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Over 900 items available at reduced prices this Ramadan

The Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MoCI) has announced the discounted consumer goods list for the holy month of Ramadan (1444 AH) 2023. The list includes more than 900 commodities and the discounted prices, which are offered in co-ordination with major consumer and retail entities. The initiative came into effect yesterday and continues until the end of the holy month. Page 12

Saudi Arabia launches new national airline

Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Mohamed bin Salman formally announced vesterday the creation of a new national airline, Riyadh Air, with industry veteran Tony Douglas as its chief executive, as the kingdom moves to compete with regional transport and travel hubs. Riyadh Air will will serve more than 100 destinations around the world by 2030, making use of the kingdom's location between Asia, Africa and Europe, state news agency SPA said. The new airline is expected to add \$20bn to Saudi Arabia's non-oil GDP growth and create more than 200.000 jobs both directly and indirectly, it said. Business Page 1

UAE supports Qatar's bid to host 2026 World Bank and IMF meeting

Amir holds phone call with UAE president

QNA

is Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani received yesterday a phone call from his brother President of the sisterly United Arab Emirates Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed al-Nahyan.

During the call, His Highness the Amir and the President of the United Arab Emirates discussed the fraternal relations between the two countries and ways to enhance and support them, in addition to regional and international developments.

During the call, Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed al-Nahyan expressed the UAE's support for Qatar's candidacy file to host the 2026 Annual Meetings of the World Bank Group (WBG) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and accordingly, the UAE will withdraw its can-

didacy file, wishing Qatar all the success in hosting that international gathering.

In turn, His Highness the Amir extended his thanks to the President of the United Arab Emirates, for his country's support for Qatar's candidacy to host these meetings and for his sincere fraternal wishes.

The 2023 Annual Meetings of the World Bank Group and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) will take place from October 9-15 in Marrakesh, Morocco.

The World Bank/IMF Annual Meetings are held for two consecutive years at the World Bank Group and IMF headquarters in Washington, D.C., US, and every third year in another member country. This cycle was disrupted by the Covid-19 pandemic, with the Annual Meetings convening virtually in 2020 and 2021.

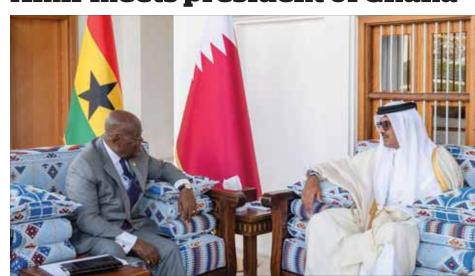
The Annual Meetings bring together central bankers, min-

isters of finance and development, private sector executives, civil society, media, and academics to discuss issues of global concern, including the world economic outlook, global financial stability, poverty eradication, inclusive economic growth and job creation, climate change, and others.

The Annual Meetings will include the meetings of the Boards of Governors, the joint World Bank Group/IMF Development Committee and the IMF International Monetary and Financial Committee (IMFC). The Development Committee and the IMFC advise the Boards of Governors on issues of global concern, including the world economic outlook, poverty eradication, economic development, and aid effectiveness.

Other featured events include regional briefings, press conferences, and fora focused on international development.

Amir meets president of Ghana



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani met at Sheikh Abdullah bin Jassim Majlis at the Amiri Diwan yesterday with President of the Republic of Ghana Nana Akufo-Addo, on the occasion of his visit to the country to attend the 5th United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries (LDC5). During the meeting, they discussed relations between the two countries and ways to enhance and support them in various fields, in addition to a number of topics of common interest. **(QNA)**

Qatar-Indonesia 2023 Year of Culture kicks off

The Qatar-Indonesia 2023 Year of Culture kicked off yesterday at the Museum of Islamic Art (MIA), putting a spotlight on projects that enhance the creative and cultural industries in both countries with a focus on sustainable and long-term partnerships.

"Our partnership with Indonesia this year is taking us to a new level, where we witness art, cultural and humanitarian events and initiatives, to bring people closer together through creative programmes in fashion, theatre, culinary art, education, sports,

filmmaking, politics and museums," said Qatar Museums (QM) Chairperson HE Sheikha Al Mayassa bint Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani. This year's programme, preceded by the Middle East, North Africa and South Asia (Menasa) Year of Culture in 2022, will feature an array of cultural events and live performances, sports competitions, exhibitions, culinary festivals, photography projects, residency and volunteer programmes, among other activities, QM noted. Page 12

AHLAN WA SAHLAN MR. KINJI SAITO & MR. KOICHI SUZUKI!



Mr. Kinji Saito

Director and Senior Managing Officer Global Automotive Marketing, Suzuki Motors Corporation



Mr. Koichi Suzuki

Managing Officer Middle East/Africa Automobile
Marketing, Suzuki Motors Corporation

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Amir meets outgoing Brazil, Somalia ambassadors





His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani met yesterday morning, at Sheikh Abdullah bin Jassim Majlis at the Amiri Diwan, the outgoing Brazil ambassador Luiz Alberto Figueiredo Machado and the Somalia ambassador Abdul Razak Farah Ali, who called on HH the Amir to greet him at the end of their tenure in the country. HH the Amir wished the two ambassadors success in their future duties and relations between Qatar and their countries further progress and development. The two ambassadors expressed their thanks and appreciation to HH the Amir, and officials of the State for the cooperation accorded to them, which contributed to the success of their tour of duty. (QNA)

Official

Amir and Deputy Amir greet Mauritius president

Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Ha-∎mad al-Thani and His Highness the Deputy Amir Sheikh Abdullah bin Hamad al-Thani sent yesterday cables of congratulations to President of Mauritius Prithvirajsing Roopun on the occasion of his country's National Day. (ONA)

Shura Speaker hails Qatar as model for peaceful coexistence and tolerance

the Speaker of the Shura Council Hassan bin Abdullah al-Ghanem yesterday hailed Qatar as a model for peaceful coexistence under the wise leadership that nurtures the values of tolerance, coexistence and acceptance of others.

Addressing the 146th Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) in Bahrain, His Excellency hailed the Qatari people as homogeneous who are united by one religion, language, culture and history.

He also highlighted the culturally and religiously diverse residents who hail from more than 80 countries dominated by a culture of tolerance and acceptance of the others. Qatar exerted great efforts to combat violence, promote the language of dialogue, spread the values of tolerance and respect, and to achieve peaceful coexistence among individuals and societies, launched many initiatives that support dialogue among different cultures and civilisations.

Based on this pioneering role of the government and people of Qatar, the Shura Council, on behalf of the Arab Group, submitted a request to include the issue of criminalising blasphemy of religions as an emergency item on the IPU's agenda under the title "criminalising blasphemy of religions and violating places of worship and sanctities, spreading hatred among people and calling for promoting the values of coexistence, tolerance, international peace and security," he added in the GA held under the theme 'Promoting peaceful coexistence and inclusive societies: fighting intolerance! He also stressed the role that parliamentarians play as representatives of people, and the great responsibility they bear in addressing the causes and motives



HE the Speaker of the Shura Council Hassan bin Abdullah al-Ghanem.

Al-Ghanem attends IPU Governing Council session

HE the Speaker of the Shura al-Ghanem, and a delegation from the Council participated yesterday in the 211th session of the Governing Council of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), as part of the work of the 146th General Assembly of the Union, which is currently being held in Bahrain. At the beginning of the

session, the meeting approved the meeting schedule, then approved the summary of the report of the 210th session of the Union, which was held in Rwanda in 2022. During the meeting, President of the Inter-Parliamentary

Union Duarte Pacheco reviewed the activities of the

of intolerance, combating hate speech, and promoting the values of tolerance, integration and peaceful coexistence, by adopting the enactment of legislation presidency since the previous as well as the activities of the Executive Committee. Secretary-General of the IPU Martin Chungong, reviewed the 2022 report, followed by the inauguration of the IPU climate campaign entitled "Parliaments for the Planet" to mobilise parliaments and parliamentarians in order to work on the climate emergency.

The meeting of the Governing Council witnessed the discussion of a number of other items on the agenda, such as the financial situation of the union, the activities of the various committees, among others. (QNA)

that enhances and maintains the cohesion of the social fabric, and criminalises everything that stirs up tribal, sectarian and religious strife.

He called on parliamentarians and the geopolitical groups in the IPU to adopt legislation that achieves this, by calling for adopting international legislation criminalising contempt of religion and infringement of religious places and sanctities, by supporting the emergency clause. HE the Speaker of the Shura Council began his speech with a Qur'anic verse that affirms the unity and coexistence of mankind, expressing regret at the instability the world is witnessing today, with large parts hit by conflicts and increasing border tensions, clashes, and

He lambasted the inability of the international community and humanitarian and human rights organisations to establish a system that achieves security and stability, the administration of justice and the protection of human rights, which is reflected peaceful coexistence, reducing violence in various societies, and the spread of hate speech.

He pointed out that the Arab region is witnessing hotbeds of tensions, instability and lack of security, and stressed that Israel's more than seven-decade practices against Palestine are the major cause of wars and violence in the region and the spread of terrorism, which the international community remains unable to deter or criminalise. In this context, he cited recent calls by an Israeli occupation government minister for the Palestinian village of Huwara to be wiped out, as a clear statement of incitement to violence.

He called on the assembled and parliamentary organisations to work to stop the blatant attacks on the Palestinian people and to call for reform in the United Nations' specialised agencies concerned.(QNA)

Shura Council secretary-general participates in ASGP meeting

The Association of Secretaries-General of Parliaments (ASGP) of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) held a meeting yesterday, as part of the 146th Assembly of the IPU which is being held in Bahrain, with the participation of HE the Secretary-General of the Shura Council Dr Ahmed bin Nasser al-Fadala.

The meeting discussed several issues related to the work of the general secretariat in parliaments and legislative assemblies, and presented the practices of a number of countries on improving administrative processes in parliamentary work and the role of parliaments in amending constitutions.

The meeting also dealt with the issue of citizens' participation in the work of parliament, and the participants reviewed different models and experiences from their countries in this aspect.(QNA)



HE the Secretary-General of the Shura Council Dr Ahmed bin Nasser al-Fadala

Shura takes part in IPU General Assembly panel meetings

The Shura Council participated in the meetings of several committees within the work of the 146th General Assembly of the Interwhich Bahrain is hosting from March 11 to 15.

The Steering Committee of the General Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union held a meeting yesterday, with the participation of Mohamed bin Mahdi al-Ahbabi, member of the Shura Council and chairman of the Permanent Committee for International Peace and Security of the Inter-Parliamentary Union.

The meeting was attended by Secretary-General of the Inter-Parliamentary Union Martin Chungong, and the heads of the permanent committees.

During the meeting, the agenda of the meeting committees of the Inter-Parliamentary Union was studied, and the meetings were programmed and co-ordinated.

The Standing Committee for International Peace and Security also began its meetings under the chairmanship of al-Ahbabi, and approved its agenda items as well as its brief report on the committee's activities approved at the previous session of the General Assembly of the Union held in Rwanda last

For his part, member of the Shura Council Eng. Ahmed bin Hitmi al-Hitmi, participated in the meeting of the Standing Chairperson

Committee for Sustainable Development, where it reviewed and approved its brief report on the committee's activities, approved at the previous session of the General Assembly of the Federation held in Rwanda last

It discussed the parliamentary efforts required to achieve environmental sustainability in forests and reduce carbon emissions, and reviewed the proposed draft resolution in this regard and the explanatory memorandum prepared by the rapporteurs.

In his intervention during the meeting, al-Hitmi highlighted the efforts of Qatar to reduce carbon emissions according to clear plans crystal-lised in the "Qatar National Strategy for the Environment and Climate Change."

The Council was also represented in the meeting of the Bureau of the Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights, by Dr Sultan bin Hassan Aldosari, member of the Council, as part of the work

of the 146th General Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Un-

During the meeting, the conferees discussed the comficking in orphans and the role of parliaments in confronting They discussed the draft

resolution on parliamentary momentum to combat misinformation and hateful and discriminatory content in cyberspace.

During the evening, the Council participated yesterday in the Young Parliamentarians Forum, represented by Omair bin Abdullah al-Nuaimi, member of the Council.

The meeting assessed the participation of youth at the national and international levels in parliaments and the latest developments in this regard.

The successes achieved and the challenges that hinder youth's work were reviewed in order to draw conclusions and make recommendations regarding them, in addition to reviewing the efforts of the Inter-Parliamentary Union in supporting youth participation and activating their role.

Earlier, the Shura Council on Saturday took part in the opening of the 146th General Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), with a delegation headed by Speaker of the Council HE Hassan bin Abdullah al-Ghanem. (QNA)

Civil Service and Government Development Bureau launches Ada'a system to upgrade govt sector performance

The Civil Service and Government Development Bureau launched the "Ada'a" system to upgrade the performance of the government sector in Qatar, in line with Qatar National Vision 2030.

The new system promotes work oriented towards achieving goals and results in all government sector practices in the country, which is reflected in the tasks that the employee performs throughout the year and becomes an opportunity for the employee to highlight his achievements and efforts in order to achieve the main goals.

HE the President of the Civil Service and Government Development Bureau Abdulaziz bin Nasser al-Khalifa said the Ada'a system constitutes an essential step towards the gradation and fragmentation of the strategic objectives at the State's level for sectoral goals, institutional goals, then goals at the level of administrative units and departments, and later at the individual goals level, thus highlighting the important role of each employee in achieving the national goals.

Every employee is important and plays a role within a team to achieve goals that fall within Qatar National Vision.

The role of the Ada'a system is to highlight this role and measure the extent of produc-



tivity clearly and transparently with continuous motivation and development. The purpose is to develop human resourc-

es, which is the most valuable investment and it is upto them to achieve Qatar National Vision 2030, he said.

He stressed the importance of developing performance systems for human resources and providing the appropriate environment for creativity, hard and distinguished work to achieve the requirements of comprehensive development in all government agen-

cies, noting: "In the context of the plans of the Civil Service and Government Development Bureau, we continue to co-ordinate with government agencies to build bridges of communication and continue introducing the methodology of the system, while clarifying the principles to build a future vision for the government sector, based on efficiency, innovation, respect, co-operation, responsibility, commitment and integrity at

In order to create a more efficient and productive work environment, the Ada'a system targets all entities subject to the civil human resources law, including employees of the government sector in all grades, from excellent and below, for whom, Ada'a presents a new stage to start a professional development journey.

Ada'a is a comprehensive evaluation system that allows employees to know their strengths and weaknesses, and how they can improve and develop them. Through this system, the employee's performance is measured in a transparent manner, whereby goals and performance indicators are agreed upon at the beginning of the year between the employee and his direct supervisor, and are followed up during the year. (QNA)

Assistant FM meets UK Minister of State for Middle East, South Asia and UN

HE the Assistant Foreign Minister Lolwah bint Rashid AlKhater met with Minister of State for the Middle East, South Asia and United Nations at the UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office Lord Taria Ahmad, on the sidelines of the "Women in Islam: Understanding the Rights and Identity of Women in the Islamic World" conference which



concluded in New York. The meeting discussed aspects of bilateral co-operation, mainly in the field of development, and the Afghan file. (QNA)

'Education City to be more sustainable'

By Joseph Varghese

everal tests have been conducted as part of a study at Qatar Foundation's (QF) Education City to continue making the place more sustainable and to reduce carbon reduction, which later can be applied at the national level, revealed a top official.

"The advantage of Education City is that it is a large place where we can conduct many experiments and the results can be applied in Qatar as a whole," Dr Gonzalo Castro de la Mata, executive director of Earthna Centre, a QF initiative, told the media recently.

