.

Eswatini, formerly known as Swaziland, has long cracked down on dissent, with political parties banned since 1973.

At least 37 people were killed during weeks of anti-monarchy protests in June 2021. Maseko's murder drew widespread international outrage and calls for an impartial probe and the prosecution of the culprits.

UK ambassador Simon Boyden, said "human rights defenders, like Thulani, must be able to depend on institutions of the state to protect them from violence, from intimidation and from death". The Vice-President of the Law Society in Eswatini, Sdumo Dladla, bemoaned that Maseko "had to die such a violent death while he was preaching against violence".

APPEAL Call to extend deadline on old banknotes

Nigerian opposition presidential candidate Atiku Abubakar urged the central bank yesterday to extend a Jan 31 deadline to phase out old high-value banknotes, a measure many Nigerians fear will disrupt business in the cash-reliant economy, Reuters reported from Lagos. Nigerians have to turn in 1,000 (\$217), 500 and 200 naira notes by Tuesday when they cease to be legal tender. The central bank started releasing newly designed notes last month but many Nigerians say they are not yet available in banks. The Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) says recalling the notes is part of plans to reduce the use of cash. About 1.3tn naira in old notes has been deposited into the bank since the announcement in October, the bank said this week. However, in Africa's biggest economy Nigeria, most people live in rural areas and the biggest employer is the informal sector where cash is used for most transactions. Atiku, the main opposition People's Democratic Party's candidate in next month's presidential election, said it would be impossible for most of Nigeria's unbanked population to turn in their old notes in time.

KLM travel advisory sparks anger in Kenya and Tanzania

The governments of Kenya and Tanzania hit out at KLM yesterday for spreading "unfounded" claims after the airline published an advisory warning of travel disruptions due to purported civil unrest in the two countries, AFP reported from Nairobi.

The carrier had said that "civil unrest"

between Friday and Monday could potentially force flights to be cancelled, before amending its alert to refer to an unspecified "local threat in Tanzania".

Kenya's Transport Minister Kipchumba Murkomen said yesterday that he had protested to the airline over "this unfounded, false, insensitive and misleading

information that paints Kenya in bad light." "We will escalate this discussion through diplomatic channels," he warned in a statement. Tanzania's government also criticised the advisory, with the minister for works and transport Makame Mbarawa saying there was no truth to the claims. "This statement is baseless,

alarmist, unfounded, inconsiderate and insensitive and has caused unnecessary fear and panic," he said in a statement, urging travellers to ignore the advisory. The airline, which is owned by Air France KLM, apologised to the Kenyan government yesterday, saying the advisory was "only meant for our customers in Tanzania".

Russian Antarctic vessel docks in South Africa as green groups protest

Reuters
Johannesburg

A Russian research vessel which has been prospecting for oil and natural gas in the Antarctic docked in South Africa yesterday following protests by green campaigners who say its operations in the region violate a treaty banning mineral exploration.

Several members of the Extinction Rebellion environmental group held banners reading "Hands off Antarctica" as the polar explorer ship Akademik Alexander Karpinsky arrived as scheduled in Cape Town's port during the morning.

Earlier this week, several dozen protesters from Greenpeace and Extinction Rebellion demonstrated at the port, saying the ship's seismic surveys in the Antarctic were a threat to marine life in the area and violated a 1958 international agreement.

A 1998 amendment to the 55-nation Antarctic Treaty, to which both Russia and South Africa are signatories, prohibits all mineral explorations and extractions in the region.

RosGeo, the state-owned Russian explo-

ration company that operates the Akademik Alexander Karpinsky, says it has been conducting research in Russia's designated part of Antarctica since 1970 to explore for hydrocarbons.

According to RosGeo's website, the hydrocarbon potential of the designated area is estimated at approximately 70bn tonnes.

RosGeo did not immediately reply to a request for comment.

Extinction Rebellion representative Cassie Goodman told Reuters that South Africa's government was being complicit in environmental damage by allowing the Russian ship to dock.

South Africa's Foreign Ministry did not immediately reply to a request for comment. President Cyril Ramaphosa's government has friendly relations with Russia. South Africa says it is impartial on the Ukraine conflict and has abstained from voting on UN resolutions on the war.

Earlier this week, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov visited South Africa and the two countries along with China are set to conduct a joint military exercise on the African nation's east coast between Feb 17 and 27.



The Akademik Alexander Karpinsky, a Russian polar explorer ship, arrives in Cape Town harbour, South Africa.

Japan eyes easing South Korea export controls as Seoul seeks to improve ties

Reuters
Tokyo

Japan is considering relaxing controls on exports to South Korea as its president, Yoon Suk-yeol, seeks to improve ties amid a strained East Asian security environment, the *Sankei* newspaper reported yesterday. Japan will decide whether to ease

the curbs on shipping high-tech materials, which it imposed in 2019 over a dispute about Japan's wartime forced labour of Korean workers, as the neighbours hold a series of talks aimed at solving the dispute, *Sankei* said, citing unidentified government sources. Japan's foreign ministry and trade ministry officials were not immediately available for com-

ment on the report when Reuters contacted them outside regular business hours. The issue of the export curbs would likely be resolved during consultations between South Korea and Japan on various issues including forced labour, South Korea's foreign ministry said in a statement. "Given the growing need to promote co-operation among countries sharing universal values at

a time when the importance of economic security is increasing, we hope that Japan will judge wisely," the South Korean ministry said. Foreign ministers of the two countries met for talks in Tokyo this month. Their diplomatic officials are due to meet tomorrow in the South Korean capital, Seoul, as they near a conclusion of a plan for the resolving their

dispute, Jiji news reported on Friday. The East Asian neighbours, both important US allies, share a bitter history dating to Japan's colonisation of the Korean peninsula from 1910 to 1945. Yoon, who became South Korea's leader in May last year, has also made increasing co-operation with Japan a core goal despite the lingering disputes.

US general warns of war with China in 2025

A four-star US Air Force general said in a memo that his gut told him the United States would fight China in the next two years, comments that Pentagon officials said were not consistent with American military assessments. "I hope I am wrong," General Mike Minihan, who heads the Air Mobility Command, wrote to the leadership of its roughly 110,000 members. "My gut tells me will fight in 2025." The letter was dated Feb. 1 but had been sent out on Friday. The general's views do not represent the Pentagon but show concern at the highest levels of the US military over a possible attempt by China to exert control over Taiwan, which China claims as a territory. Both the United States and Taiwan will hold presidential elections in 2024, potentially creating an opportunity for China to take military action, Minihan wrote. "These comments are not representative of the department's view on China," a US defence official said. US Defence Secretary Lloyd Austin said earlier this month he seriously doubted that ramped up Chinese military activities near the Taiwan Strait were a sign of an imminent invasion of the island by Beijing. China has stepped up its diplomatic, military and economic pressure in recent years on the self-governed island to accept Beijing's rule. Taiwan's government says it wants peace but will defend itself if attacked. Reuters reviewed a copy of Minihan's memo, which was first reported by NBC News.