"We have measured the carbon footprint in Education City. Now we know where the carbon is emitted and how to develop a strategy to lower the carbon emissions. We have the methodology and then we have the strategies to reduce the carbon emission.

"We have identified the sources of



Dr Gonzalo Castro de la Mata

carbon emission and what can be done about it. One of the areas of focus is efficiency of the buildings. So the buildings have to be well insulated. Another important area is lights that automatically go off. So installing those types of sensors is important and many of the buildings have that and we have to in-

stall them at places where such facility is not done already.

"Another area is water. When you desalinate water, a lot of carbon dioxide is emitted because of the use of energy. Therefore, you need to conserve water to reduce emissions. Some people don't think about water as a source of emissions. But in a country where water comes from desalination primarily, then of course you should consider it as source of emission," added the official.

"We have a strategy to continue making Education City more sustainable including the liveability of the city, allowing people to walk with shade and introducing solar panels to provide shade and to generate electricity. Landscaping is one of the areas we are going to move forward and of course some green rooftops too. Then we are planning to have some pilots and after that we can apply it to Doha as a whole," added Dr Castro de la Mata.

Qatar Charity's development projects launched in Tunisia





The projects included the handover of 42 social housing units and the opening of an education centre for special needs.

atar Charity (QC) launched many development projects in Tunisia, in the presence Qatar's ambassador Saad bin Nasser al-Humaidi, Mahdia governor Abdenattah Chakchouk, Kasserine governor Ridha Rokbani, and QC's International Programmes and Development Department director Abdulaziz Jassim Hejji.

These projects included the handover of 42 social housing units and the opening of an education centre for special needs, a statement said. Hejji handed over the housing units to low-income families in Mahdia to improve their living conditions.

He explained that 20 housing units will be handed over in the Tataouine Governorate, in the presence of the governor and many officials. Hejji thanked the Tunisian authorities concerned for providing the necessary facilities for the implementation of the projects. He stressed that QC will continue to implement several other development projects in the future. The education centre for special needs in Kasserine, is the first-of-its-kind in Thala town and neighbouring cities. The centre, built on an area of 500sq m, has many halls and offices. Ambassador al-Humaidi affirmed Qatar's readiness to support Tunisia in all fields, while noting the continuation of fruitful co-operation with Tunisia to implement a larger number of development and social projects.

QC has major contributions in Tunisia in all humanitarian fields, especially in social housing, economic empowerment, water, and food security, the envoy explained citing the numerous interventions in Kasserine.

Governor Rokbani appreciated the initiative by QC, which will enable people with special needs and autism patients in Thala to receive education. The opening ceremony saw a theatrical performance by the centre's children, in addition to an exhibition and video presentations about QC and its most prominent projects in Tunisia.

Conference discusses 'Causal Dynamics of Political Culture' among 10 topics

By Tawfik Lamari
Staff Reporter

The three-day Conference on Social and Human Sciences, being held by the Arab Centre for Research and Policy Studies, continued for the second day yesterday with 10 lectures across four sessions.

Dr Stephen Welch, honorary fellow at the School of Government and International Affairs at Durham University in Britain, gave an introductory lecture on the topic 'Causal Dynamics of Political Culture'.

Mohamed Hamshi, a researcher at the Arab Centre in Doha, spoke on 'Criticism of the theory of political culture in the Arab world.' He argued that the concept of cultural politics is not separate from the sociology of the history of concepts, given that it is a shift from reflections, which can be described as philosophical and linked to traditions dating back to Plato and Aristotle. In this regard, the researcher referred to the works of Stephen Welsh and Margaret Somers, then moved on to criticising the discourse of political culture theory, based on the works of Azmi Bishara.

On a related topic, Abdul Karim Amenkay gave a lecture titled 'Arab Culture between the Fields of Middle Eastern Studies and Contemporary Arab Thought: Are Cultural Essentialism and Heritage Criticism Two Sides of the Same Coin? The professor of political science at the Doha Institute for Graduate Studies (DI) proceeded from the observation that the cultural approach, which is one of the most important theoretical and analytical currents in the field of Middle East studies, has known ebbs and flows in the extent of its dominance over this field of American origin. and regained its strength in the wake of the fall of the eastern camp with the beginning of the 1990s.

The sixth session of the conference was devoted to philosophical approaches to political culture. Raja Bahloul, professor of philosophy at the DI, talked about 'Emotional Attitudes and Democratic



Dr Stephen Welch and Mohamed Hamshi at the conference yesterday. **PICTURE:** Shaji Kayamkulam

Political Culture; in which she started from a question about the possibility of a causal relationship between political culture and the political system.

Then, Mouldi Ezzedine, professor of philosophy at the University of Sfax, Tunisia, gave a lecture titled 'A Philosophical Contribution to Liberating the Values of Arab Political Culture from Ideological Culturalism', in which he made a critical philosophical distinction between a political culture and an ideological culture that theoretically and practically posed an extreme danger.

Differentiating between the two contexts, the limit of comparison between them is governed by the hope of opening up a possible way to liberate the society of the Arab countries from its ailment due to several factors, on top of which is the political practice that is contrary to the concepts of freedom and democracy.

The seventh session devoted approaches to political culture in the Iraqi, Syrian, and Palestinian cases. Rahaf al-Daghli initiated it with a paper entitled 'The Persistence of Tyranny through Political Culture: Forms of Loyalty and Subjectivity in Syrian Public Discourse? The director of research at the Harmon Centre for Contemporary Studies said it is important to consider how socialisation spreads under authoritarian regimes, and the influence of the political scene on the level of behaviour and attitudes of citizens. In dealing with the Palestinian situation marked by the division, Hassan Obaid talked about 'Reframing the Political Culture through Pierre Bourdieu's Social Theory: A Case Study of the Field and Capital Formation of the Hamas and Fatah Movements after the Division?

Al-Nasser Duraid, consultant at the Iraqi Centre for Strategic Studies, cFoncluded the session with a lecture titled 'The Phenomenon of Nostalgia in Politics in the Middle East: Iraq as a Case? He presented a definition of the phenomenon of nostalgia, and its causes, in a manner specifically related to the political culture in Iraq.

Abdelkader Abdelali, professor of political science and international relations at Dr Moulay El Taher University in Saida, presented the 'Political Culture, Social Cracks and Democracy: A Case Study of Algeria.' He shed light on the relationship between political culture and the structure of social cracks, and its impact on support for democracy, and its considerable importance in knowing the current status of the orientation towards

democracy in Algeria. Mohamed Naimi, professor of sociology at the Institute of Social Development in Rabat, presented 'Political Culture' and Protest Collective Action in the Context of the Arab Uprisings (2011-2019)? He analysed the issue of political culture among the Arab public during the 2011 and 2019 waves of the Arab uprisings, and showed how to build Collective action, and its dismantling within the Arab protest space in connection and interaction with the prevailing political culture(s) in the Arab world. The researcher concluded that it is useful to understand and explain the transition of this political behaviour from a state of relative submission to one of growing resistance, by adopting a social approach.

talabat hosts 'Leading Ladies Gathering' event in Doha



Mary Haii

alabat, the region's leading local tech platform, hosted the 'Leading Ladies Gathering' event in Doha on March 8, on the occasion of International Women's Day (IWD).

This comes as part of the company's ongoing commitment to recognise women at the workplace, who comprise 60% of its senior leadership team in Qatar, a press statement

Through this event, talabat brought together influential business women and advocates to share their success stories, discuss challenges and perspectives on career growth and development.

Held under this year's theme for IWD, #EmbraceEquity, the session provided a platform for attendees to discuss career journeys, accomplishments, challenges and opportunities to build a successful career path. At talabat, women lead key functions across the organisation that include Communications, Marketing, Business Development, Partnerships, Human Resources, Account Management and t-Mart. On a daily basis, these women along with colleagues across the organisation, bring their professional expertise and passion to drive everyday success and help achieve company goals together.

Mary Haji, Marketing head at talabat, said: "As a woman in leadership, I understand and empathise



From the talabat IWD event.

firsthand with the challenges that women face in the workplace. I acknowledge the extra effort and resilience that each of them show in overcoming these obstacles. At talabat, we are committed to prioritising the creation of a supportive and inclusive work environment where everyone can thrive and grow."

As a leading local tech platform with a strong focus on employee development and growth, talabat has implemented a number of policies that support the career growth of women at the workplace. One of these programmes focuses on leadership-development, and engages employees to deepen their skills and adopt a growth mindset, while embracing a leadership mindset and inspiring the next generation of female leaders at the organisation.

Recent joiner of talabat Clairin Rolland added that "as a new graduate, talabat has been very supportive in helping kick-start my career with a nurturing environment. talabat is an amazing platform for me to discover and develop my potential, and I do feel that I can also be a change agent with a positive impact in the community."

Francisco Miguel De Sousa,

managing director of talabat Qatar, said: "At talabat, providing a supporting and empowering company culture, and an environment that supports career development is a top priority for us. While this has hugely benefited women who are part of the talabat family, we recognise that a larger collective effort is required to further encourage many more

age many more.

"This event builds on our ambition to further support women at the workplace and to recognise their success stories at talabat, as they comprise 60% of our senior leadership team here in Qatar. We are proud of their journeys, and to highlight their successful career paths driven by their ambition and dedication".

Over the years, talabat has built a supportive and empowering work environment for its employees, where women continue to find ongoing support to ensure a healthy work/life balance - with many highlighting flexibility at the workplace as one of the top benefits of working at talabat. Additionally, talabat is one of few private organisations across Qatar that offer a 90-day maternity leave to employees, the statement added.

BEVERLY HILLS B2B SOLUTIONS WINS WHIRLPOOL TOP DISTRIBUTOR AWARD

For Best B2B Performance in the Middle East & North Africa Region



Sheikh Abdulla Bin Khalid Nasser Hamad Al Thani (second from left) receives the award from Mr. Mourad Alem (second from right) in the presence of Mr. Pradeesh Kumar, General Manager - KBN Group Holding (left) and Mr. Rajesh Balachandran, Regional Sales Manager, Whirlpool Corporation - Middle East (right).

Beverly Hills B2B Solutions, has received the Whirlpool Top Distributor Award for Best B2B Performance in the Middle East & North Africa Region for the year 2022.

Sheikh Abdulla Bin Khalid Nasser Hamad Al Thani, Vice Chairman of KBN Group Holding, received the award from Mr. Mourad Alem, General Manager of Whirlpool Corporation – South East Europe, Middle East & Africa.

Mr. Pradeesh Kumar, General Manager of KBN Group Holding and Mr. Rajesh Balachandran, Regional Sales Manager of Whirlpool Corporation Middle East were also present.

"We are happy to receive this prestigious award in our very first year of full-fledged operation with Whirlpool Corporation," said Sheikh Abdulla Bin Khalid Nasser Hamad Al Thani. Founded by the Late H.E. Sheikh Khalid Bin Nasser Hamad Al Thani, KBN Group Holding owns several premium residential compounds that offer quality living, including Beverly Hills Gardens, Beverly Hills Towers and various Beverly Hills Apartment buildings in prime areas of Doha. Through their own and joint ventures with partners, the group also has a strong portfolio of commercial real estate, including prestigious properties like Place Vendôme Mall, Agora Doha Autograph Collection by Marriott, Al Asmakh Mall and Les Maison Blanches Lusail etc. As part of their diversification plans, KBN Group had

As part of their diversification plans, KBN Group had partnered with Whirlpool Corporation, the world's leading home appliances company in 2021.

"With Whirlpool, we can meet all kitchen and laundry requirements of important customers with one brand. In the past 18 months, we have completed over 50 projects in Qatar," said Mr. Pradeesh Kumar.



Beverly Hills Real Estate Investment Beverly Hills Maintenance & Services Master Distribution Company Beverly Hills B2B Solutions Technology Beverly Hills Pools & Landscaping

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Qatar Creates invites public to attend series of panels, tours, exhibitions

Oatar residents and visitors will have the opportunity to experience the "very best of Qatar's creative industries, as well as international contributions," with Qatar Creates' series of panels, curator-led tours, and new exhibitions.

The year-round national cultural movement curates, promotes, and celebrates the diversity of cultural activities in the country, recently revealed its upcoming spring and summer public programme for showcasing art, culture, and creativity. The 2023 Tasweer Photo Festival Oatar (March 17-May 20) will see the opening

of a series of exhibitions that amplify diverse practices and dialogues of photographers and photographic communities in Qatar and the Western Asia and North Africa (WANA) region.

The 2023 Tasweer Exhibitions and Installations to be showcased are: I Am The Traveler And Also The Road - Mathaf (Opening on March 17), Mashael al-Hejazi: My Mother Lulwa's House - Majlis Barahat al-Jufairi (Opening March 15), Hadeer Omar: And Thereafter - Al Koot Fort (Opening March 15), Doha Fashion Fridays Exhibition - Gallery 3, M7 (Opening March 15), and A Chance To Breathe Exhibition - Gallery 3, M7 (Opening March

Opening at Mathaf: Arab Museum of Modern Art on March 17 is Beirut and the Golden Sixties: A Manifesto of Fragility, a multidisciplinary exhibition co-curated by Sam Bardaouil and Till Fellrath that revisits a turbulent chapter in the development of modernism in Beirut, spanning the 1958 Lebanon Crisis to 1975 Lebanese

Opening on March 19 is Curious Desert. Icelandic-Danish artist Olafur Eliasson's

first solo exhibition in the Gulf region, brings together a dozen new site-specific installations located near the Al Thakhira Mangrove in northern Qatar and an extensive gallery presentation at the National Museum of Qatar (NMoQ). The outdoor installation consists of 12 temporary pavilions that Eliasson considers to form an artistic laboratory in the desert. At the NMoQ, the gallery portion of the exhibition features artworks from different periods of Eliasson's career and in a wide range of media.

Events as part of Curious Desert include

'Art and the Environment: Awareness and Action' - Panel Discussion Olafur Eliasson in conversation with Eng Ahmad al-Sadaa, Dr Aspa D Chatziefthimiou, Reem al-Shlawi, and Neema Githere - March 19, 3pm - 4pm, NMoQ.

Olafur Eliasson in conversation with Qatar Museums Chairperson HE Sheikha Al Mayassa bint Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani, HE the Minister of Environment and Climate Change Dr Sheikh Faleh bin Nasser bin Ahmed bin Ali al-Thani and Ghanim al-Ghanim - March 18, 4,30pm to 5.30pm, NMoO.

Open Studios (Artist in Residence 7). March 17, 4pm - 7pm, Fire Station. In this edition, Open Studios will include participants from multiple active programmes at the Fire Station such as Artists in Residence (AIR7), Curator in Residence, Ruwad residency, and Fannon/Emerge residency (a collaboration with VCUarts Qatar). During the event, studios will be open, and artists will be present to showcase their recent work and research. The studios are located on the first, third, fourth and fifth floors of the main building.

Kahramaa concludes activities of 6th edition of Tarsheed Carnival

atar General Electricity & Water Corporation (Kahramaa), represented by the National Program for Conservation and Energy Efficiency (Tarsheed), concluded the Tarsheed Carnival 2023 in its sixth edition at the Kahramaa Awareness Park. The activities lasted from March 7 to 11.

Kahramaa said in a statement yesterday that the annual Tarsheed Carnival is one of the most important sustainability and environmental awareness events held in the country, where the efforts of the Tarsheed Program and the supporting and collaborating agencies in the field of sustainability and energy are presented in line with Qatar National Vision 2030. The activities target students in the morning session and the general public in the evenings, by focusing on the importance of reducing water and electricity



Dignitaries at the event.

consumption, which in turn is reflected in the environment and its preservation.