Auckland starts clean-up after deadly flash floods



A flooded area in Auckland.



Cars are submerged in a flooded street in Auckland.

Reuters
Auckland

Authorities in New Zealand's biggest city, Auckland, began mopping up yesterday after torrential rains brought flash flooding and evacuations, with at least two people confirmed dead and two missing in the widespread inundation. A state of emergency remained in place in the city of 1.6mn people on New Zealand's north island as the rains eased after Friday's flooding in the north, northwest and west. Prime Minister Chris Hipkins, less than a week in office, flew by helicopter over the city before touring flood-hit homes. "The level of devastation in some areas is considerable," Hipkins told reporters, describing the event as "unprecedented" in recent memory. Daylight revealed the impact of the storm, caused by warm air descending from the tropics, sparking heavy rain and thunderstorms, said Auckland Emergency Management, part of the city's council. "Auckland was clobbered on Friday - Auckland's wettest day on record - and today we start the clean-up," the agency's duty controller, Andrew Clark, said in a statement, urging caution for residents returning home to survey flood damage. While heavy rain had eased, another period of downpours was possible today, the national weather forecaster said. Showers were "dotted around Auckland" with some heavy west of the city, Auckland Emergency Management tweeted, while warning

residents to "stay safe" amid the emergency. "We're not out of this yet. Heavy rain returns tomorrow," the agency wrote on the social media platform. Two men were found dead, New Zealand Police said. A search was under way for a man believed swept away, while another person was unaccounted for after a landslide hit a house in an inner Auckland suburb, police said. More than 2,000 calls for assistance and 70 evacuations had been made around the city, the New Zealand Herald reported. City rainfall records were broken, with Auckland Airport logging 249mm (9.8 inches) in the 24 hours to 9am on Saturday, beating the 1985 high of 161.8mm. Some local flights resumed at Auckland Airport, which had closed domestic and international operations on Friday. Air New Zealand said its domestic flights in and out of Auckland resumed from noon, and advised it was assessing whether international flights would also restart. The airport, on its website, said it was scheduled to open its international terminal for departures from 5pm, while international arrivals would restart at 4:30am today. Air New Zealand said 12 of its international flights due into Auckland had been diverted overnight. On Friday, social media showed firefighters, police and defence force staff rescuing stranded people from flooded homes using ropes and rescue boats. The flooding forced cancellations of British pop star Elton John's concerts in the city, which had been scheduled for Friday and Saturday nights.



Passengers arriving at Hankou railway station on the last day of the Lunar New Year holidays in Wuhan, in China's central Hubei province.

Holiday trips within China surge after lifting of Covid curbs

Reuters
Beijing

Lunar New Year holiday trips inside China surged 74% from last year after authorities scrapped Covid-19 curbs that had stifled travel for three years, media reported yesterday. The Lunar New Year is the most important holiday of the year in China, when huge numbers of people working in prosperous coastal cities head to their hometowns and villages for family reunions. But for three years people were told not to travel during the holiday, with those who insisted facing the risk of snap lockdowns, multiple Covid tests, quarantine and even admonishment by their work units. An estimated 226mn domestic trips were made by all means including plane during the holiday week that ended on Friday, state broadcaster CCTV reported, citing government figures. That compares with about 130mn domestic trips during the holiday week last year, according to the transport ministry. In the last Lunar New Year holiday before the novel coronavirus emerged in late 2019 in the central city of Wuhan, some 420mn trips were made internally. As for travel abroad, inbound and outbound cross-border trips jumped 120.5% from last year to 2.88mn, the National Immigration Administration said yesterday. During the Lunar New Year holiday in 2019, 12.53mn cross-

An estimated 226mn domestic trips were made by all means including plane during the holiday week that ended on Friday, state broadcaster CCTV reported, citing government figures

border trips were made, the Xinhua news agency reported. China abandoned its strict "zero Covid" policy in early December after protests against the restrictions, allowing people to travel and the virus to spread rapidly throughout the country. Now that majority of the population had been infected, China has achieved herd immunity, *Jiankang Shibao*, a state-backed newspaper with a focus on health reported, citing Shanghai-based medical professor Fang Bangjiang. On the economic outlook, analysts at Japanese brokerage Nomura said in a research note that holiday consumption of in-person services had recovered notably, as seen in the rebound in travel, but households were likely to be moderate in releasing pent-up demand, given their worsening balance sheets.

Search underway for radioactive capsule missing in Australia

Parts of Western Australia were under a radiation alert yesterday after authorities said a radioactive capsule used in mining was lost en-route to the state's capital, Perth. Authorities in Australia's largest state issued the alert on Friday for a "radioactive substance risk" in several regions, including Perth. The small, silver capsule containing Caesium-137 got lost during transport from

north of Newman - a small town in the remote Kimberley region - to the northeast suburbs of Perth, the Department of Fire and Emergency Services said. "The substance is used within gauges in mining operations. Exposure to this substance could cause radiation burns or radiation sickness," the agency said. The capsule went missing while being driven in a truck from a mine to a Perth

storage facility, the state's health agency said. Newman is about 1,200km northeast of Perth. The truck left the site on Jan 12 but the capsule was not discovered missing until this week, which was when emergency services were alerted, according to authorities. The capsule was reportedly from a Rio Tinto Ltd mine. The company did not immediately respond to a request for comment. Western Australia chief health

officer Andrew Robertson said the capsule, if kept close to the body, could cause skin redness and radiation burns. "If it was kept long enough and they were exposed for long enough they could have some more acute effects, including impacts on their immune system," he told reporters. It was thought at the vibration of the truck caused the gauge to fall apart and the item then came out of it, he said. **-Reuters**

Protests in Bangladesh



Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) activists take part in a protest march in Dhaka yesterday to press their 10-point demand, including holding the next general election under a non-party caretaker government.



Students detained over BBC series on Modi

AFP
New Delhi

Indian police have detained students in New Delhi after stopping the screening of a BBC documentary on Prime Minister Narendra Modi's role during deadly sectarian riots in 2002.

The students at Delhi University had followed several campuses around the country in staging a broadcast, defying government efforts to stop its spread by blocking its publication on social media.

Police swarmed the university after student groups supportive of Modi's ruling party objected to the screening, seizing laptops and imposing a ban on assemblies of more than four people.

Police officer Sagar Singh Kalsi told Indian news channel NDTV that 24 students were detained.

The two-part BBC programme alleges that Modi had ordered police to turn a blind eye to deadly riots while he was chief minister of Gujarat state.

The violence began after 59 Hindu pilgrims were killed in a fire on a train.

Thirty-one Muslims were convicted of criminal conspiracy and murder over that incident.

At least 1,000 people, mostly Muslims, died in the unrest that followed.

India has dismissed the series as a "hostile" propaganda piece and ordered big social media platforms like Twitter and YouTube to block sharing or streaming it under controversial information technology laws.

Earlier this week, authorities at New Delhi's prestigious Jawaharlal Nehru University also banned an attempted screening and warned of "strict disciplinary action" if the edict was ignored.

However, defiant groups of students there and at numerous college campuses across India have gathered to watch the documentary on laptops and phone screens.

Modi ran Gujarat from 2001 until his election as prime minister in 2014 and briefly faced a travel ban by the United States over the violence.

An investigation team appointed by the Indian Supreme Court to probe the role of Modi and others in the violence said in 2012 it did not find any evidence to prosecute him.

British army soldier in court for terror offence

A judge has adjourned legal proceedings against a serving soldier in the British army who is accused of terrorism and explosives-related offences and remanded the 21-year-old in custody, the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) said. London's Metropolitan Police said on Friday that they had charged Daniel Abed Khalif from Stafford in central England with eliciting or attempting to elicit in August 2021 information that could be used by a person committing or preparing an act of terrorism. He was also charged with the offence of placing an article which other people might fear was a bomb earlier this year. When Khalif appeared at Westminster Magistrates' Court yesterday, the judge adjourned proceedings until February 3 so that the attorney-general can give permission for the case to go ahead, the CPS said. Khalif, wearing a grey jumper and blue jeans, spoke only to confirm his identity. - Reuters/AFP

Actor Alan Cummings hands back UK medal in anti-empire protest

AFP
London

Scottish actor Alan Cumming said on Friday that he had returned a UK state honour in protest at the "toxicity" of the British Empire, 14 years after receiving the award.

Indian military jets collide, one dead

AFP/Reuters
New Delhi

Two Indian Air Force fighter jets crashed yesterday, killing one pilot and injuring two others, in an apparent mid-air collision while on exercises south of the capital New Delhi.

The crash is the latest in a string of military aircraft accidents at a time when the government is trying to modernise its armed forces and meet India's complex security challenges.

It involved a Russian-made Sukhoi Su-30, carrying two pilots, and a French-built Mirage 2000, operated by a third, and was reported by witnesses to police around 10am (0430 GMT).

Both aircraft took off from the Gwalior air base, around 50km (30 miles) east of where they came down.

"The aircraft were on routine operational flying training mission," the country's air force said in a statement, adding that one of the three pilots was fatally injured.

An investigation was underway to determine the cause of the crash, it added.

The first plane hit the ground in the

forests of Pahadgarh in central Madhya Pradesh state, around 300km south of New Delhi.

"Two pilots were found near the crash site, who were later evacuated in an IAF chopper for treatment," Morena district police superintendent Ashutosh Bagri told AFP. "Both of them are out of danger."

The second jet crashed some distance away in Rajasthan state, and images from local rescue authorities showed military officials inspecting mechanical wreckage strewn across the ground.

India has suffered a spate of military aviation accidents in recent months.

Five army soldiers were killed last October when their helicopter crashed in Arunachal Pradesh state, near the country's militarised and disputed border with China.

It was the second military chopper crash in the state that month, coming weeks after a Cheetah helicopter came down near the town of Tawang, killing its pilot.

India's defence chief, General Bipin Rawat, was among 13 people killed when his Russian-made Mi-17 helicopter crashed while transporting him to an air force base in December 2021.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government is grappling with the urgent task of overhauling India's outdated armed forces.

Its military establishment is fretting over a growing assertiveness by China along its vast Himalayan frontier, which in 2019 sparked a lingering diplomatic freeze after a deadly high-altitude confrontation between troops of both countries.

India unveiled its first locally built aircraft carrier last year as part of government efforts to build an indigenous defence industry and reduce reliance on Russia, historically its most important arms supplier.

An effort to reform military recruitment to trim India's bloated defence payroll stalled last year after a backlash from aspiring soldiers, who burned train carriages and clashed with police in fierce protests.

Yesterday it was reported that a security assessment by Indian police in the Himalayan region of Ladakh says that there could be more clashes between Indian and Chinese troops along their contested frontier there as Beijing ramps up military infrastructure in the region.

At least 24 soldiers were killed when the armies of the Asian giants clashed in Ladakh, in the western Himalayas, in 2020 but tensions eased after military and diplomatic talks.

The assessment is part of a new, confidential research paper by the Ladakh Police that was submitted at a conference of top police officers held from January 20-22 and has been reviewed by Reuters.

The Indian army did not respond to a request for comment and China's foreign ministry said the situation along the border was at present generally stable.

The report said the assessment was based on intelligence gathered by local police in the border areas and the pattern of India-China military tensions over the years.

The assessment assumes significance as it was submitted at the conference in New Delhi which was attended by Prime Minister Modi.

India's defence and foreign ministries also did not respond to requests for comment.

China's foreign ministry spokesperson's office said yesterday that China is maintaining close communication and

dialogue through diplomatic and military channels with India.

"Aksai Chin is an inseparable part of China's territory," the Chinese ministry said, referring to a disputed region that lies at the intersection of China's Xinjiang and Tibet and to the east of Ladakh in India.

Referring to China's People's Liberation Army (PLA) the Indian research paper said: "Given the domestic compulsions ... in China and their economic interests in the region, the PLA would continue to build up its military infrastructure and skirmishes would also get frequent which may or may not follow a pattern."

"If we analyse the pattern of skirmishes and tensions, the intensity has increased since 2013-2014 with an interval of every 2-3 years," it said. "With the massive infrastructure build up by PLA on Chinese side both the armies are testing each other's reaction, strength of artillery and infantry mobilisation time."

India and China share a 3,500km (2,100 miles) border that has been disputed since the 1950s.

The two sides went to war over it in 1962.

Conor McGregor struck by car while biking

Reuters
London

UFC star Conor McGregor said on Friday that he was struck by a car while riding his bike in his native Ireland.

McGregor posted videos of himself in the road to Instagram after the incident.

He was heard saying, "I could have been dead there" while the car's driver was apologising.

He later deleted the posts.