This year's events were held at four sustainable venues, including the Kahramaa Awareness Park, the main event site, Msheireb Downtown Doha and the Oxygen Park of Qatar Foundation, in addition to Aspire Park.

It also included many awareness activities, including: lectures and workshops using environmentally friendly and recycled materials, interactive paragraphs and competitions on Tarsheed stage, and the sustainability bazaar that displays environmentally friendly products.

The Director of Marketing and Communication, at Msheireb Properties, Dr Hafez Ali Ali, said environmental sustainability is a major pillar of community service in Qatar, pointing out that Msheireb shares this vision by presenting a sustainable model city at Msheireb Downtown Doha.

The National Program for Conservation and Energy Efficiency (Tarsheed) comes within the framework of keenness to implement the best standards of rationalisation and promote a rational culture among the public. (QNA)

HMC honours Ashghal



Medical Corporation has honoured the Public **Works Authority** (Ashghal) for its special contribution in supporting the health sector during FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022. Ashghal tweeted that engineer Yousef al-Emadi. director of Projects Affairs, received the award.

The Hamad

Centara West Bay announces Ramadan culinary offerings

Centara West Hotel & Residence Doha has announced a variety of culinary offerings for the upcoming Ramadan.

There is selection of Iftar, Ghabga and Suhour options from Arabic and Indian specialties, a statement said vesterday.

Ghabga under the stars at The Mezze House Tent features a combination of live BBQ stations along with a buffet and traditional local delicacies including Chef's traditional & international selections, served from sunset to 12.30am.

Iftar sharing menu at Dalchini will feature the diversity of India's regional cuisines in a Ramadan menu with both vegetarian and non-vegetarian dishes. In addition, there is a selection of special Iftar sharing

Home delivered or takeaway Iftar box will have Arabic and Indian delicacies. Each box is inclusive of hot and cold mezzes, main courses, and desserts. Home delivery and takeaway are available from 12noon to 9pm, including free delivery for areas within West Bay and Pearl with minimum order of two boxes.

available from Creative Catering by Centara, which serves menu options of Arabic cuisine and international delicacies

Thai Kitchen, Bondi Burgers, Biryani Box and Dalchini A la carte menus are also available on delivery apps including Talabat, Snoonu, Rafeeq and Deliveroo. More information is available by calling 4009 5530 or through WhatsApp 3001 5360.





HBKU CIS signs agreement with International University of Africa

The College of Islamic Studies (CIS) at Hamad Bin Khalifa University (HBKU) has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the International University of Africa (IUA) to collaborate on research in the fields of humanitarianism conflict resolution, and related areas

agree to explore opportunities for joint research activities, publications, library exchanges, lectures and talks, as well as invitations to scholars from both institutions to participate in seminars, conferences and workshops.

The agreement also established



Officials at the signing ceremony.

a framework for sharing academic literature in the chosen research fields as well as exchanging faculty members and students for study, teaching, and research.

"This agreement strengthens both institutions' expertise in critical research areas while offering opportunities for faculty and students to exchange knowledge across our universities. In line with HBKU's innate dedication to dialogue, CIS overcomes borders to facilitate expertise and build capacity in Qatar and beyond," said Dr Recep Senturk, dean, CIS.

Liquidation Announcement (2)

Based on the Extraordinary General Assembly Resolution

To Liquidate

Ready Mix Beton Qatar W.L.L.

(the "Company") (Under Voluntary Liquidation)

The Liquidator Rami Mohammad Ali Qudah

Deloitte & Touche - Qatar Branch

Announce the liquidation of

Ready Mix Beton Qatar W.L.L. **Commercial Registration No. (27008)**

Any party who has any claims from this Company should send a registered letter including all supporting documents to P.O. Box 431, Doha - Qatar, within the remaining legal period.

HMC to host forum on quality and safety in healthcare

ore than 3,000 healthcare professionals will gather in-person and virtually in Doha from March 16 to 19 for the Middle East Forum on Ouality and Safety in Healthcare 2023.

Now in its 10th year, the forum is the biggest event of its kind in the region, will be held at the Sheraton Grand Doha. The event is again hosted by Hamad Medical Corporation (HMC), in collaboration with the Institute for Healthcare Improvement.

This year's event will focus on Healthcare Resilience in Extraordinary Times with five learning tracks for attendees: Improvement Science; Person-Centered Care; Flow, Safety and Value Improvement; Leadership, Resilience and Sustainability and Population Health.

For the first time, this year's event will include 11 excursions for attendees, two of which will highlight the key role played by the healthcare sector in the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022. The two excursions are: Specialised Care for Athletes and Major Incident Response Preparedness.

Registered attendees will be able to see first-hand the healthcare system's response to the World Cup, including the National Health Incident Command Centre as well as touring Al

Speakers for the event include Prof Jason Leitch, national clinical director of the Scottish Government; Kedar Mate, is the president and CEO at the Institute for Healthcare Improvement; and Dr Abdullatif al-Khal, deputy chief medical officer at HMC.

Janoub Stadium.



Race Towards a Healthy Heart HAYYA RUN 2023 on 17th March



atar: On Friday, the torch tower near the Aspire Zone, all acclaimed for its leading role in sports in Qatar, will see a day of fast legs sprinting in speed. Raheep Media, in association with Naseem Health Care, is organizing a running race on March 17th, Friday, under the theme, "Let's take a step for a healthier heart." The race starts at 6:30 in the morning, and everyone, irrespective of caste, creed, and gender, will race on a single track for a singular cause.

Children above the age of 3 will be participating in the mini-kids level of the race, and the masters level will have people even older than 60 as its participants. The first, second, and third place winners will be presented with awards. All the contestants will be provided with t-shirts and medals for their enthusiastic

participation. Also, a "fun run" for a distance of 1 km is being organized for the general



The logo launch of the programme was performed by EP Abdul Rahman, the President of Indian Sports Center, during an event held at the Ibis Hotel, Doha. The video launch for the Hayya Run was done by Dr. Sabu KC, Advertising Controller of Gulf Times. Also present at the event were: Anwar Hussain (Head of Branding and CSR, Naseem Healthcare),

Sanket Medhekar (Corporate Relations and Marketing Manager, Naseem Healthcare), Iqbal Abdullah (Branding and CSR Assistant Manager, Naseem Healthcare), Sandeep G. Nair (Corporate Relations Assistant Manager, Naseem Healthcare), Shafi Parakal (Managing Director, Raheep Media), Ajith Kumar (Division Manager, City Gym), and Shabir KK (General Manager, Festival Limousine). The media partners for the Hayya Run, 2023, Gulf Times, Radio Malavalam, and the Oatar representatives for Radio Mirchi were also present at the

Radio Malayalam Marketing Head, Naufal Abdul Rahman, Radio Mirchi Oatar Business Director, Arunlakshmanan, Hayya Run 2023 Program Director, Rafeeq RV, and Radio Malayalam 98.6 RJ, Thushara,



Ooredoo Group & companies corner glory for socially responsible investing

vironmental, social and governance (ESG) report for 2022, Ooredoo Group announced yesterday the great strides it has achieved in its Socially Responsible Investing, a key facet of ESG.

The adoption of ESG principles has long been a significant aim for Ooredoo and the company's growing commitment to achieve in this area is reflected in a wide range of socially responsible initiatives. Within the 'Social' element, the company has particularly focused on the areas of empowering women, promoting gender equality, reducing the gender gap, promoting equal opportunities and pay, and developing talent across the company.

Fatima Sultan al-Kuwari, Group Chief Human Resources officer at Ooredoo, said: "Ooredoo is committed to the highest standards of environmental protection, social impact and good governance, looking to build a sustainable legacy for all. One of our top priorities is empowering our workforce. We recognise the importance of harnessing human potential and focus on providing equal opportunities, securing gender equality, investing in our talents, and ensuring a healthy and safe work environment for

Women empowerment is a



COMMITTED: "Ooredoo is looking to build a sustainable legacy for all," says Fatima Sultan al-Kuwari.

mainstay of Ooredoo's strategy, with a focus on equal pay and treatment, equal representation on leadership teams and corporate boards, and equal access to training and career-building opportunities.

Based on the company's Human Resources Policy and commitment to equal opportunity, initiatives specifically designed to bring women into the workplace and enable them to access and use information technologies in a way that works for them were launched at Ooredoo Group and across operating companies.

Ooredoo is committed to investing in the development of young national leaders, focusing on training, development, and

vidual development plans, management and leadership development programmes, as well as coaching and mentoring, are all in place to help the company develop and retain its best people.

Ooredoo's overall coaching and mentoring programme at the group level and across companies have seen some 63 participants being closely coached and 250 participants being mentored. Seeing the great response to this programme, Ooredoo is now launching its own Ooredoo Learning Academy that aims to upskill and reskill employees in a rapidly changing industry.

Ooredoo's HR Policy ensures that all applicants and employees, regardless of race, colour, marital status, parental status, ancestry, source of income, religion, gender, age, national origin or disability, have equal opportunities in hiring, promotion, transfer, compensation, benefits, and all other employment deci-

To promote employees' wellbeing, Ooredoo has launched major initiatives to increase their engagement and upgrade their experience in the workplace.

Among these initiatives was the introduction of the Organisational Health Index (OHI) in 2020 at the group level and across operating companies in Qatar,

Kuwait, Oman, Algeria, Tunisia, Maldives, Iraq, and Palestine.

This company-wide effort has encouraged a strong employee engagement culture, further strengthening Ooredoo's unity across borders, fostering the feeling of belonging to a 'one Ooredoo; and enabling everyone to align around and achieve strategic goals, as well as sustain positive performance.

Based on McKinsey's OHI, Ooredoo Group has seen its score increase steadily from being in the second quartile in 2020 to reaching the top quartile in 2022 compared to other companies, improving by six points since the company started using the measurement. With an overall OHI score of 79, Ooredoo's employees have a relatively high level of satisfaction.

Another important initiative was Ooredoo Group, Ooredoo Qatar and Ooredoo Maldives implementing a more agile way of working with the introduction of flexible hours to enhance worklife balance. Ooredoo Group has also given its employees the possibility to work from home in Qatar or abroad for up to four weeks in a row per year. In addition, Ooredoo Group and a number of its companies around the world have drastically improved paternity leaves, sick leaves, family escort leaves and study leaves.

Ooredoo customers to unlock 'great deals' this Ramadan

UNLOCK **TOGETHER** THIS UPGRADE YOUR WORLD RAMADAN

Enjoy EXTRA data, minutes and deals during the Holy Month

ooredoo'

Ooredoo has announced a raft of offers and promotions as part of its annual campaign to celebrate the holy month of Ramadan. This year's campaign - under the theme 'Connecting and Giving' - includes a host of special offers across Ooredoo's many products and services, including roaming deals for customers travelling for Umrah; offers on both prepaid and postpaid plans: free access to four Islamic channels via Ooredoo tv; special deals on devices at the Ooredoo eShop and across its retail shop network; and extra points for members of its loyalty programme, Nojoom, as well as exclusive Iftar and Sohour offers for Al Nokhba members.

Sheikh Ali bin Jabor al-Thani, CEO of Ooredoo Qatar, said: "We're delighted to announce our many special offers and promotions for this holy month of Ramadan. We have designed our offers to help our customers stay connected with their friends and loved ones throughout Ramadan, and enjoy spending time together. In our drive to upgrade our customers' worlds, we are constantly looking for ways in which we can offer extra value for money, and ensure our customers feel valued and rewarded for their loyalty." Shahry 5G and Qatarna 5G customers heading

to Saudi Arabia for Umrah during the holy month can use their plan allowances for roaming while in the country. The telco leader's prepaid Hala customers will

benefit from an extra 1GB data, valid for one day, at no extra cost when they recharge their Hala line with OR10 or above via the Ooredoo App or via Ooredoo Money. With Ooredoo ty, customers will be gifted

access to Islamic channels through its Ooredoo ONE broadband and entertainment service. All customers, new and existing, can take advantage of this complimentary service and enjoy four religious channels for free during this special time of year. Customers have the opportunity the unlock exclusive partner vouchers when they play the Ramadan Cannon game via the official app. They will also be in with a chance to win 1mn Nojoom Points in a prize draw. Ooredoo Money customers making international transfers with MoneyGram via Ooredoo Money during Ramadan will be entered into a weekly draw to win QR5,000, with a total prize fund of QR750,000 on offer. Customers wishing to upgrade their worlds with new devices will find special prices on a range of brands, including Apple, Samsung and My-Fi, and on a range of devices from smartphones and wearables to tablets and home Wi-Fi devices. Purchases can be made at the Ooredoo eShop and across the retail

network. With the theme of 'Connecting and Giving' this Ramadan, customers can donate to Ooredoo's valued charity partners with the Nojoom points they have earned this year. The offers and extra benefits will be available from the first day of Ramadan. Sheikh Ali concluded: "We hope everyone enjoys connecting with friends, family and loved ones during this holy month, and that we all take the opportunity to find ways in which we can share the spirit of giving among our communities. We wish all our customers a safe, blessed and peaceful Ramadan, and

thank them for placing their trust in Ooredoo."

Al Mana Group opens the first-ever dedicated Ford Truck Showroom in Qatar



l Mana Automotive, the exclusive dealer of Ford in Qatar, proudly declared open an only one of its kind, dedicated Ford Truck Showroom on February 15, 2023.

Located at Gate No. 49, Street No. 16 in the Industrial Area, Doha, the Ford Truck Showroom is a state-ofthe-art facility which offers a host of services to its customers. Given the continuously rising interest in this world renown brand, and the growth prospects for reliable. versatile, heavy-duty trucks, Al Mana Automotive captured the first mover advantage and set up the facility to serve Qatar's market.

The Al Mana Group has a trusted reputation for being at the forefront

of offering value added services to its customers. This was proved by the multiple services made available at the new Ford Truck Showroom, Technical Workshop and Parts Support, Mobile Service for Remote Locations, On-Site Breakdown Assistance, Recovery, Washing, and Vehicle Replacement.

The grand opening was attended

by Mr. Badr Al Mana, President of Tariq Al Mana, Vice President of Mr. Bahattin Topçu, Managing Director of M. East & Africa for Ford

Al Mana Automotive Group, Mr. Al Mana Automotive Group, Al Mana Automotive Managers, VIP guests, and members of the media. Representing Ford at the opening were Mr. Dave Johnston, Deputy General Manager of Ford Otosan,



Trucks, Mr. Burak Kalali, Regional Sales Manager, Amer Omar Hassan, Director-Group Sales & Marketing, and Mohammed Afnaz, Brand Manager of Ford Trucks.

Addressing the media Mr. Badr Al Mana, President of Al Mana Automotive Group said, '

We are delighted to take the lead in the market and open the firstever Ford Truck Showroom in Oatar. The facility is a testament to our commitment to providing our customers with the best-in-class services and products. We believe that our customers will appreciate the new facility and the range of services that we are offering. With this new initiative, Al Mana Automotive has taken yet another leap ahead. We set this showroom up as a centre of excellence with an aim to provide an extraordinary experience to Ford Truck customers in Qatar and we are certain our current customers will not only appreciate it but this will also attract new customers and draw them toward the brand".

The Ford Truck Showroom is a one-stop-shop for all Ford Truck customers in Oatar, providing them with an unmatched experience. Customers can now visit the showroom to view the latest range of Ford Trucks and avail themselves of a host of services. The showroom's highly trained staff will ensure that customers receive the best-in-class service, making the Ford Truck ownership experience truly exceptional.

In addition to the range of





services on offer, the Ford Truck Showroom also features a stateof-the-art workshop facility, equipped with the latest technology to ensure that all Ford Trucks are serviced to the highest standards.

The workshop is staffed by highly trained technicians, who have been trained by Ford to provide the best possible service to customers.