"Got a bang of a car just now from behind," McGregor wrote on Instagram. "A sun trap, the driver couldn't see me. Full speed straight thru me. Thank you God, it wasn't my time."

"Thank you wrestling and judo also, he added. "Having an awareness on the landing saved my life."

McGregor has been in the news for a litany of reasons this week.

A woman accused McGregor of assault on his yacht last July, prompting investigations in both Ireland and Spain.

She told police McGregor "would have killed" her had she not jumped off his yacht to escape.

McGregor denies the allegation.

The former featherweight and lightweight champion also said that the UFC has asked him to be a coach on the next season of *The Ultimate Fighter* series, and he has yet to say whether he will agree to return to the reality show.

McGregor last fought in July 2021, suffering a TKO loss to Dustin Poirier.

McGregor broke his leg in the bout and has been rehabbing ever since.

McGregor's coach John Kavanagh has said he expects McGregor to fight in 2023.

Maintenance worker 'killed' by telescopic urinal

A man was crushed to death in central London on Friday while attempting to repair a telescopic urinal, one of a number of facilities which rise out of the ground to provide late-night relief for revellers. Firefighters used a winch to remove the man who was trapped underneath the urinal, below street level, but he was pronounced dead at the scene by ambulance staff, the London Fire Brigade said in a statement. The incident took place in the heart of London's West End entertainment district. "We're sorry to have to update that, despite the efforts of emergency services, the man who was critically injured in Cambridge Circus was pronounced dead at the scene," Metropolitan Police tweeted. - Reuters/AFP



Happening yesterday

A chained globe covered in oil rests on a rug at an Extinction Rebellion Scotland protest yesterday outside the Barclays Bank branch in Argyle Street, Glasgow.



People attend a protest yesterday following the burning of the Qur'an in Stockholm, outside the embassy of Sweden in London.



Right: Indian Congress Party leader Rahul Gandhi and his sister Priyanka Gandhi wave yesterday during the 'Bharat Jodo Yatra' march in Anantnag, south Kashmir.



Spectators watch Indian-born Canadian singer A P Dhillon perform during the Lollapalooza India music festival in Mumbai. One of the world's longest-running festivals kicked off in Mumbai yesterday for the Indian financial hub's biggest music extravaganza since the end of the coronavirus pandemic.

India rocks to Asia's first Lollapalooza festival

AFP
Mumbai

One of the world's longest-running festivals kicked off in Mumbai yesterday for the Indian financial hub's biggest music extravaganza since the end of the coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic.

Lollapalooza's arrival in Mumbai is the first time the festival has been staged in Asia after branching out from its American origins in the past decade.

Crowds thronged the Mahalaxmi

racecourse near the centre of a city that, before the disruption of the pandemic, was increasingly becoming a popular tour stop for leading international artists.

"I think it's huge - it's the first major American festival to come to India, I couldn't miss it," Narayani Anand, 29, told AFP.

"The live music scene is really bouncing back," she said. "It's almost like signifying the end to the dark days."

Not everyone was impressed by this year's lineup, despite months of anticipation, when the festival's Mumbai de-

but was announced last year.

The Strokes, Diplo and Imagine Dragons headline the inaugural concert and Binjal Shah, 30, was among those who decided to skip it.

"The tickets were exorbitant considering the lineup. I couldn't justify spending that much," she told AFP. "There was mad hype before the lineup dropped. But the lineup was really sad. My friends who bought early-bird tickets were really disappointed."

Around 60,000 people are expected at the festival over two days, organisers say. Lollapalooza was launched in the ear-

ly 1990s by Jane's Addiction frontman Perry Farrell during the US boom of alternative music.

It was originally conceived as a travelling festival that would explore non-mainstream music and culture.

Lollapalooza shut down after criticism that the festival was becoming increasingly commodified but re-emerged in 2005 as an annual event with Chicago the regular venue.

The festival has since expanded to Latin America, with versions in Argentina, Brazil and Chile, as well as Europe starting with a 2015 edition in Berlin.

oning for Welsh actor Michael Sheen, who handed back his OBE late last year and urged an end to the heir to the British crown being named prince of Wales.

Beatles songwriter John Lennon returned his MBE medal - which ranks below an OBE - in 1969 in protest at UK involvement in a Nigerian civil war and its support for the US war in Vietnam.

ated with the toxicity of empire", Cumming said.

"So, I returned my award, explained my reasons and reiterated my great gratitude for being given it in the first place. I'm now back to being plain old Alan Cumming again. Happy birthday to me!"

The queen's death also forced a reck-

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Resource-rich Africa needs help to end food insecurity and feed its people

Access to food – in quantity and quality – is a fundamental human right. It is also essential for ending hunger and malnutrition, and ensuring a healthier and productive workforce. Although agriculture employs over 60% of the African workforce and accounts for roughly a third of the continent’s GDP, Africa is the most food-insecure region in the world with more than 232mn under-nourished people, or approximately one in four, says African Development Bank.

Structural food insecurity is a particular challenge in fragile economies, which are disproportionately susceptible to resource and commodity price shocks and where poor agriculture infrastructure, governance and weak institutions result in low productivity and a heavy dependence on food imports.

Women face systematic discrimination across the continent, for example in terms of land ownership, which severely limits their opportunities to benefit from agricultural value chains. This is further multiplied by women’s unequal access to inputs, household decision making, education, finance, and markets.

Africa’s potential for agricultural production is enormous, with 60% of the world’s unused arable land

FAO estimates that closing the gender gap could increase farm yields by 20-30%, and there is wide-spread evidence that closing the gender gap within households has wide-spread benefits for families.

As a result of these factors, Africa had an estimated net food import bill of \$35.4bn in 2015, with about 15 food chains accounting for most imports, including five staple commodities such as wheat, sugar, rice, beef, soybeans.

Africa’s potential for agricultural production is enormous, with 60% of the world’s unused arable land. Increased food demand and changing consumption habits are leading to rapidly rising net food imports, which are expected to grow from \$35bn in 2015 to over \$110bn by 2025, which could be offset by increased African production.

Export of primary agricultural production is still very high in Africa compared to other regions of the world.

Therefore, agriculture offers a realistic prospect for large-scale job creation, especially in fragile economies. Given the importance of food and nutrition, promoting agricultural value chains and improving market access have the potential to diversify economies, raise incomes, increase food security and macroeconomic stability, contribute to mitigating conflict and prevent internal and external migration.

The African Development Bank (AfDB) has developed a strategy for long-term agricultural transformation in Africa under an initiative dubbed ‘Feed Africa’. It launched an initiative to ensure food sufficiency on the continent. Dubbed: the Africa Emergency Food Production Facility (AEFPF), the initiative intends to equip 20mn farmers with climate-resilient technology to produce 38mn tonnes of food, worth \$12bn, to feed the continent.