The opening of the Ford Truck Showroom marks a significant milestone for Al Mana Automotive, as it continues to expand its presence in Qatar. The Al Mana Automotive Group has been the exclusive dealer of Ford in Qatar for over three decades and has established itself as a leading automotive dealership in the country. The new Ford Truck Showroom is another step towards providing the best possible services to its customers and further cements Al Mana Automotive's position as a leading automotive dealer in Oatar. The Service Department of the facility is open from Saturday to Thursday from 7 a.m. to 4 p.m. and the Sales department is open from Sunday to Thursday from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.





OATAR

EAA pledges \$53mn to help 709,060 children

■ ducation Above All (EAA) and its programmes had ■ a successful week at the United Nations fifth Least Developed Countries (LDC5) Conference, which concluded in Doha on March 9.

EAA Foundation is committed to giving 709,060 out-ofschool children access to quality education. The total budget for these projects is \$53mn with the support of the Qatar Fund for Development (QFFD), the Asian Development Bank and more than six partners.

As well as taking part in a variety of panel discussions on everything from gender equality to online universities and vouth climate action, the OFFD signed four MoUs with Senegal, Bangladesh, Liberia and Burkina

The projects will address the need for clean water, food for students and teachers, and proper sanitation. It will also offer awareness campaigns for parents and teach them the importance of education and its links to combating problems such as child labour and dropout rates. Project leaders will work with local communities and influential personalities and will try and address issues such as



From the recently held LDC5.

student registration systems and solving overcrowded classrooms. Another big success of the

LDC5 conference, was a cosigning between EAA and Unesco. It was agreed upon for a joint advocacy for implementing the Unesco Qualifications Passport programme at the regional, Mena and international levels. It aims to address persistent challenges and constraints for forcibly displaced populations trying to access higher education.

EAA's panel discussions were attended by global leaders and ministers from Africa and Asia throughout the week. Ministers

of education from Bangladesh and Pakistan attended EAA's discussion on gender and equality, hosted along with its programme Protect Education in Insecurity and Conflict.

EAA - along with its programme Educate A Child - discussed ways to improve teaching in Burkina Faso, while eight countries participated in a ministerial roundtable on outof-school-children sharing information from Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Liberia, Malawi, Nigeria, Senegal, Pakistan and

the State of Palestine. EAA also included youth voices across all of its panel discussions, especially through its Reach Out To Asia event on how "green skills" can combat climate change challenges and youth unemployment.

Speaking on the final day of the event, CEO of EAA Foundation, Fahad al- Sulait said: "We are proud of our achievements at the LDC5 conference, but there is still a lot of work to do. We must now turn these conversations into concrete plans and solutions and continue our commitment to our sustainability goal, which is quality education for everyone." (ONA)



UDST organises 'Festival of Cultures' to celebrate its diversity

University of Doha for Science and Technology (UDST) held its annual Festival of Cultures event to celebrate the multiculturalism and diversity of its community, consisting of more than 70 nationalities.

Organised by Student Engagement, a division of Student Affairs, the two-day festival was inaugurated in the presence of ambassadors and other representatives from various embassies alongside UDST's students, faculty, staff and their families. Close to 10,000 people visited the campus.

Student participants were given the freedom to decorate their booth in a way that best represents their country, its values and traditions. Attendees were also encouraged to come dressed in their traditional attire and enjoy various artistic and cultural activities from the represented student countries: Oatar, Bangladesh Egypt, France, India, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Malaysia, Morocco, Nepal, Pakistan, Palestine, Philippines, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Turkiye and Yemen.

The two-day festival also featured the university's talents as students presented cultural dances and musical ensemble performances.

Dr Salem Al-Naemi, president of UDST said: "Our university is a melting pot of diverse individuals who each have a heritage and a culture to share. UDST places high importance on inclusivity and we encour age our community members to engage in different extra-curricular activities that will help them interact



vith their peers, learn and grow not only academically but also on the personal level. This year we invited the public to come onto our campus to learn about the many countries that are represented here." The Festival of Cultures event closed with many awards, including a prize for first, second and third Best Cultural Dress and the winner was Somalia. "Best Booth" was awarded to India.

First, second and third prizes were also given for "Best Performance" and the winner was the Philippines

MDD organises guest tours to showcase sustainability features

sheireb Properties organised special tours recently to highlight its sustainability features on the sidelines of the 2023 Earthna Summit, recently hosted at Msheireb Downtown Doha

The Msheireb tram enabled visitors to learn first-hand about the sustainability elements of the city and its facilities, as well as the city's key landmarks. The tram has won many awards, including the Global Light Rail Awards 2020, for adopting a zero-carbon sustainability approach.

services in the MDD throughout the day, with an average of one trip every 12 minutes.

MDD, a fully sustainable



Msheireb tram enabled visitors to learn first-hand about the sustainability elements of the city.

est concentrations of gold or Platinum LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) certified sustainable

Some of the inspiring features in MDD include the orientation of the streets to capture the cool breeze from the Arabian

Gulf and shade most pedestrian routes from the hot sun. Buildings are massed uniquely to shade one another, and lightcoloured to reduce cooling requirements.

The city is also designed to reduce at least 30% of its total energy consumption, through enhanced building envelopes of walls and windows, recessed windows, energy recovery to the outside air entering the building, and a high-efficiency district cooling plant.

MDD relies on solar energy produced through photovoltaic solar panels and solar hot water rooftop solar panels have been installed to provide onsite energy generation and 1,400 solar panels to secure hot water.



Qumra 2023 focus on Qatar projects.

Qatar filmmakers highlight role of Qumra in building a strong national film, creative industry

atar-based filmmakers have highlighted the role of Qumra in building a strong national film and creative industry that enables them to fulfil their cinematic aspirations as well as take their projects to a global audience.

Oumra 2023 is nurturing 13 homegrown projects by filmmakers in Qatar, including features and short films. Seven of these films are by Qatari nation-

More than 200 industry professionals, including five eminent Qumra Masters are supporting their script-to-screen journey through in-person meetings, workshops, and masterclasses.

At a media briefing, the filmmakers said the Doha Film Institute (DFI) serves as a crucial resource that enables them to understand more about the entire film ecosystem - from scripting to financing, production, post-production, marketing, distribution and showcasing their films at international film

Mohamed A al-Suwaidi, director of Alagiq: Darkness of Media (Qatar) said his project, supported by the Qatari Film Fund, is distinctive in content and style. The film is co-directed by Kummam al-Maadeed and is set in a city warped by social media and technology.

Kummam al-Maadeed said the film deals with a very important topic - social media - using superhero characters to explore solutions. She said her skills in writing stories helped her cut a pathway in films and is focused on creating a project with a local flavour.

Nadia al-Khater, who is directing Continuity [working title] (Qatar) says Qumra has been important for her in receiving feedback from men-tors. "Many film festivals have specific priorities and gaining an understanding of what is relevant and cutting edge in cinema is important to me as a filmmaker as we want to create a film that is original and fresh." Eiman Mirghani, director of

Villa 187 (Sudan, Qatar), is participating in Qumra for the third year. "The DFI is like family to me, and I have been participating in several workshops over the past six years. Their support has opened my eyes to many aspects regarding filmmaking, such as grants and connecting to organisations that help directors develop their craft. "

Obada Jarbi, director of Bel Falstini (Lebanon, Qatar), said Qumra has opened new horizons and helps him expand his thinking to explore new ideas and make the film more compelling.

Karim Emara, director of Holy Feet (US, Egypt, Qatar), said, "Qumra not only helps filmmakers in gaining feedback on your script as well as opens opportunities for financing and production support, but also helps in developing connections. We are creating a hub and a family; even though I reside in America I can always connect with them."

Qatar Diabetes Association launches Al-Tahadi Diabetes Camp

Oatar Diabetes Association (ODA) has launched its 7th 'Al-Tahadi Diabetes Camp' targeting adolescent males living with Type 1

The camp at Qatar Scouts and Guides Association, being attended by 30 boys aged 12-15 years from Qatar, Oman, and Kuwait, will continue until March 16. Dolphin Energy is the

The four-day camp includes several educational workshops, sports, motivation. trips, and leisure activities, with a team of experts, dietitians, and educators from QDA being on hand to help the participants learn about day-to-day care and to enhance their skills in self-care and diabetes management.

Al-Tahadi camp is one of the most important



initiatives organised by QDA to support adolescents living with Type 1 diabetes. It helps them lead healthier, and more productive

lives through successful diabetes manage-

Different factors, such as genetics and some viruses, may cause Type 1 diabetes. Although there is no cure for Type1 diabetes, there are new medicines and technologies that are allowing people of all ages to live full, healthy, and productive lives.

Dr Abdullah al-Hamaq, executive director, QDA, said: "The camp is designed to provide the participants with the support and care they need to keep diabetes in check while enjoying their teenage years, and by adjusting insulin levels, diet, and lifestyle, diabetes complications can be prevented. Moreover, it is necessary for them to know their role in society, get involved in their community, and develop their personalities."

Surround yourself with best, Qumra Master Parfitt advises filmmakers

cademy Award winning producer and Oumra Master David Parfitt drew on his four decades of experience in filmmaking at his masterclass at Qumra 2023, encouraging young filmmakers and producers to surround themselves with the best professionals and invest in the creative process not just in budget management.

At the annual talent incubator event for Arab and international cinema organised by the Doha Film Institute (DFI), Parfitt shared extensive anecdotes from his career, including his lifelong friendship with actor and filmmaker Kenneth Branagh and his rewarding journey of producing acclaimed films such as Henry V (1989), Peter's Friends (1992), Much Ado About Nothing (1993),

Shakespeare in Love (1998) that won seven Academy Awards, My Week with Marilyn (2011), Loving Vincent (2017), which was supported by DFI, and The Father (2020), among others.

Parfitt's masterclass was defined by an unwavering passion for cinema and theatre, in equal measure. Although he started his career as a child actor, Parfitt says by the time he was 15, he didn't want to be an actor, but his acting experience gave him the background "to understand film-

making enough to be a producer." Yet he insists he only knows film production the way he does it. "I learn on every production, and I have done a lot of things wrong. It is a management job, which I took from my parents, who were in retail business." But Parfitt is not just into the business of management. As he advised Qumra delegates, "being involved and investing in the creative process is important."

That has also defined his cinematic journey as a producer, starting off with Kenneth Branagh, who he says, "is responsible for me being in film at all." As cast members in a theatre group, they had plenty of time to themselves. "We were planning our escape since young actors in theatre then had no control on their careers."

Five years later in 1986, they realised their dream with the launch of the Renaissance Theatre Company and moved into producing plays as well as their first film production, Henry V. They also produced the Academy Award nominated live action



short film, Swan Song (1992) with the legendary Sir John Gielgud, shot over a weekend using a prize money Branagh had won.

Parfitt says it was one of the most intense working periods of his life as he was also producing Peter's Friends, done only to support the distributors of *Henry* V, which was a commercial disappointment. "Our distributors were sceptical of another Shakespeare adaptation we were producing, Much Ado About Nothing. We shot Peter's Friends, a comedy, on a fairly low budget in four weeks and the film was a huge hit in Europe."

Parfitt says there is a distinctive edge to working with theatre actors "as they learn the whole lines and don't need multiple takes. They know what they must do from day one." Describing screen actors as "a different breed," Parfitt observes that, "they like to discover in the moment; the result can be extremely brilliant or terribly frustrating." Parfitt describes himself as

being "staggeringly lucky with breaks at all stages" of his career, more so in realising Shakespeare in Love, initially planned with Julia Roberts to play Viola. She had insisted that Daniel Dey-Lewis play Shakespeare. But some four years later, several actors considered for the lead, and \$20mn sitting in the books, no progress was made. Following discussions with many studios, Parfitt eventually went on to produce Shakespeare in Love, which starred Joseph Fiennes as Shakespeare and Gwyneth Paltrow as Viola. The film was a commercial and

critical hit. He says producing Loving Vincent was a one-of-a-kind experi-

ence for him, a film in which every frame was oil-painted by hand. "We had over 150 artists working in cubicles, over 18 months, painting every single frame of the film we shot. We had contribution from here (in Doha) that made the crowdfunded film possible."

Being diplomatic is part of being a producer, he tells young filmmakers. "But there is no need to take stress. I find things are quite calm when you get to the sets; crises tend to happen in the leadup."

He also advices aspiring producers not to go out too early for financing. "Take a step back, invest in the creative process and don't panic. Do not force your decisions on others; always surround yourself with the best professionals and you are protected."

Hungarian minister hails Qatar stance on peaceful dialogue to resolve disputes

inister of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Hungary Peter Szijjarto stressed the depth of relations between Hungary and Qatar, which are based on mutual respect through their keenness on the sovereignty of states and non-interference in internal affairs and focus on joint work and co-operation for the benefit of all.

He noted that Qatar has become an important country at the international level and is distinguished by its rational and impartial stance, which is appreciated by Hungary.

In an interview with Qatari newspaper Al-Sharq published yesterday, he said: "We very much respect Qatar's position in calling for peaceful dialogue and conflict resolution, and we believe that it is a position stemming from a very important political sense in international action, and we agree with this policy."

The minister noted the economic co-operation between Doha and Budapest and said that talks for co-operation in the field of energy started some time ago between the two countries, adding that he was here in Doha last December for discussions in this regard. There are ongoing negotiations between QatarEnergy and the Hungarian Power Company responsible for purchasing gas in order to see any possible

horizon for the Qatari gas to be part of the Hungarian energy mix, he said. He explained that there is a new dimension of cooperation between Qatar and Hungary in light of the ongoing negotiations between the QatarEnergy and the Hungarian Power Company, and it is expected that Qatari gas will be part of the Hungarian energy

mix in 2026.

He underlined that there are many areas for co-operation between the two countries, and said Qatar is invited to invest in them, including digitisation and the information technology-based economy, and "we all know that Qatar has a lot of interest and projects in this field. It is also possible to co-operate in the manufacture of electric cars.

We have the fourth largest capacity in the world in terms of manufacturing electric vehicle battery cells."

He noted that Hungary has one of the lowest tax rates in Europe, as the corporate income tax rate (CIT) of 9% is the lowest in Europe, and it enjoys political stability. "We have made important improvements in infrastructure in addition to our higher education system's high level of scientific standards and providing of qualified, skilled and up-to-date workforce," he said, adding that Hungary enjoys a strategic location and is

located in the heart of Europe, with access to 124 countries.

There are Qatari investments in Hungary in the field of real estate and tourism, and "we are working to attract more investments," he noted.

Regarding the importance of the 5th United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries (LDC5) in supporting development and international co-operation, which was held in Doha last week, the Hungarian minister considered that the main objective of his country's participation is to provide substantial support to the least developed countries, because it is well aware of the serious impact and negative repercussions of the war in Ukraine that has affected the world and caused a number of problems such as the energy crisis, the disruption in supplies and food security. He added that all these current challenges have caused enormous pressure on a number of countries, especially the least developed ones, which are facing more threat of instability, in light of the difficulties in providing energy and food, which may produce a series of crises that may pose serious challenges. Therefore these countries could become sources of more huge waves of migration, which is something Hungary would like

to avoid, and which the Euro-

pean Union countries may not be able to confront.

The international community should provide support and assistance to the least developed countries, as Hungary has allocated a Line of Credit of \$760mn to enhance economic co-operation with companies in the least developed countries, and announced \$250mn in aid programmes to improve water management, health and food security, in addition to 715 scholarships for these countries, which is a very popular programme with applications from these countries, he said.

"We believe that we are doing our part, and we hope that the rest of the international community will do its part properly in supporting the least developed countries to overcome difficult challenges," he added.