It was in response to the current food crisis plaguing the continent, triggered by the Russia-Ukraine conflict, two countries on which many African countries depend for wheat, maize, sunflower oil and barley.

According to the multilateral development bank, Africa should not be going with cap in hand begging for food when the continent held 65% of the world’s arable land.

“Africa should not go cap in hand to beg for food. No! Africa should produce to feed its citizens,” noted Dr Akinwunmi A. Adesina, president of AfDB.

The overall goal of ‘Feed Africa’ initiative is to make Africa a net food exporter by 2025.

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How not to fight inflation

By Joseph E Stiglitz
New York

Despite favourable indices, it is too soon to tell whether inflation has been tamed. Nonetheless, two clear lessons have emerged from the recent price surge.

First, economists’ standard models – especially the dominant one that assumes the economy always to be in equilibrium – were effectively useless. And, second, those who confidently asserted that it would take five years of pain to wring inflation out of the system have already been refuted. Inflation has fallen dramatically, with the December 2022 seasonally adjusted consumer price index coming in just 1% above that for June.

There is overwhelming evidence that the main source of inflation was pandemic-related supply shocks and shifts in the pattern of demand, not excess aggregate demand, and certainly not any additional demand created by pandemic spending. Anyone with any faith in the market economy knew that the supply issues would be resolved eventually; but no-one could possibly know when.

After all, we have never endured a pandemic-driven economic shutdown followed by a rapid reopening. That is why models based on past experience proved irrelevant. Still, we could anticipate that clearing supply bottlenecks would be disinflationary, even if this would not necessarily

counteract the earlier inflationary process immediately or in full, owing to markets’ tendency to adjust upward more rapidly than they adjust downward.

Policymakers continue to balance the risk of doing too little versus doing too much. The risks of increasing interest rates are clear: a fragile global economy could be pushed into recession, precipitating more debt crises as many heavily indebted emerging and developing economies face the triple whammy of a strong dollar, lower export revenues, and higher interest rates. This would be a travesty. After already letting people die unnecessarily by refusing to share the intellectual property for Covid-19 vaccines, the United States has knowingly adopted a policy that will likely sink the world’s most vulnerable economies. This is hardly a winning strategy for a country that has launched a new cold war with China.

Worse, it is not even clear that there is any upside to this approach. In fact, raising interest rates could do more harm than good, by making it more expensive for firms to invest in solutions to the current supply constraints. The US Federal Reserve’s monetary-policy tightening has already curtailed housing construction, even though more supply is precisely what is needed to bring down one of the biggest sources of inflation: housing costs.

Moreover, many price-setters in the housing market may now pass the higher costs of doing business on to renters. And in retail and other markets

more broadly, higher interest rates can actually induce price increases as the higher interest rates induce businesses to write down the future value of lost customers relative to the benefits today of higher prices.

To be sure, a deep recession would tame inflation. But why would we invite that? Fed Chair Jerome Powell and his colleagues seem to relish cheering against the economy. Meanwhile, their friends in commercial banking are making out like bandits now that the Fed is paying 4.4% interest on more than \$3 trillion of bank reserve balances – yielding a tidy return of more than \$130 billion per year.

To justify all this, the Fed points to the usual bogeymen: runaway inflation, a wage-price spiral, and unanchored inflation expectations. But where are these bogeymen? Not only is inflation falling, but wages are increasing more slowly than prices (meaning no spiral), and expectations remain in check. The five-year, five-year forward expectation rate is hovering just above 2% – hardly unanchored.

Some also fear that we will not return quickly enough to the 2% target inflation rate. But remember, that number was pulled out of thin air. It has no economic significance, nor is there any evidence to suggest that it would be costly to the economy if inflation were to vary between, say, 2% and 4%. On the contrary, given the need for structural changes in the economy and downward rigidities in prices, a slightly higher inflation target has much to recommend it.

Some also will say that inflation has remained tame precisely because central banks have signalled such resolve in fighting it. My dog Woofie might have drawn the same conclusion whenever he barked at planes flying over our house. He might have believed that he had scared them off, and that not barking would have increased the risk of the plane falling on him.

One would hope that modern economic analysis would dig deeper than Woofie ever did. A careful look at what is going on, and at where prices have come down, supports the structuralist view that inflation was driven mainly by supply-side disruptions and shifts in the pattern of demand. As these issues are resolved, inflation is likely to continue to come down.

Yes, it is too soon to tell precisely when inflation will be fully tamed. And no one knows what new shocks await us. But I am still putting my money on “Team Temporary.” Those arguing that inflation will be largely cured on its own (and that the process could be hastened by policies to alleviate supply constraints) still have a much stronger case than those advocating measures with obviously high and persistent costs but only dubious benefits.

– Project Syndicate

● Joseph E Stiglitz, a Nobel laureate in economics, is University Professor at Columbia University and a member of the Independent Commission for the Reform of International Corporate Taxation.



Efforts since Floyd death have failed to stem police violence

AFP
Washington

The shocking death of Tyre Nichols after a police beating has reopened anguished debate across the United States about police violence, fuelling a sense that the huge, nationwide demonstrations of 2020 have done little to solve the problem.

Nichols, a 29-year-old Black man, died in a hospital on January 10, three days after a brutal beating by five Black police officers in the southern city of Memphis, Tennessee.

The five have since been charged with second-degree murder.

Memphis police released body-cam footage of the incident — after starkly warning viewers of its brutality — late Friday.

“I’m just sad for where we are in

America; we’re still here,” said Lora King, whose father Rodney King sustained a violent beating by police in Los Angeles in 1991, also caught on camera. The incident fuelled lethal and destructive riots in that city and elsewhere. “I’m in disbelief.”

“We have to do better,” Lora King said on CNN. “This is unacceptable.”

Nichols’ death left many Americans questioning how much real progress had been made since 2020.

The killing that year in Minneapolis of George Floyd, a Black man whose videotaped death under the knee of a white officer was viewed millions of times, sparked the historic Black Lives Matter movement felt across the US and abroad.

In the wake of Floyd’s death, promises of police reform swept across the country.

And yet two years later, the number of people who have died during inter-

actions with police hit a 10-year high in 2022, at 1,186 deaths, according to the website Mapping Police Violence.

African Americans accounted for 26% of those deaths, though Blacks represent only 13% of the US population.

By way of comparison, fewer than 20 people die in France each year during police interventions.

A huge factor explaining the difference is the enormous number of privately owned firearms in the United States — there are more guns than there are people — which sharply increases the sense of vulnerability police feel during interactions with the public, making them much quicker to draw their own arms.

Last year, 66 police officers were killed by gunfire while on duty, according to a fund created to honour them.

But attorney Ben Crump, who represented Floyd’s relatives and is now

working with Nichols’ family, sees a deeper dynamic at work.

“We have to talk about this institutionalised police culture that has this unwritten law that you can engage in excessive use of force against Black and Brown people,” he said during a press conference Friday.

“We have to have this conversation over and over and over again until it stops.”

The tumult of 2020 led, among other things, to efforts to curb the considerable legal immunity granted to American police, or to establish a register of officers who have been found to use excessive force.

Proposed federal legislation, initially supported by both political parties, ultimately failed in Congress at a time when homicides were rising sharply, with Republicans falling back on their traditional appeals for “law and order.”

In the absence of progress on the

federal level, the push for reform advanced primarily on the local level — modestly and unevenly, producing a patchwork of different approaches.

Across the United States, there are nearly 18,000 autonomous policing entities — city police, county sheriffs, state highway patrols — each with its own rules for recruitment, training and on-the-job practices.

Some of them have reviewed and revised their rules, notably banning strangleholds, such as the one killed George Floyd, requiring greater use of body-cams and increasing the penalties for unjustified violence.

The Memphis police were among those adopting reforms. Officers were barred from forcing their way into homes unannounced; were told they must step in to stop colleagues engaging in violence; and were given additional training in de-escalating dangerous confrontations.

Despite all that, the officers who stopped Nichols for a simple traffic violation were “riled up” from the beginning, and “the escalation was already at a high level,” said Cerelyn Davis, the Memphis police department’s first Black female chief.

For activists, the central problem is the extensive arrest powers American police have, even over minor infractions.

“We must stop relying on police to respond to issues related to poverty and disinvestment,” said Kathy Sinback, director for Tennessee of the American Civil Liberties Union.

That approach, she said in a statement, “leads to more frequent, unnecessary and aggressive actions by law enforcement toward community members.”

US police have killed nearly 600 people during traffic stops since 2017, according to Human Rights Watch.

Peru Congress turns down president’s plan for early elections

Peru’s Congress rejected yesterday a request by embattled President Dina Boluarte to bring forward elections to December 2023, as protests that have killed dozens rage on against her leadership. The South American country has been embroiled in a political crisis with near-daily protests since December 7 when former president Pedro Castillo was arrested after attempting to dissolve Congress and rule by decree.

Demanding that Boluarte resign and call fresh elections, Castillo supporters have erected roadblocks on highways, causing shortages of food, fuel and other basic supplies. The government said it will soon deploy police and soldiers to clear the roadblocks.

Lawmakers already agreed last month to bring forward elections from 2026 to April 2024. In the face of relentless protests, Boluarte on Friday urged Congress to call the vote for December, describing the political crisis as a “quagmire.”

But in a plenary session held during yesterday’s early hours, Congress rejected the proposal, with 45 votes in favour, 65 against and two abstentions. Leftist parties had demanded that the advancement of elections be accompanied by a constitutional convention — something protesters have repeatedly called for.

“With this vote, the constitutional reform proposal for the advancement of elections is rejected,” Congress president Jose Williams said, after more than seven hours’ debate. Following the vote, Williams received a request for “reconsideration”, which could be debated tomorrow in a new session, though it would be difficult to reverse the decision. Protesters have demanded immediate elections, as well as Boluarte’s removal, the dissolution of Congress and a new constitution.

Russia’s deputy FM to meet new US ambassador

Russia’s deputy foreign minister Sergei Ryabkov will hold a meeting with Lynne Tracy, the new US ambassador to Moscow, early next week, the RIA news agency reported yesterday. Tracy arrived in Moscow earlier this week. Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova said on Friday that the new US ambassador would not improve ties between the two countries because of what she called Washington’s ongoing “hybrid war” against Russia. Relations between Washington and Moscow have been at rock bottom since Russia’s invasion of Ukraine last February. Russia casts the war as confronting what is says is an aggressive and expansionist US-led Nato alliance, while Kyiv and its allies call Russia’s actions an unprovoked land grab. According to Ryabkov, the traditional presentation of copies of credential by Tracy is already agreed upon.

“It will take place literally at the beginning of the week. It is expected that the transfer of copies of credentials by Ambassador Tracy will be made to me,” he said.



A protestor steps on the windshield of a police vehicle in New York. (Reuters)

Anger, protest in Memphis after police beating video released

AFP
Memphis

About 50 protesters gathered Friday night in Memphis, in the southern United States, demanding justice after a video was released showing police violently arresting Tyre Nichols, a young Black man who died a few days after the incident.

Waving signs reading “Justice for Tyre” and “End police terror,” they headed to Martyrs Park in the centre of Memphis.

Five police officers have been charged with second-degree murder in the beating of the 29-year-old, who died in a Memphis hospital on January 10 three days after being stopped on suspicion of reckless driving.

At 6pm on Friday, the few dozen protesters, chanting “No justice, no peace,” managed to block a major road in the city, causing traffic jams.

The procession carried on to a bridge crossing the Mississippi River.

“Whose bridge?!” shouted an activist with a megaphone; “Our bridge” came the reply from the crowd.

Monica Johnson, a community organiser from Atlanta, said it was “sick” that all the accused policemen were also Black, an anomaly among recent high-profile killings of Black men, which often involve white officers.

“But it doesn’t surprise me, because we’ve seen for years and for decades that Black people have — for a check, for their occupation — done the same thing and served the same system of white supremacy and capital,” the 24-year-old said.

She said the protesters demanded “accountability, conviction for all of the cops involved and a stop to the police making those traffic stops where they kill people.”

“For me there is no good cop,” said LJ Abraham, a community organiser in Mem-



A combination photo of mugshots shows the Memphis police officers charged with second-degree murder in the death of Tyre Nichols. They are clockwise from top left Demetrius Haley, Justin Smith, Emmitt Martin III, Tadarrius Bean and Desmond Mills Jr. (Reuters)

phis. “And so for me, it does not matter what the race of the cop is. They’re hired to protect us and serve — they’re failing on that across the country, and to say ‘murder’ is the proper word to describe what happened, he was murdered,” she added.

For David Stacks, a Black Memphis resident who owns a car detailing business, Nichols’ death “should draw everybody together, open the eyes of” the country’s African-American population.

“Like, this is bigger than all other obstacles and whatever y’all have, going on amongst each other,” the 38-year-old said.

Authorities had feared that fury triggered by the video could spark widespread violence, but the centre of the city remained calm, with businesses still open.