The Hungarian minister also expressed hope that the international community would be able to put in place substantial programmes to empower these countries, and appreciated the role of Qatar in hosting the international conference and providing support for these efforts. He pointed out that his country realises that Qatar takes the matter seriously to help these countries, and said "we will continue to increase rehabilitation programmes for these countries in the coming period." (QNA)

Three Palestinian fighters shot dead in West Bank

AFP Nablus

Tsraeli soldiers shot dead three Palestinian fighters in a pre-dawn firefight in the occupied West Bank, Israeli and Palestinian sources said yesterday, amid a surge in violence in the region.

The Israeli army said "gunmen opened fire" at an army position near the Jit junction, west of Nablus in the northern West Bank, with the soldiers responding with "live fire". A Nablus-based group said the Israeli troops had laid an ambush for them.

The Palestinian health ministry identified three men killed by Israeli gunfire near Nablus as Jihad al-Shami, 24, Uday al-Shami, 22, and Mohamed Da-

beek, 18.
According to the army, the



People walk in front of closed shops during a strike after the killing of three Palestinian fighters by Israeli troops, in Nablus in the occupied West Bank, yesterday.

"three gunmen were neutralised during the exchange of fire and an additional armed gunman surrendered himself to the forces."

It noted in a statement none of the Israeli forces were

wounded in the clash. The Lions' Den, an emerging Palestinian group that claims to rise above traditional factional loyalties and has been blamed for a number of recent attacks on Israeli targets, identified the three

as members. A statement from the group said they had engaged in combat after identifying the Israeli ambush, vowing to revenge the "martyrs".

Violence intensified last year, but has worsened in the West Bank – which Israel has occupied since the Six-Day War of 1967 -after Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu returned to office in December at the head of a hard-right coalition. Speaking ahead of his weekly cabinet meeting, Netanyahu commended the Israeli forces who "operate around the clock against those seeking to kill us". "The principle is simple -whoever tries to hurt us, or hurts us, will pay the price," he said in televised remarks.

Hamas, the rulers of the Gaza Strip, said the deaths would "fuel the great West Bank intifada," or uprising.



AAB-Lexus launches all-new RX in Qatar

Abdullah Abdulghani & Bros Co (AAB) has launched the luxury crossover — Lexus RX — at the main Lexus showroom in Doha.

Japanese ambassador to Qatar Satoshi Maeda was the guest of honour at the event. Abdulghani Nasser al-Abdulghani, AAB CEO, attended the event along with AAB senior managers and others.

In his opening speech, Abdulghani said: "It is my pleasure to welcome you all to this significant event as we unveil the highly anticipated all-new Lexus RX 2023. At Abdullah Abdulghani & Bros Co, we have been serving the Qatari market with premium automotive services and products for several decades, and we are proud of our accomplishments. Despite the challenges we have faced due to the regional and global environment affecting the automobile industry, we have remained committed to our customers and emerged stronger than ever. We are grateful for the support of our valued customers, principals,

employees and all those who have contributed to maintaining this commitment."

The fifth-generation RX has been completely reimagined to deliver greater style, comfort and performance than ever before and comes with a choice of powertrains, one of which is electrified to contribute to the realisation of a carbon-neutral society, a press statement notes.

Koji Sato, president of Lexus International, said: "For the all-new RX, we were determined to keep the Lexus DNA of supreme quality, ride comfort and refinement, and elevate the driving experience to the next level, delivering a unique Lexus driving signature."

Takaaki Ohno, chief engineer in charge of the vehicle's development, said: "Created without compromise through the combined efforts of development and production, the all-new RX will become a companion that enriches your life. We hope customers in the Middle East will look forward to it."

Kei Fujita, chief representative of the Middle East & Central Asia Representative Office, Toyota Motor Corporation, said: "We are pleased to launch the 2023 Lexus RX as the latest step in our drive to create innovative and amazing experiences for owners and passengers in the Middle East by developing vehicles that offer a highly engaging driving experience."

The all-new Lexus RX is built on Lexus's Global Architecture K platform and delivers excellent body rigidity and a low centre of gravity, guaranteeing a more rewarding driving experience.

Complementing the all-

new RX's distinctive design is a thrilling drive personality imbued by two powertrain options. A newly developed inline 4-cylinder, 2.4-litre turbocharged engine that produces 275hp and 430Nm of torque is mated to a new tomatic transmission. A hybrid-electric system pairing a 2.4-litre turbocharged engine with an electric motor is also available, which provides a combined power of 366hp mated to a 6-speed automatic transmission that

offers fuel consumption of 15.7km/L while delivering a new level of driving pleasure.
Lexus has further developed its new 'Next Chapter' design language to create a vehicle that is instantly recognisable as an RX, but with a more dynamic, elegant and confident character. The allnew RX's interior features

the driver's cockpit.

The 2023 RX's spacious interior offers ample luggage space and five newly designed luxury seats with

Lexus' Tazuna concept for

excellent legroom, including an 8-way adjustable powered driver seat. The vehicle's inviting interior provides drivers and passengers with a host of advanced features for a refined cabin experience. These include a new 14-inch touchscreen multimedia system with Apple CarPlay and Android Auto compatibility, a colour multi-information display, a colour head-up

display, and more.

Drivers can enjoy complete peace of mind, thanks to the Lexus Safety System+, an advanced safety and driver assistance system that includes a Pre-Collision System with an expanded detection range for vehicles, pedestrians, cyclists and motorcycles, together with new features such as Emergency Steering Assist, Acceleration Suppression at Low Speed, Intersection Collision Avoidance Assistance, and more.

The 2023 RX also includes comprehensive safety features designed to protect its occupants. Lexus is also introducing its first-ever turbo hybrid electric vehicle. The RX 500h F SPORT Performance's new hybrid electric system comes with a front unit that integrates a hightorque 2.4-litre turbo engine, six-speed automatic transmission, and an electric motor. An eAxle rear unit allows the electric motor to provide low-end torque for improved performance and quick acceleration. It also features the new DIRECT4 all-wheel drive force system.

The RX 500h F SPORT Performance model boasts of exclusive interior and exterior features.

Karwa buses operating at Pearl go electric

Mowasalat (Karwa) has announced that all its buses operating at The Pearl Island are now electric. This provides a major boost for a sustainable and eco-friendly public transportation. the company said in a tweet. Three metrolink routes are covered by these services, while eight Peak Vehicle Requirement (PVR) buses are in operation, it added. Mowasalat (Karwa) had used a large number of electric buses during the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022, providing modern, comfortable



and environment-friendly transportation solutions, and keeping pace with sustainable development projects in the country.

Islam and modernity discussed in second Seminar Series

By Tawfik Lamari Staff Reporter

he activities of the Ministry of Culture's Seminar Series 2023 continued yesterday at Qatar University (QU) with Qur'anic Studies professors Dr Abdulrahman Halli (QU) and Dr Joseph Lombard (College of Islamic Studies, Hamad Bin Khalifa University) talking about Islam and modernity.

Dr Hallali stressed that Islam has never been in conflict with modernity except in certain cases that may undermine religion. Muslim philosophers and thinkers have constantly addressed it. There are many aspects of modernity present in the Western and Islamic worlds in varying degrees.

"Modernity, from the perspective of theorists, is to create your own modernity without affecting the modernity of others. But this modernity should not be used in a wrong place, whether in experience or in theoretical vision



Some of the participants in the Seminar Series.

"Some see postmodernism as a breach that produced alternative theories and carried within them a denial of the facts that the eras of modernity ended with. That success necessitates reaching the best by having the will and the ability to change, which has been achieved theoretically, but is still missing on the practical level."

Dr Hallali saw there are obstacles in acquiring the necessary knowledge regarding modernity and postmodernity, bearing in mind that the context in the perspective of the West is not the

modernity that people in the Arab world are talking about, and therefore should be defined properly.

Dr Lombard said: "We must focus on making our reality in harmony with our culture and our Islamic religion. Modernity is different in the West from Islam, as it became related to science. Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) was sent as a mercy to the world. Therefore, our officials as Muslims should deliver mercy, and make it closely related to modernity, and present an Islamic model to the world.

"There is a need to invest resources in our Islamic world for the benefit of advancement by applying the teachings of Islam for the benefit of humanity. Abu Hamid al-Ghazali realised the incoherence of philosophers who were governed by a liberal human model. But the spirit of religion means looking at our responsibility and at the same time to build the future.

"The spirit of modernity makes us look only at the future and then we make excuses for failure. Postmodernism is a concept that has more than one definition. However, the developments of modernity in Europe have taken different forms according to their different social, political and religious circumstances. There should be Islamic definitions that are not only related to the past but are also compatible with the present, contemporary people," he con-

cluded.

The session was moderated by journalist Iman al-Kaabi, director of the Qatar Media Centre,

the Ministry of Culture.

WORLD

China chooses continuity with new cabinet appointments

Reuters/AFP

home and abroad.

hina unexpectedly kept its central bank governor and finance minister in their posts at the annual session of the parliament yesterday, prioritising continuity as economic challenges loom at

President Xi Jinping, who has been installing allies in key roles in a government reshuffle as he begins a third five-year term, broke with convention to retain Yi Gang, 65, as governor of the People's Bank of China (PBoC) and Liu Kun, 66, as finance minister.

Both men have reached the official retirement age of 65.

Across the slate of appointments, there were fewer changes than anticipated, with most cabinet ministers retained.

However, further announcements are expected in coming weeks as China implements a reorganisation of its financial regulatory structure and other government bodies.

"Opting for continuity in these critical economic roles suggests an emphasis on credibility and stability," said Mattie Bekink, China director at the Economist Intelligence Corporate Network.

"It is also perhaps a tacit acknowledgment of some of the challenges for Beijing at the moment," she said. "The real challenge for this third Xi administration is whether it will address structural imbalances in China's economy and undertake reforms necessary to ensure China's longterm competitiveness?

The government has set a 2023 economic growth target of around 5%, up from 3%

last year, which was among the weakest performances in decades.

China's statistics bureau head, Kang Yi, told the parliamentary session yesterday that China's economy still contains deep structural "contradictions" and "problems", according to state media.

Chinese policymakers face the challenge of getting the economy back on track after three years of coronavirus (Covid-19) restrictions, weak consumer and business sentiment and increasingly adversarial relations with the West, with many global firms looking to hedge their China expo-

China has also appointed Li Shangfu, who is sanctioned by the United States over the purchase of Russian weapons, as defence minister, and named a slate of four vice-premiers, led by Ding Xuexiang, who has long served as Xi's chief of staff.

The biggest change at the parliament session was the promotion on Saturday of Li Qiang, 63, a longtime Xi confidant, to

The former Shanghai Communist Party boss takes a role charged with managing the economy, replacing Li Keqiang, 67, who stepped down after two five-year

"The government sent a positive signal to the market by keeping these senior financial experts in the cabinet," said Zhang Zhiwei, chief economist at Pinpoint Asset Management.

The US-educated central bank chief Yi, appointed PBoC governor in 2018, had widely been expected to retire after being left off the ruling Communist Party's Central Committee during the party's oncein-five-vears congress in October.

Analysts had anticipated that once Yi



Attendants serve tea for the fifth plenary session of the National People's Congress (NPC) at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing

and Liu stepped aside, they would be replaced by people with far less international experience.

"The US side will be much more comfortable with someone like Yi Gang in charge," said Alfred Wu, assistant professor at the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy at the National University of Singapore. "It shows China wants to at least have a dialogue with the United States on monetary policy and financial co-opera-

Sources had told Reuters last month that Zhu Hexin, chairman of state-run financial conglomerate CITIC Group Corp, was likely to succeed Yi as head of the central bank.

The appointments "indicate that the government put professionalism, management and the art of fine-tuning on the front burner when it comes to picking the central bank governor and finance minister, as positions at the helm of core economic departments need tremendous professional skill", said Sun Fei, an econo-

As expected, Wang Wentao stayed on as commerce minister.

Zheng Shanjie, governor and deputy

party secretary of Zhejiang province, was approved to take over as head of the National Development and Reform Commission, the powerful state planner

The parliamentary session will end today, with Xi expected to give a speech and Li, the new premier, scheduled to hold a televised media conference afterwards.

US-China tensions have worsened in recent weeks, exacerbated by the entry of an alleged Chinese spy balloon into US airspace and accusations that Beijing might supply Moscow with weapons to use against Ukraine.

Xi slammed the United States this week for leading an effort of "containment, encirclement and suppression of China".

Li Qiang's appointment is "a deliberate pushback against US sanctions", said Manoj Kewalramani, China expert at the Takshashila Institution in Bengaluru, In-

The move "demonstrates Beijing's willingness to engage in brinkmanship" and will "add another hurdle in US-China engagement, which is already very constrained", he told AFP.

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Cyclone Freddy displaces hundreds in Mozambique

Reuters

yclone Freddy displaced hundreds of people as it battered central Mozambique yesterday after making landfall for a second time in a month, breaking records for the duration and strength of tropical storms in the southern hemisphere.

Communications and electricity supply in the storm area have been cut so the extent of the damage and number of casualties were not clear.

At least one person was killed in Quelimane on Saturday when his house collapsed as the storm swept on shore. $\,$

More than 171,000 people were affected after the cyclone swept through southern Mozambique last month, killing 27 people in Mozambique and Madagascar.

More than half a million are at risk of being affected in Mozambique this time, according to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA).

State TV reported that hundreds were displaced across the storm's path.

More than 650 houses were destroyed in Marromeu district, it said, while in Sofala province more than 3,000 people were affected by flood-

After passing the port town of Quelimane, the storm was continuing inland towards the southern tip of neighbouring Malawi, satellite data showed.

However, national power company Electricidade de Moçambique said that by mid-afternoon electricity had been restored in most areas, with the exception of Milange, Lugela, Maganja da Costa, Namanjavira and parts of the city of Mocuba.

"The wind was very strong into the night ... there is a lot of

destruction, trees fallen down, roofs blown off," Unicef chief of advocacy, communications and partnerships for Mozambique, Guy Taylor, told Reuters by satellite phone from Queli-

He had no word yet on casualties or numbers of displaced.

"It's potentially a disaster of large magnitude, and additional support will be needed," Taylor said, adding that heavy rains were continuing to fall.

In Malawi, authorities were bracing for the cyclone to pass near the southern tip of the landlocked country by evening, bringing torrential rains and flooding, the department of meteorological resources and climate change said in a statement.

A Zoom Earth satellite map laying out the cyclone's probable path forecast it would fizzle out near the Malawi border as it moves further inland around 2am (0000 GMT) tomorrow.

Two weeks ago, 27 died when the storm first made landfall, after first being spotted near Indonesia on February 6.

After swirling for 35 days, Freddy is likely to have broken the record for the longestlasting tropical cyclone, with the previous record held by a 31-day hurricane in 1994, according to the World Meteorological Organisation (WMO).

It has also set a record for the highest accumulated cyclone energy, a measure of the storm's strength over time, of any southern hemisphere storm in history, according to the US National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration.

Climate change is making hurricanes stronger, scientists

Oceans absorb much of the heat from greenhouse gas emissions, and when warm seawater evaporates its heat energy is transferred to the atmosphere, fuelling more destructive storms.

Everything Everywhere enters Oscars as unlikely favourite

By Andrew Marszal, AFP

verything Everywhere All at **H** Once, a wacky sci-fi film featuring multiple universes and hot dog fingers, enters this year's Oscars ceremony as the for best picture.

Academy bosses hope audiences will tune in to see whether the zany \$100mn-grossing hit can claim Hollywood's most coveted prize - and draw a line under Will Smith's infamous slap at last year's gala.

Everything Everywhere – which leads the overall nominations count at 11 - follows a Chinese immigrant laundromat owner locked in battle with an inter-dimensional supervillain who happens to also be her own daughter.

Michelle Yeoh's heroine Evelyn must harness the power of her alter egos living in parallel universes, which feature hot dogs as human fingers, talking rocks and giant adult toys used as weapons. The film has dominated nearly

every awards show in Hollywood, with its charismatic, predominantly east Asian stars becoming the feel-good story of the season. "It's a group of very likable people behind the movie who it's

impossible to not be happy for," Hollywood Reporter awards columnist Scott Feinberg told AFP. However, although the quirky film is widely expected to domi-

nate Oscars night, it could hit a stumbling block for best picture. The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences uses a special "preferential" voting system for that award, in which members rank films from best to

The approach punishes polar-

One Oscars voter who asked not to be identified told AFP that some members - particu-

but not a traditional movie ... it could be further down the ballot for a lot of people," the voter said.

likely All Quiet on the Western Front, Netflix's German-language World War I movie that dominated Britain's BAFTAs.

is Top Gun: Maverick, the long-

saved the entire theatrical industry" from the pandemic.

it, where three of the four acting

chett had long been favourite to win a third Oscar for Tar, but Everything Everywhere love could propel Yeoh to a historic first win by an Asian woman in the cat-

isherin).

And the supporting actress race may be even closer.

larly among the Academy's older ranks - are "more divided about Everything Everywhere All at

"It was very bold and unique,

awaited sequel from Tom Cruise

brought audiences back to movie theatres," said the anonymous Oscars voter.

a clear favourite, the acting contests are incredibly tight.

categories were true toss-ups," said Feinberg.

will probably win," said the Oscars voter. "Cate Blanchett has already won twice ... some people vote with that in the back of

Best actor is a three-horse race between Austin Butler (Elvis), Brendan Fraser (The Whale) and Colin Farrell (The Banshees of In-

For best actress, Cate Blan-

Angela Bassett, the first Marvel



"It was that movie that

While the best picture race has

"I think that Michelle Yeoh

Another potential beneficiary

no less a figure than Steven Spielberg recently said that the actor and his film "might have

"I can't remember a year, at least in the time I've been doing

> superhero actor ever nominated with Black Panther: Wakanda Forever, is up against Everything Everywhere star Jamie Lee Curtis and Banshees actress Kerry Con-

One category does appear to be

locked. Ke Huy Quan, the former child star of Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom and The Goonies, has won every best supporting actor prize going and looks nearcertain to complete a comeback story for the ages.

Hanging over the ceremony is the spectre of "The Slap" - the shocking moment at last year's Oscars when Smith assaulted Chris Rock on stage for cracking a joke about his wife.

At a press conference this

Decorative Oscar statues are seen near spotlights and red drapes as final preparations are made for the 95th Academy Awards, in Hollywood, Los Angeles, California week. Oscars executive producer Molly McNearney said: "We're going to acknowledge it, and then

> Organisers were criticised last year for allowing Smith to remain at the show after the attack, and even collect his best actor award.

we're going to move on."

He was later banned from Oscars events for a decade, meaning he cannot present the best actress statuette this year, as is traditional.

A "crisis team" has been set up for the first time to respond to any unexpected developments. Partly thanks to "The Slap", last year's Oscars TV ratings improved from record lows, but

remained well below their late

1990s peak, as interest in awards

This year, organisers have brought back Jimmy Kimmel as host for a third stint, and are hoping that nominations for popular blockbusters like Top Gun: Maverick and Avatar: The Way of Water will bring viewers

back. In 1997, when the wildly popular Titanic won 11 Oscars, a record 57mn tuned in.

"If the public cares about the movies, they care about the Oscars, relatively more," said Fein-

Another potential draw for viewers: pop superstar Rihanna will grace the stage, just a month after her long-awaited Super Bowl halftime show, to sing the nominated *Lift Me Up* from *Black* Panther: Wakanda Forever.

IS claims bomb attack that targeted Afghan journalists

AFP Kabul

ising films.

The Islamic State (IS) group has claimed a bomb attack that killed a security guard and wounded a group of journalists and children in the northern Afghan city of Mazar-e-Sharif

Saturday's bombing occurred at an event honouring Afghanistan's journalists, and came two days after a suicide bomber killed the Taliban governor of Balkh province in an attack also claimed by IS.

The attack against journalists was caused by a "parcel bomb that IS fighters managed to place and detonate" at the event held at a cultural centre in Mazare-Sharif, the capital of Balkh province,

IS said in a statement on its Amaq news agency.

shows wanes

"The blast targeted a rally held inside a Shia centre to reward several journalists working in agencies involved in the war and instigation against IS," the statement said. A security guard was killed, while

five journalists and three children were

wounded in the bomb attack, police said.

The governor of Balkh, Mohamed Dawood Muzammil, was killed on Thursday by a suicide bomber at his office in Mazare-Sharif.

That attack was also claimed by the Islamic State.

The killing of Muzammil, known for fighting religious militants, marked one of the highest-level attacks since the Taliban stormed back to power in 2021.

Record-breaking Queensland flood peak predicted

record-breaking flood in Australia's Queensland state was forecast to peak over the weekend, after almost 100 residents of an outback town were moved to higher ground. The flood, triggered by heavy rain over the past week, is worst in the remote Gulf Country town of Burketown, about 2,100km (1,300 miles) northwest of state capital Brisbane.

for Burketown, said yesterday that 97 residents had been airlifted out in the past 48 hours. Water levels in the area were "at heights not previously known" and the town looked like it was "sitting in the middle of an ocean",

Dan McKinlay, chief executive of the local council responsible

he told ABC radio. Australia's Bureau of Meteorology predicted water levels in the area would peak over the weekend. It said the flood had already topped a March 2011 record of

6.78m (22.2'). The crisis comes after frequent flooding in Australia's east over the last two years due to a multi-year La Nina weather event, including once-in-a-century floods that hit remote areas in the neighbouring Northern Territory, in January.

On Saturday, police released aerial images of the Burketown

flooding, showing properties and swaths of land submerged. The Bureau of Meteorology expected the weather event to continue this week, but said it was now in a "receding" phase. "Further showers and isolated thunderstorms are forecast for the remainder of Sunday, however widespread rainfall has gener-

ally eased in the area," the forecaster said, adding that the peak of

the flood waters could extend into today. - Reuters

North Korea 'adopts war deterrence measures'

Torth Korea has decided to take "important practical" war deterrence measures, state media reported yesterday, a day before Seoul and Washington begin their largest joint military

drills in five years. The decision was made at a meeting of the ruling party's military commission presided over by leader Kim Jong-un, according to the official Korean Central News Agency (KCNA).

"The meeting discussed and adopted the important practical steps for making more effective, powerful and offensive use of the war deterrent," KCNA said.

The report said that the move was aimed at "coping with the present situation in which the war provocations of the United States and south Korea are reaching the red-

line", but did not elaborate on the measures.

South Korea and the United States are scheduled to start the "Freedom Shield" exercises today, focusing on the "changing security environment" due to North Korea's redoubled aggression, the allies said.

All such exercises infuriate North Korea, which views them as rehearsals for an inva-

The country has said its nuclear weapons and missile programmes are for self-defence. Analysts have said North Korea will likely use the drills as an excuse to carry out more provocations, including mis-

nuclear test. On Friday KCNA reported that Kim ordered North Korea's military to intensify drills for a "real war". - AFP

sile tests and perhaps even a



India tech minister plans to meet start-ups on SVB fallout

Reuters Mumbai

ndia's state minister for technology said yesterday he will meet start-ups this week to assess the impact on them of Silicon Valley Bank's collapse, as concerns rise about the fallout for the Indian start-up sector.

California banking regulators

shut down Silicon Valley Bank (SVB) on Friday after a run on the lender, which had \$209bn in assets at the end of 2022, with depositors pulling out as much as \$42bn on a single day, rendering it insolvent.

"Start-ups are an important part of the new India economy. I will meet with Indian start-ups this week to understand impact on them and how the government can help during the crisis," Rajeev Chandrasekhar, the state minister for IT said on Twitter.

India has one of the world's biggest start-up markets, with many clocking multi-billion-dollar valuations in recent years and getting the backing of foreign investors, who have made bold bets on digital and other tech businesses.

SVB's failure, the biggest in the US since the 2008 financial crisis, has roiled global markets, hit banking stocks and is now unsettling Indian entrepreneurs.

Two partners at an Indian venture capital fund and one lender to Indian start-ups said they are running checks with portfolio companies on any SVB exposure and if so, whether it is a significant part of their total bank balance.

Consumer Internet startups, which have drawn the bulk of funding in India in recent years, are less affected because they either do not have an SVB account or have minimal exposure to it, the three people said.

"Spoke to some founders and it is very bad," Ashish Dave, CEO of Mirae Asset Venture Investments (India), wrote in a tweet. "Especially for Indian founders... who setup their US companies and raised their initial round, SVB is default bank, Uncertainty is killing them. Growth ones are relatively safer as they diversified. Last thing founders

Software firm Freshworks said it has minimal exposure to the SVB situation relative to the company's overall balance sheet.

"As we grew, we brought on larger, diversified banks such as Morgan Stanley, JP Morgan and

UBS. The vast majority of our cash and marketable securities today is not held at SVB,"

Freshworks said in a blog post, adding that the company does not foresee any disruption to employees or customers.

Freshworks said it is working with customers and vendors who were using its SVB account to migrate to alternate bank ac-

Cheetahs back in wild in India after decades

AFP New Delhi

wo Namibian cheetahs relocated to India last year were released into the wild, more than seven decades after the world's fastest land animal was declared extinct in the South Asian country.

"Both cheetahs are doing good," India's Environment Minister Bhupender Yadav tweeted after the male and female darted from quarantine enclosures of Kuno National Park

"Big day for the cheetah reintroduction programme," Yadav added.

Obaan and Asha were among eight cheetahs brought to India last September after India's top court ruled in 2020 that the species should be reintroduced on an experimental basis.

The programme is a major prestige project for Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who presided over the release of the animals into an enclosure after their ar-

Twelve more of the globally listed "vulnerable" big cats were translocated from South Africa last month, with India aiming to bring in about 100 of them over the next decade.

The last Asiatic cheetah to roam the sub-continent was believed to have been hunted down

The spotted feline was declared officially extinct in India

Kuno National Park, a wildlife sanctuary in central India, was selected for relocation of the African cheetahs - a different subspecies – for its abundant prey and grasslands.

The African cheetah's introduction in India is the first intercontinental relocation of the planet's fastest land animal.

Critics have warned the creatures may struggle to adapt to the Indian habitat due to competition for prey from a significant number of leopards in the national park.



Thick smoke rises during an eruption from Mount Merapi, Indonesia's most active volcano, as seen from Tunggularum village in Sleman.

BBC chief refuses to quit despite chaos sparked by Lineker removal

AFP Londor

ritain's finance minister yesterday said "people" of fidence" in the BBC needed to be restored as the broadcaster's boss vowed not to quit amid the chaos surrounding Gary Lineker's

removal as Match of the Day host. Lineker was forced to "step back" from his duties presenting the flagship Premier League highlights show after accusing the UK government of using Nazi-era rhetoric in announcing its policy to tackle illegal immigration.

The BBC said on Friday that Lineker, England's fourth highest goalscorer of all-time, had breached guidelines on impartiality and the corporation would seek "an agreed and clear position on his use of social media" before an on-screen return.

Former BBC chief Greg Dyke warned on Saturday that "it looks like - the perception out there that the BBC has bowed to government pressure," deepening an ongoing row over impartiality at the broadcaster.

told Sky News yesterday that he "profoundly" disagreed with Lineker's remarks, but that the decision was one for the BBC and its director general Tim Davie. "The reason that it is a great

national institution that we all treasure so much, is because it is respected for impartiality," he said.

"We need to make sure that what comes out of this is that people's confidence in the impartiality of the BBC is restored."

Lineker's critics claim the public-funded broadcaster has allowed him to use the platform afforded him as the face of its much-loved football show to influence contentious political is-

But his backers accuse the broadcaster of taking their cues from Conservative politicians, pointing out that current BBC chairman Richard Sharp facilitated a loan guarantee for former prime minister Boris Johnson while applying for the job.

The decision to remove Lineker caused chaos to scheduled sports programming across the BBC's television and radio output.

Former England players Ian Wright and Alan Shearer were among the pundits who refused to take up their usual roles on Match of the Day, followed by the programme's commentators. As a result, the longest-running

football television programme in

the world was aired for the first time without a presenter, pundits or even commentary in a shortened 20-minute highlights package of six matches from the English top-flight. Despite the disrupted format, BBC entertainment correspond-

ent Lizo Mzimba tweeted yesterday that viewing figures were up nearly half a million on last week's audience, with 2.58mn people Weekend preview show Foot-

ball Focus and results programme Final Score were also pulled from the schedule, as was yesterday's round-up show Match of the Day 2, while BBC Radio 5Live's coverage was disrupted.

When asked if he should resign over the Lineker issue, Davie replied: "Absolutely not."

"I think that my job is to serve licence-fee payers and deliver a BBC that is really focused on world-class impartial landmark output, and I look forward to us resolving this situation and looking forward to delivering that."

He added: "To be clear, success for me is Gary gets back on air and

together we are giving to the audiences that world-class sports coverage which, as I say, I'm sorry we

haven't been able to deliver today." Prime Minister Rishi Sunak said Saturday he hoped the stand-off can be "resolved in a timely man-

Lineker is a freelance broadcaster for the BBC, not a permanent member of staff, and is not responsible for news or political content so does not need to adhere to the same strict rules on impar-

However, former BBC boss Mark Thompson told the broadcaster vesterday that the former Leicester, Everton, Barcelona and Tottenham striker may have technically breached the guidelines.

He pointed to a section that says that non journalists "who nevertheless have an additional responsibility to the BBC because of their profile at the BBC" should avoid 'taking sides on party political issues, or political controversies".

The row was sparked by Lineker's response to a video in which Home Secretary Suella Braverman unveiled plans to stop migrants crossing the Channel on small

Lineker, the BBC's highestpaid star with an annual salary of £1.35mn (\$1.65mn) according to the figures released last year, wrote on Twitter: "This is just an immeasurably cruel policy directed at the most vulnerable people in language that is not dissimilar to that used by Germany in the '30s."

The Conservative government intends to outlaw asylum claims by all illegal arrivals and transfer them to other countries, such as Rwanda, in a bid to stop the crossings, which totalled more than 45,000 last year.

A YouGov poll published yesterday showed 50% backing the measures, with 36% opposed.

India, Australia to boost critical mineral trade in broader deal

Reuters New Delhi

ndia and Australia aim to expand trade in critical mineral to help them achieve their goals on reducing carbon emissions, as they seek a broad trade pact, Indian Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal said.

"India is short of critical minerals. Australia has a large reserve of critical minerals that go into (electric vehicle) batteries, which isn't fully processed or manufactured presently," Goyal told a news conference after meeting Australia's Trade and Tourism Minister, Don Far-

Critical minerals, along with space technology and opportunities in the digital sector, will be key areas of the planned deal, Farrell said. The meeting followed a summit in New Delhi on Friday between the Asia nations' prime ministers, Narendra Modi and Anthony

Australia and India also hope

to seal by the end of the year an ambitious, comprehensive trade deal that has been stuck in negotiations for over a decade, Albanese said earlier. Albanese said India and Aus-

tralia have agreed to accelerate their economic partnership and strengthen defence ties. "We also agreed on an early

conclusion of our ambitious Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement as soon as possible, and I am hopeful that we will be able to finalise that this year," Albanese added.