Earlier in the day, at a Memphis skate

park where Nichols was a regular, Robert Walters, a 67-year-old blues musician visiting the city from Virginia, said the fact the officers were Black “hurts.”

“I’m a Black man living in America. And that fear is always something that me and my son, we grew up with and we live with,” he told AFP, in reference to police brutality.

“These guys, you’d think, of anybody, should know (better), but it just goes to show you that anybody can fall into that trap,” he said.

“I just want people to just be calm and not do anything stupid, not destroy or hurt.”

Candles and flowers had been laid in Nichols’ honour at the skate park.

“Rest in peace Tyre,” read a handwritten message on the flowers.

Academy to probe indie film’s surprise Oscars nod

The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences said Friday it was launching a review of Oscars campaigning, days after a small indie film surprised industry-watchers with a shock nomination to Hollywood’s most prestigious awards.

To Leslie had taken just \$27,000 at the box office when star Andrea Riseborough’s name appeared on the shortlist of nominees for Best Actress.

Riseborough, who plays a Texas single mother struggling with alcoholism, beat out presumed frontrunners Viola Davis (*The Woman King*) and Danielle Deadwyler (*Till*).

The nod came after an intense, last-minute social media campaign mounted on her behalf by celebrity friends including Edward Norton, Gwyneth Paltrow, and Sarah Paulson.

Movie industry magazine *Variety* said the Academy had received multiple calls and e-mails in the wake of the nomination, and there was a raging debate among moviemakers over whether rules had been broken.

On Friday, the Academy said it would be examining its processes, although it did not mention the film by name.

“It is the Academy’s goal to ensure that the Awards competition is conducted in a fair and ethical manner, and we are committed to ensuring an inclusive awards process,” a statement said.

“We are conducting a review of the campaign procedures around this year’s nominees, to ensure that no guidelines were violated, and to inform us whether changes to the guidelines may be needed in a new era of social media and digital communication.

Ex-Nato general wins Czech presidential election

AFP
Prague

Retired Nato general Petr Pavel beat a billionaire former prime minister in an election run-off yesterday to become the fourth president of the Czech Republic, final results showed.

Pavel, a former paratrooper, won 58.3% of votes while Andrej Babis scored 41.7%, said the Czech Statistical Office.

“I would like to thank those who voted for me and also those who did not but came to the polls, because they made it clear they honoured democracy and cared about this country,” Pavel said after the results showed his victory.

“I can see that values such as truth, dignity, respect and humility have prevailed in this election,” he added.

The 61-year-old Pavel will in March replace President Milos Zeman, an outspoken and divisive politician who fostered close ties with Moscow before making a U-turn when Russia invaded Ukraine last year.

Turnout in the EU and Nato member country of 10.5mn people was unusually high, topping 70% following an acrimonious campaign marked by controversy.

Babis and his family have been targeted by death threats, while Pavel was the victim of a hoax claiming he was dead as disinformation plagued the final campaign.

“Our community is somewhat hurt by the presidential campaign, by the multiple crises we have faced and are facing, but also by the political style that has recently prevailed here,” said Pavel.

“This has to change, and you have helped me to take the first step on the path towards this change.”

Babis, who served as Czech prime minister from 2017-2021, congratulated Pavel after the vote and admitted defeat.

“I would like to wish him to be the president of all citizens of

the Czech Republic, to be sensitive to their problems and fight for the interests of the Czech Republic,” he added.

While the role is largely ceremonial, the Czech president names the government, picks the central bank governor and constitutional judges, and serves as commander of the armed forces.

German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier said he was looking forward to “deepening the close co-operation” between the two neighbours.

“I am impatiently awaiting a personal meeting and wish you a lot of strength and success,” he added.

Pavel will be the fourth Czech president since the country’s independence following its peaceful split with Slovakia in 1993, four years after former Czechoslovakia shed four decades of totalitarian communist rule.

His predecessors were Vaclav Havel, an anti-communist dissident playwright who led the country from 1993-2003, economist Vaclav Klaus (2003-2013) and Zeman.

Slovak President Zuzana Caputova even travelled to Prague to congratulate Pavel in person, saying she was happy that “in our region and in Europe, there is a new head of state who honours democratic values”.

A graduate of a military university, Pavel was decorated as a hero in the Serbo-Croatian war when he helped free French troops from a war zone.

He rose to chief of the Czech general staff and chair of Nato’s military committee.

Like Babis, Pavel was a member of the Communist Party in the 1980s.

But the man with a carefully trimmed beard and white hair, who has a passion for powerful motorbikes, has since become a strong advocate of EU and Nato membership.

“We have no better alternative. We should use all opportunities offered by membership and try to change that which we don’t like,” he said on his campaign website.



Petr Pavel and his wife Eva during a press conference in Prague yesterday, after he became the fourth president of the Czech Republic according to official results. (AFP)



Health benefits, sustainable farming push global demand for millets, says top LuLu official

By Peter Alagos
Business Reporter

Millets, also known as ancient grains grown worldwide, have taken centre stage during the celebration of India Utsav 2023 held recently at LuLu Hypermarket, Barwa Madinatna.

According to LuLu Group International director Dr Mohamed Althaf, millet is becoming “more and more popular” due to its benefits for health, particularly for diabetics.

Similarly, the demand for millet in the agriculture sector is also growing because of its sustainability. Dr Althaf pointed out that India Utsav is an annual event.

This year, the festivities also highlight ancient grains as a health product following the UN's declaration of 2023 as the “International Year of Millets”, he explained.

Indian ambassador Dr Deepak Mittal, who inaugurated India Utsav 2023, said: “India is one of the largest producers of millet, which is considered a superfood, and India Utsav 2023 is a good opportunity for visitors to learn about the use of millets in day-to-day life.”

Regarded as an old grain, millets are small, spherical whole grains that are grown in Nigeria, India, and other Asian and African nations.

Dr Mittal said the 10-day India Utsav 2023 is not only focusing on a wide variety of millets and their health benefits, but also showcasing a wide range of Indian food and spices, authentic dishes, and ethnic clothing.

India Utsav 2023, which aligns with India's Republic Day, will primarily feature and promote top-notch Indian cuisine, as well as the nation's rich cultural history.

The event also strives to highlight India's prowess in manufacturing and innovation among local and international audiences.

The festival offers an exclusive display of these products at all LuLu stores in the region.

Moreover, LuLu Hypermarket is also highlighting a huge range of bakery products made of millets, as well as fresh hot foods prepared in-store for the entire promotion – from biryanis to curries, popular street foods, traditional sweets, and many other delicacies.