"This transformational deal will realise the full potential of the bilateral economic relationship, creating new employment opportunities and raising living standards for the people of both Australia and India."

Last year the two countries signed a free trade deal called the Economic Co-operation and Trade Agreement (ECTA), the first signed by India with a

developed country in a decade. However, for the much larger Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (CECA) discussions had begun in 2011 but were suspended in 2016 as the talks were gridlocked.

Negotiations resumed in 2021

but a deal has remained elusive. The ECTA came into effect in December and removed duties on 96% of Indian exports to Australia and 85% of Australian exports to India.

Australia's minister for trade and tourism, who accompanied Albanese on the visit, said earlier that trade worth \$2.5bn had benefited from the ECTA deal in January alone.

Beyond the bilateral defence co-operation, India and Australia are also security partners in the Quad group together with the US and Japan.

This was the fourth meeting between the two leaders since Albanese took over as the prime minister in May. He is expected to meet Modi three more times this year on the sidelines of multilateral events including the Quad Summit in Sydney in May and G20 Summit to be hosted in Delhi in September.

Investiture ceremony



Indian army paratroopers perform during the western command investiture ceremony at a military station on the outskirts of Amritsar.

Fire at Rohingya camps 'planned sabotage': Bangladesh panel

A fire that left thousands of Rohingya Muslims homeless in Bangladesh camps was a "planned act of sabotage", a panel investigating the blaze said yesterday. Nearly 2,800 shelters and more

than 90 facilities including hospitals and learning centres were destroyed in the fire on March 5, leaving more than 12,000 people without shelter, officials said. More than 1mn Rohingya

refugees live in tens of thousands of huts made of bamboo and thin plastic sheeting in camps in the border district of Cox's Bazar, most having fled a military-led crackdown in Myanmar in 2017. "The fire was a planned act of sabotage," senior district government official Abu Sufian, head of the seven-member probe committee, said from Cox's Bazar.

He said the blaze broke out in several places at the same time, proving it was a planned act, adding it was a deliberate attempt to establish supremacy inside the camps by militant

He didn't name the groups. "We recommended further investigation by the lawenforcing agency to identify the groups behind the incident," he said, adding that the report was based on input from 150 eye witnesses

The panel also recommended the formation of a separate fire service unit for the Rohingya camps. Each block of Rohingya

camps needs to be widened to accommodate fire service vehicles and the construction of water cisterns, and the camps should use less flammable materials in shelters, among other recommendations. Fires often break out in the crowded camp with its makeshift structures. A massive blaze in March 2021 killed at least 15 refugees and destroyed more than 10,000

Surging crime, difficult living conditions and bleak prospects for returning to Myanmar are driving more Rohingva refugees to leave Bangladesh by boat for countries such as Malaysia and Indonesia, putting

their lives at risk.

UN data shows 348 Rohingya are thought to have died at sea last year.

COMMENT

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Warning to polluters: 3.6bn people are now climate vulnerable

While the world population reached 8bn on November 15, 2022 according to the United Nations, nearly 3.6bn people are now climate vulnerable. It is in this context that one should analyse the news that the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Synthesis Report under the Sixth Assessment Cycle will be released on March 20 following negotiations this week by governments on the 'Summary for Policymakers'.

The report will gather and distil scientific evidence from the IPCC working group reports and special reports published between 2018 and 2022. It will be the last such report from the IPCC in this cycle until further reports are published under the next assessment cycle, which could be only in 2027 or 2028.

Culminating with this Synthesis Report, the science from the IPCC is crucial evidence to governments for this decade on the current state of the climate crisis. It must serve as a warning to polluters that their time is up. The window of time to keep global temperatures below 1.5°C is fast closing in. Current climate targets put the world on a 2.8°C pathway by 2100. A rapid equitable fossil fuel phase out must be top priority for all governments while scaling up investments in renewables and energy efficiency measures. Wealthy nations must substantially increase their international climate finance based on their fair share, the Climate Action Network (CAN) has urged in a statement last Friday.

Leaders must heed the science and act immediately with the pace and scale necessary to decarbonise the economies in time'

Past reports under this assessment cycle have underlined the dire situation and stated unequivocally that greenhouse gases - from the reliance on fossil fuels, industrialisation and landuse - is driving up emissions and causing unprecedented levels of global heating. Human actions have caused the last decade to be the warmest decade in the last 125,000 years. Sharpening inequities show that the richest 10% of households contribute about 36%-45% of global greenhouse gas emissions. Communities in many vulnerable regions will

experience the limits of adaptation even before 1.5°C warming and sea-level rise poses an existential threat to some small islands and low-lying coastal areas.

"The forthcoming IPCC report should mobilise governments to envision and act towards transitioning into a fully renewable-energy powered society supported by strong energy efficiency measures, based on principles of justice and the protection of human rights," stated Stephan Singer, senior global specialist on climate science and energy, CAN International, and head of delegation for CAN at IPCC. Investing in renewables means rapidly divesting from fossil fuels and nuclear energies and phasing them out by mid-century to ensure the least damaging pathway towards climate stability. The IPCC Synthesis Report must reiterate its recent findings that renewable energy, particularly solar and wind, are technologically, financially and economically the key means to fight climate change, he said.

Dr Stephen Cornelius, Global Deputy Lead for Climate and Energy, World Wide Fund for Nature, stated that leaders must heed the science and act immediately with the pace and scale necessary to decarbonise the economies in time. An accelerated phase-out of fossil fuels is needed to limit global warming to below 1.5°C and avoid the worst climate change risks. As he explained, nature is our secret ally in the fight against climate change. Natural systems have absorbed 54% of human-related carbon dioxide emissions over the past decade and have slowed global warming and helped protect humanity from much more severe climate change risks. We can't hope to limit warming to 1.5°C, adapt to climate change and save lives and livelihoods, unless we also act urgently to safeguard and restore nature, a non-negotiable part of the solution to the climate crisis, as Dr Cornelius said.

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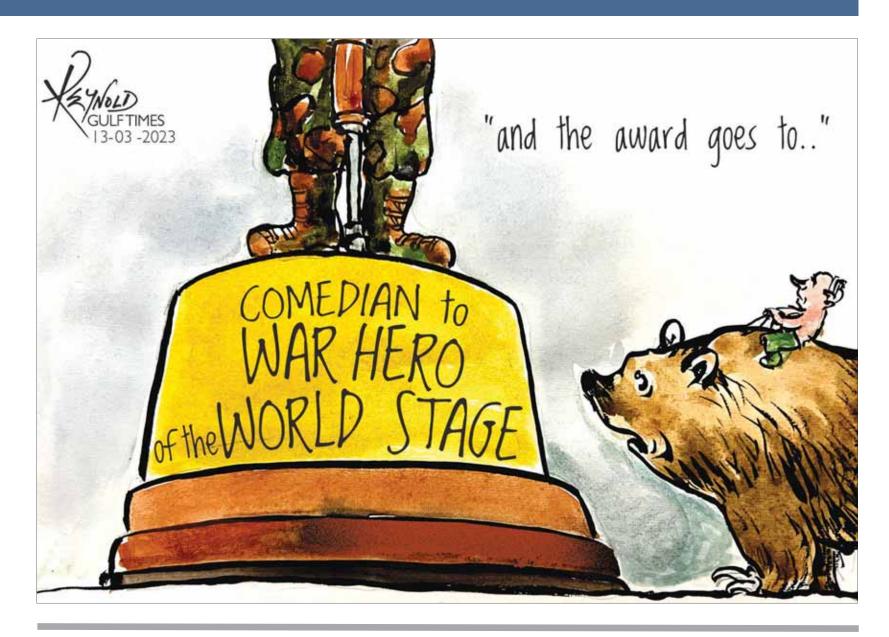
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The austerity train wreck

By James K Galbraith

n a flash, the savage destruction of Greece foretold in 2015 (and before) is back in the news, owing to a grisly tragedy on one of Europe's smallest railroad systems. On February 28, a passenger train collided head-on with a freight train travelling in the opposite direction on the same track, resulting in the obliteration of the lighter, faster passenger train.

According to *The Guardian*, "the trains were travelling on what appears to be a well-maintained stretch of electrified mainline." Take a moment to let the irrelevance of that observation sink in. We are talking about a head-on collision. Of course it wasn't the track.

collision. Of course it wasn't the track. Was it a "tragic human error," then, as Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis quickly announced? The stationmaster at Larissa has been arrested and faces a long prison term. How convenient that there is someone to blame.

Who was the stationmaster?
Journalist Dimitris Konstantakopoulos reports that he "was a 60-year-old man of limited experience, alone in a position of great responsibility." The New York Times adds that he had only six months of training.

Why were humans involved at all? Apparently, automated systems to prevent two trains from approaching each other on the same track were not installed. And why not? Evidently, such things are expensive. They add to costs without contributing to revenues. To ensure that such safeguards are in



The scene of the train crash.

place, the firm hand of regulation must override the profit motive.

Worse, Konstantakopoulos reports that, according to a former director of the Trainose company, "The last system of tele-management of the railways was deactivated in 2020." Since then, the former director "stopped travellin by train." Worse still, The New York Times notes, "Rail workers say the traffic lights were always red because of years of technical failures. Workers were left to warn one another of oncoming trains only by walkie-talkie." And the president of the train drivers' association told the BBC, "Neither the indicators, nor the traffic lights, nor the electronic traffic control work."

Trainose, Greece's railway operator, was purchased from the Greek state in 2017 by Italy's Ferrovie dello Stato. Since the Italian company was the only bidder, we can infer that it got an excellent price. The privateers – excuse me, the privatisers – did just what the profit motive demanded: they cut costs, not only by eschewing safety equipment

but also by shedding railway staff. There are only 800 employees today, down from 6,000 in 2010, though there are supposed to be 2,800. Having multiple sets of eyes on the rail line is after all redundant – 99.9% of the time.

So, there was indeed human error. But which humans made the mistakes? Does responsibility lie with the lone stationmaster, or with Trainose (which last year changed its name to Hellenic Train)? The stationmaster is obviously a scapegoat. And since Hellenic Train's management did exactly what it was required to do, it can hardly be accused of making an error.

How about Mitsotakis? His government has regulatory power that it failed to exercise. The Ministry of Infrastructure and Transport had a responsibility to upgrade the network, but it did not do so. But that, too, was no error. The failure to regulate was in the service of the private firm's profit motive. The failure to upgrade was in the service of the government's austerity programme.

What about former prime minister Alexis Tsipras, who signed the terms of the 2015 surrender to Greece's creditors that led to the wave of fire-sale privatisations? Again, this was not done in error; it was the result of treachery, bad faith, and force majeure.

What about those who imposed the terms of austerity, deregulation, and privatisation on the Greeks? The International Monetary Fund, the European Central Bank, and the European Commission – the infamous troika – took effective control of the Greek government in 2010 and again in 2015 and still run the show to this day. They also made no errors. They simply applied the dogma that had been prescribed by economists in the service of creditors. Theirs was victor's justice, executed precisely as intended.

The human error therefore lies elsewhere. It lies with those who devised, defended, and promoted the economic doctrines that have ravaged Greece, and with the rest of us who went along. We did so stupidly but with self-assurance, smugly accepting that free-market economics is the only option ("there is no alternative"), that regulation is an avoidable burden, and that private ownership is always better than public. Those in positions of power were complacent – if not cheerful – as these doctrines took hold in Greece and around the world. – Project Syndicate

• James K Galbraith, Professor at the Lyndon B. Johnson School of Public Affairs at the University of Texas at Austin, is the author of Welcome to the Poisoned Chalice: The Destruction of Greece and the Future of Europe.

Worse still, The New York Times notes, "Rail workers say the traffic lights were always red because of years of technical failures. Workers were left to warn one another of oncoming trains only by walkie-talkie." And the president of the train drivers' association told the BBC, "Neither the indicators, nor the traffic lights, nor the electronic traffic control work"

Thousands march in Athens in protest over the reported negligence of the authorities that led to the train crash last week.

Finding Covid-19 origins is a moral imperative: WHO chief

Reuters

iscovering the origins of the coronavirus (Covid-19) is a moral imperative and all hypotheses must be explored, the head of the World Health Organisation (WHO) said, in the clearest indication yet that the UN body remains committed to finding how the virus arose.

A US agency was reported by the Wall Street Journal to have assessed the pandemic had likely been caused by an unintended Chinese laboratory leak, raising pressure on the WHO to come up with

Beijing denies the assessment which could soon become public after the US House of Representatives voted this week to declassify it.

"Understanding #COVID19's origins and exploring all hypotheses remains: a scientific imperative, to help us prevent future outbreaks (and) a moral imperative, for the sake of the millions of people

Moldova

smashes

network

protest kicked off.

pro-Moscow

subversion

oldovan police said

yesterday that they had

arrested members of a

network they suspected of being

orchestrated by Moscow in a bid

to destabilise the small ex-Sovi-

et nation as an anti-government

and seven of them detained, police chief Viorel Cernauteanu

An agent managed to infiltrate

the group led by a Moldovan-Russian, he said, adding that

the prosecution had recorded 10 hours of video and audio.

"People came from Rus-

The Moldovan authorities

said they acted after "receiving information on the organisation

by Russian special services of

destabilising actions on our territory via demonstrations".

The party of fugitive pro-

Russian oligarch Ilhan Shor has

again mobilised people in recent

weeks against the pro-European

government, amid heightened

tensions between Moscow and

He has organised several ral-

Scuffles broke out at the pro-

The demonstrators gathered

in front of parliament and tried

to reach the seat of government

a few hundred metres away, but

Police said they held 54 pro-

testers, including 21 minors, "with suspicious behaviour and

prohibited items" for identifica-

Bomb scares caused disrup-

tion at Chisinau airport in the

morning, while border controls

had been tightened ahead of the

A total of 182 foreigners were

banned from entering the coun-

try during the week, including "a

possible member" of the Russian

paramilitary group Wagner, the

"We ask the government to pay

The slogan of the protest was

Participants spoke of the high

cost of living and blamed the

government and President Maia

The organisers also accused

Sandu of trying to drag Moldova

into the war in Ukraine. - **AFP**

Sandu for not doing enough.

police stopped them.

tion and checks.

police said.

test in Chisinau yesterday after-

lies for which he is suspected of

sia with a very specific training

role," the official added.

After searches on Saturday night, 25 men were questioned

who died and those who live with #LongCOVID," Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said on Twitter late

He was writing to mark three years since the WHO first used the word "pandemic" to describe the global outbreak of Covid-19.

Activists, politicians and academics said in an open letter this weekend that the focus of the anniversary should be on preventing a repeat of the unequal Covid-19 vaccine rollout, saying this led to at least 1.3mn preventable deaths.

In 2021, a WHO-led team spent weeks in and around Wuhan, China where the first human cases were reported and said in a joint report that the virus had probably been transmitted from bats to humans through another animal, but further research

China has said no more visits are needed. Since then, the WHO has set up a scientific advisory group on dangerous pathogens but it has not yet reached any conclusions on how the pandemic began, saying that key pieces of data are missing.

8 dead in boat capsize near San Diego

At least eight people have died after two fishing boats capsized off the coast of San Diego, California, emergency officials said

San Diego Fire Rescue said in a statement that a search and recovery operation began late on Saturday night, when the department received calls about fishing boats in distress off the coast of San Diego's Black's Beach.

A 911 caller said she had been on a fishing boat with eight people that had made it to shore, but that there was another boat with 8-10 people aboard that had capsized, the statement said.