LuLu Group regularly imports more than 4,000 products from India, including popular fast-moving consumer goods (FMCGs), products bearing the LuLu private label, fruits and vegetables, packaged food items, household goods, kitchen essentials, and traditional wear and other garments, which are available throughout the year in all stores across the region.

The group also has a strong network of food processing and logistics centres across India for exporting bulk products to countries in the Middle East, northeastern Africa, Indonesia and Malaysia.



Dr Mohamed Althaf explaining the importance of millets during the inauguration of India Utsav 2023, which is being celebrated at all LuLu stores. **PICTURE:** Shajji Kayamkulam



Dr Mittal delivering a speech.

Right: Dr Deepak Mittal leading the inauguration ceremony of India Utsav 2023 at LuLu's Barwa Madinatna outlet in the presence of Sri Lankan ambassador Mohamed Mafaz Mohideen and Dr Mohamed Althaf, as well as other public and private sector dignitaries.

PICTURES: Shajji Kayamkulam



India Utsav 2023 celebrates Indian cuisine.



The cake-cutting ceremony at the inauguration.

LuLu Group hosts ‘India Utsav 2023’ 10-day festival

By Peter Alagos
Business Reporter

LuLu Group is organising India Utsav 2023, a 10-day festival held across all LuLu hypermarkets in Qatar, which is also part of celebrations for India's 74th Republic Day.

Indian ambassador Dr Deepak Mittal led the inauguration ceremony of India Utsav 2023 recently at LuLu's Barwa Madinatna outlet in the presence of Sri Lankan ambassador Mohamed Mafaz Mohideen and LuLu Group International director Dr Mohamed Althaf, as well as other public and private sector dignitaries.

India Utsav 2023, which is aligned with the Republic Day of India, will largely highlight and promote Indian food and the country's diverse culture and heritage.

The festival also aims to promote among the local and expatriate communities India's excellence in innovation and manufacturing.

The ambassador, who was accompanied by his wife Dr Alpana Mittal, underscored in his inaugural speech that India Utsav “is a unique initiative by LuLu Hypermarket on the eve of India's 74th Republic Day”.

“The festival is offering a wide variety of food products, including organics, which were imported from different parts of India,” said the ambassador, who congratulated LuLu for organising the festival to introduce “fantastic Indian food items and cuisines in an innovative way to the residents”.

Dr Althaf reiterated that the festivities related to India Utsav 2023 underscore the celebration of India's 74th Republic Day,



Dignitaries at the event.

saying that colourful cultural programmes will be held on a daily basis throughout the festival for two weeks.

“These activities include artistic performances, a film launch and a celebrity cook, among others, to promote LuLu Hypermarket, Barwa Family Housing, Madinatna,” he said. “Some events will be held in the morning, while cultural activities will be held in the evenings.”

India Utsav has been an annual celebration by LuLu Group for the past two decades.

Not only does it commemorate India's Republic Day, but it is also a celebration of longstanding Qatar-India trade relations.

The inaugural ceremony was high-

lighted by a cultural extravaganza, including traditional Panchari Melam, Punjabi Kathak/Bollywood Fusion dance performances, a magic show, Dastangoi by renowned artiste Fouzia, and a team from Delhi.

To complete the Indian cultural experience, trendy high-street fashion and a curated collection of Sarees and Churidars are also available at the festival.

The India Utsav 2023 festival's inauguration was also highlighted by the presence of dignitaries from Qatar ministries and representatives and officials of Indian associations, Qatar Chamber, banking and retail institutions, and the fast-moving consumer goods sector.

IN-Q celebrates 10 years of IDAM at MIA with exclusive Chef's Table hosted by Alain Ducasse

IN-Q Enterprises (IN-Q), the commercial arm and a wholly owned subsidiary of Qatar Museums (QM), hosted a Chef's Table event recently to celebrate the 10th anniversary of IDAM by Alain Ducasse at the Museum of Islamic Art (MIA) and the decade-long partnership between Groupe Ducasse Paris and the QM.

The Chef's Table featured an elaborate culinary presentation that boasted of a combination of flavours crafted by Alain Ducasse, executive chef Jeremy Cheminade, IDAM's head chef Fabrice Rosso, and head pastry chef Lucas Fournier.

The Chef's Table, which was attended by Ducasse, presented the perfect opportunity for VIPs, influencers and the media to have a taste of the restaurant's latest menu and enjoy a conversation with the Michelin-starred chef, a press statement noted.

IDAM was established in 2013 as the first foray of Alain Ducasse into the Middle East.

It marked the first venture in the collaboration between Groupe Ducasse Paris and Qatar Museums.

In November 2022, IDAM reopened after the renovations at the MIA, with Mathieu Courtin in the helm as the restaurant manager and Rosso as head chef.

In commemorating a decade of haute cuisine, IDAM is welcoming back guests and new visitors with an enhanced menu and an elevated experience.



Alain Ducasse with the IDAM team.

Commenting on the event, IN-Q general manager Phil Lawrie said: “We are honoured and delighted to have Alain Ducasse with us here to celebrate 10 fruitful years of partnership with the Groupe Ducasse Paris.”

“We have made great strides in this partnership to transform the dining scene in Doha with the signature experi-

ences and masterful touches of gastronomic virtuoso Alain Ducasse,” he said. “The Chef's Table event is a celebration of this close co-operation, and we are delighted to welcome our guests to enjoy the tantalising tastes and fantastic flavours of the menu crafted by the IDAM kitchen team led by chef Fabrice Rosso.”

From his part, Ducasse said: “I am very glad to be back in Qatar and meet the team at IDAM.”

“The IDAM team and I are excited to welcome our loyal patrons with a specially curated menu that will offer them an exclusive Haute French Cuisine experience in an intimate setting,” he said.

“This Chef's Table event is a tribute to our valuable partnership with Qatar Museums,” Ducasse added. “Our chefs have meticulously prepared every recipe on this special evening's menu to take our guests on an unparalleled gastronomic experience.”

Located on the top floor of the MIA, IDAM celebrates an iconic landmark in Qatar in an environment that seamlessly blends local tradition with modernity and offers picture-perfect views of Doha's skyline.

The spectacular view is matched with an exquisite interior created by French designer Philippe Starck, fusing modernity with the classics to offer IDAM a dynamic environment with an Arabian touch.

IDAM offers the highest standard of French haute cuisine with the warmest Arabic hospitality.

The menu features contemporary Mediterranean dishes with a twist of eclectic Arabian flavours, prepared using fresh and sustainably produced ingredients enhanced with a sophisticated balance of flavours, the statement adds.

For more information and reservations, visit idam.com/