Emergency crews from agencies including the fire department, San Diego Police, US Customs and Border Protection and the US Coast Guard responded to the scene and found two overturned panga fishing boats and lifeless bodies spread over an area of about 400 vards (366m). - Reuters

History will hold Trump 'accountable' for 2021 attack on Capitol: Pence

AFP/Reuters

Washington

ormer US vice-president Mike Pence has said that history would hold former president Donald Trump "accountable" for his role in the 2021 attack on the US Capitol, US media reported.

The remarks are likely to widen the rift between the former running mates, who have been at loggerheads since Pence refused to go along with Trump's efforts to overturn the 2020 election results and remain in power.

Pence was in the Capitol when thousands of Trump supporters breached the building in an attempt to stop Congress from certifying the results of the 2020 presidential election, which Trump lost to Joe Biden.

As the vice-president has the constitutional role of Senate president, Pence was presiding over what had always been the ceremonial task of approving the votes of the Electoral College to select the president and vice-president.

Throughout the siege, Trump sent several tweets, one calling on Republicans to "fight" and others making false claims of voter fraud.

He also criticised Pence for certifying the

"President Trump was wrong," Pence said in a speech at the annual Gridiron Dinner in

Washington, a white-tie gala put on by journalists that draws top politicians.

"I had no right to overturn the election. And his reckless words endangered my family and everyone at the Capitol that day. And I know that history will hold Donald Trump accountable," Pence was quoted as saying by multiple media outlets.

Some of the thousands who stormed the US Capitol on January 6, 2021, called for Pence to be hanged.

Pence was whisked to safety by law enforcement during the attack.

The former vice-president rarely addressed January 6 in the months following the incident, but has since upped his criticism of the rioters and the behaviour of his former boss that day.

He has sharply criticised Trump's conduct in recent media interviews, and in a memoir released in November, he accused Trump of endangering his family.

Trump has already declared his intention to seek a new term as president in 2024 elections, and Pence indicated that he may challenge him for the Republican nomination.

The Gridiron Dinner is usually a lighthearted event with skits and musical entertainment, and Pence initially sought to poke

"I will wholeheartedly, unreservedly support the Republican nominee for president in 2024 – if it's me," he said.

Near the end of his speech, Pence said

that there is one issue he would not joke about.

"The American people have a right to know what took place at the Capitol on January 6th," he said, according to the Washington Post newspaper. "But make no mistake about it, what happened that day was a disgrace, and it mocks decency to portray it in any other way."

"For as long as I live, I will never, ever diminish the injuries sustained, the lives lost, or the heroism of law enforcement on that tragic day," Pence added.

A spokesperson for Trump did not immediately respond to a request for comment outside business hours.

Pence's sharp remarks aimed at Trump

were unexpected at the gala.

"Was at the dinner and can confirm @ Mike_Pence definitely caught the room by surprise - lots of dropped jaws," tweeted Maryam Mujica, a former State Department official.

Pence's remarks came just days after conservative television host Tucker Carlson aired security footage of the Capitol attack, claiming that many of the rioters were "or-

Carlson's depiction of January 6 was sharply criticised by Democrats and several high-profile Republicans in the Senate. though many other Republicans - particularly in the House - shrugged off the epi-

Rubbish piles up in Paris after week of strike action

Union leader vows to keep fighting pension reform plan

AFP/Reuters

Thousands of tonnes of garbage have piled up on streets across the French capital after a week of strike action by dustbin collectors against government pension reforms, city hall said yesterday.

Three incineration plants outside the capital have been hit by the work stoppages that have left entire pavements covered in black bags and overflowing The capital's household waste agency

Syctom said it has been re-routing dustment sites in the region and has yet to resort to calling in the police.

City hall employees have for the last week been picking up rubbish in just half of Paris's districts. The strike has hit some of the most

exclusive areas including the 5th, 6th and 16th arrondissements. Other districts are served by private

firms which have not gone on strike. According to the hard-left CGT union. refuse collectors and drivers can currently retire from 57 years of age, but would face another two years of work under the reform plans which still grant early retirement for those who faced

tough working conditions. Life expectancy for the garbage workers is 12-17 years below the average for the country as a whole, the CGT says.

Out on the streets, student Christophe Mouterde told AFP that the dustbin collectors were among "the first victims of this reform ... often they have started work young ... in a job that's more difficult than for other people in offices".

Pastry chef Romain Gaia, who works in the 2nd district where bins are not being collected, said: "It's terrible, there are rats and mice."

However, he still offered support for the garbage workers despite the smelly mountains of rubbish nearby.

"They are quite right to strike," said



A pedestrian takes a picture of household waste containers in a street of Paris, which have been piling up since collectors went on strike against the French government's proposed pensions reform.

the 36-year-old. "Normally they have no power, but if they stop work they really have (power)."

The reform's headline measure and the cornerstone policy of President Emmanuel Macron's second term in office is a hike in the general minimum retirement age to 64 from 62, seen by many as unfair to people who start working early.

Meanwhile, French unions insist that they will keep on fighting against the pension reform plan despite the upper house of parliament approving the text on Saturday, a leader of one of the main unions said yesterday.

Laurent Berger, secretary-general of France's largest union the CFDT, also warned Macron's government against forcing the parliament's hand by pushing the text through without a vote from

MPs of the National Assembly, using a procedure known as 49:3 after the related article in the French constitution.

"Given the mobilisation of the population, the level of opposition to the plan (...) you cannot resort to a democratic flaw by using this 49:3 procedure," he said on BFM TV. "In my opinion, (using 49:3) would be very dangerous as it risks creating a great degree of bitterness."

Now that the Senate has passed the pension reform, it will be reviewed by a joint committee of lower and upper house lawmakers, probably on Wednes-

French unions have called for an eighth round of nationwide demonstrations on that day to keep up the pressure on the government and parliament.

If the committee agrees on a text, both

chambers will have a final vote, most likely on Thursday, but the outcome of that still seems uncertain in the lower chamber, where Macron's party does not have an outright majority.

It needs the support of the conservative Les Republicains party in the National Assembly.

However, some of them have said that they would not approve the text and there are even cracks in the presidential camp, with Macron's former environment minister Barbara Pompili opposing

Even though Prime Minister Elisabeth Borne has repeatedly said she wanted to avoid resorting to the 49:3 procedure to push the reform through, she might have no other option if there is a real risk of not having enough votes.

Launch of world's first 3D-printed rocket cancelled at the last second

AFP Washington

The launch of the world's first 3Dprinted rocket was ultimately scrubbed after several tries on Saturday, marking a new setback for the private owner of an innovative spacecraft billed as being less costly to produce and fly.

Engines had begun igniting on the unmanned Terran 1 rocket, built by California aerospace startup Relativity Space, when an "automation" issue caused the company to abort takeoff for the second time in less than a week.

A little later, the company tried again to launch the spacecraft from Florida's Cape Canaveral but had to abort due to pressure issues in the rocket's second

stage, the company later tweeted.

"The team went HARD today and we intend to do so during our next attempt. More to come on the new launch date," Relativity said.

At one point during the three-hour launch window, which began at 1pm (1800 GMT), the countdown was put on hold when a private boat violated a danger zone.

An earlier scheduled launch last Wednesday was also postponed over last-minute propellant temperature is-

Once it does take off, Terran 1 is set to reach low Earth orbit after eight minutes on a voyage intended to gather data and demonstrate that a 3D-printed rocket can withstand the rigours of lift-

off and space flight. If the rocket manages to attain low

Earth orbit, it will be the first privately funded vehicle using methane fuel to do

so on its first try, according to Relativity. Terran 1 is not expected to carry a payload for its first flight, but the rocket will eventually be capable of putting up to 2,755 pounds (1,250kg) into low Earth

The rocket is 110' (33.5m) tall with a diameter of 7.5' (2.2m).

Eighty-five per cent of its mass is 3D printed with metal alloys, including the engines.

It is the largest ever 3D printed object, according to the Long Beach-based company, and is made, it says, with the world's largest 3D metal printers. Relativity's goal is to produce a rocket

that is 95% 3D printed.

Terran 1 is powered by Aeon engines using liquid oxygen and liquid natural gas - the "propellants of the future" capable of eventually fuelling a voyage to Mars, Relativity says.

Vulcan rockets being developed by United Launch Alliance and SpaceX's Starship use the same fuel.

Terran 1 has nine 3D-printed Aeon 1 engines on its first stage and one 3Dprinted Aeon Vacuum engine on its second stage.

Relativity is also building a larger rocket, Terran R, capable of putting a payload of 44,000 pounds (20,000kg) into low Earth orbit.

The first launch of a Terran R, which is designed to be fully reusable, is scheduled for next year from Cape Ca-

naveral. A satellite operator can wait for years for a spot on an Arianespace or SpaceX rocket, and Relativity Space hopes to

accelerate the timeline with its 3Dprinted rockets.

"Long-term, a major benefit of 3D printing is the ability to more rapidly democratise space due to the incredible cost effectiveness, radical flexibility and customisation," the company said.

Relativity said its 3D-printed rockets use 100 times fewer parts than traditional rockets, and can be built from raw materials in just 60 days.

Relativity has already signed commercial launch contracts worth \$1.65bn, mostly for the Terran R. according to chief executive Tim Ellis, who co-founded the company in 2015.

"Medium-heavy lift is clearly where the biggest market opportunity is for the remaining decade, with a massive launch shortage in this payload class,"

SpaceX capsule returns crew of 4 from ISS

our crew members aboard a SpaceX Crew Dragon capsule splashed down off Florida's Gulf coast on Saturday, returning safely from a five-month science mission on

The SpaceX capsule, dubbed Endurance, parachuted into waters off the coast of Tampa just after 9pm EST (0200 GMT) carrying two Nasa astronauts, a Japanese astronaut and one Russian cosmonaut after a roughly nine-hour flight from the orbital research lab, a Nasa-SpaceX webcast showed.

The Crew-5 team launched from Florida on October 6 to conduct routine science aboard the station.

It included cosmonaut Anna Kikina, 38, who became the first Russian to fly on an American spacecraft in 20 years, and National Aeronautics and Space Administration (Nasa) flight commander Nicole Aunapu Mann, 45, the first Native American woman sent into orbit.

Nasa pilot Josh Cassada, 49, and Japanese astronaut Koichi Wakata, 59, a veteran of four previous spaceflights, were also aboard.

The Crew Dragon spacecraft, a gumdrop-shaped pod designed to launch atop SpaceX's Falcon 9 rockets, undocked from the space station early on Saturday morning and re-entered Earth's atmosphere around 8.11pm EST (0111 GMT yesterday), enduring frictional heat that sent temperatures outside the capsule soaring to 3,500° Fahrenheit (1,930° Celsius).

Two sets of parachutes deployed to brake the capsule's descent to 15mph (24kph) just before splashdown.

The mission was SpaceX's sixth crewed flight for Nasa since its Crew Dragon spacecraft first flew humans in May 2020, when $it\ restored\ crewed\ launches\ from$ American soil after nearly a decade of US dependence on Russia's Soyuz programme for space

station flights. Kikina, the only woman in Russia's cosmonaut corps, was the first Russian to fly on an American spacecraft under a renewed agreement signed in 2022 between Nasa and Russia's space

agency to conduct joint flights. Nasa astronaut Frank Rubio is currently on the station.

QATAR

Foodies delight this Ramadan

Ramadan will offer an opportunity to embark on special culinary journeys in both countries. Indonesian chefs will infuse traditional ingredients into menus of various restaurants in the country during Ramadan while special culinary demonstrations will take place at the ongoing Qatar International Food Festival (QIFF).

At the same time, Qatari cuisine and traditional celebrations like Garangao will make their way to

Collaboration around the shared passion for food will continue over the summer when two Qatari and Indonesian chefs travel across Indonesia on a culinary journey

The Years of Culture has also partnered with Reach Out to Asia to organise a volunteer trip for a group of young people from Qatar to work with school children in Indonesia.

There will be a special theatrical presentation of HAYATI (Tree of Life): Searching for The Essence of Love, organised and presented by Indonesia's ministry of education, culture, research and technology, and created especially for this Year of Culture, in Qatar this year.

In Indonesia, participants from both nations will join in a cycling tour to the world's largest Buddhist temple in Borobudur, located in Central Java. The tour will culminate with a festive dinner and the presentation of a traditional Qatari performance, highlighting the shared passion of the two cultures for sport, cuisine, and the performing arts. The longest-running exchange programme of the Qatar Years of Culture programme, the Photography Journey, will be organised this year with the support of the Jakarta International Photography Festival. A pair of Qatari and Indonesian photographers will capture images of traditional practices, documenting and preserving intangible cultural heritage in both countries.

An exhibition of photographs by the participants will be presented in Qatar and Indonesia later in the year. In the fall of 2023, the Years of Culture team is set to organise a cultural extravaganza in Qatar celebrating shared traditions of craftsmanship and hospitality.

Major events will celebrate vibrant cultural traditions in both Qatar and Indonesia during the Workshop Month (September), a special exhibition celebrating the two nations' shared appreciation for the rituals of hospitality and coffee-making at the National Museum of Qatar (NMoQ) in October, participation in the Ubud Writers & Readers Festival (also in October) and the return of the annual Cultural Festival at Flag Plaza celebrating Indonesia as this year's partner (November), as well as film screenings in both countries.

Residency programmes

The year's special emphasis on fostering the creative and cultural industries will be carried out through three-month-long residency programmes, pairing Qatari and Indonesian designers to encourage direct engagement between emerging talent from both countries. These collaborative residencies will provide op-

portunities for Qatari product and fashion designers to discover traditional Indonesian craftsmanship from local masters in jewellery design and metalworking and embroidery.

Mentors and locations were carefully selected from regions of Indonesia best known for these specific areas of expertise: Tasikmalava (embroidery) and Sumba (metal ornamentation). Each residency will challenge participants to consider issues of waste management and sustainability in their choice of materials and designs.

Final products will be introduced at prestigious festivals celebrating Indonesian culture and design, including the Indonesian Contemporary Art and Design festival in October-November, Jakarta Fashion Week in October, as well as a year-end exhibition at the National Gallery in Indonesia. Artwork by some of Qatar's brightest emerging contemporary artists will travel to Indonesia as part of the ARTJOG 2023 festival, which asks participating artists to reveal the intent and motivation behind their work through various interactions, discussions, and silahturahmi (a concept based on Islamic practices about keeping or mending ties between family or kin adopted by Muslim communities in Indonesia) with artists. Additional community events and celebrations will be announced throughout the year on Years of Culture social media pages and website at yearsofculture.ga

Qatar-Indonesia 2023 Year of Culture kicks off

By Joey Aguilar

The Qatar-Indonesia 2023 Year of Culture kicked off yesterday at the Museum of Islamic Art (MIA), putting a spotlight on projects that enhance the creative and cultural industries in both countries with a focus on sustainable and longterm partnerships.

"Our partnership with Indonesia this year is taking us to a new level, where we witness art, cultural and humanitarian events and initiatives, to bring people closer together through creative programmes in fashion, theatre, culinary art, education, sports, filmmaking, politics and museums," said Qatar Museums (QM) Chairperson HE Sheikha Al Mayassa bint Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani.

working together and sharing knowledge, we will all benefit from Indonesia's experience in building its creative economy, which includes a lifestyle rich in culture," she said at the special ceremony, attended by Indonesian ambassador Ridwan Hassan, several ambassadors from various embassies in Doha and QM officials, among other guests.

The celebration at the MIA showcased a traditional Saman dance by members of the Indonesian diaspora (Rumah Seni Al Khor), a performance on Sasando (a traditional musical instrument from the island of Rote in East Nusa Tenggara) by Ganzer Lanaalso, and folk songs by Firdha Rachmadani.

This year's programme, preceded by the Middle East, North Africa and South Asia (Menasa) Year of Culture in 2022, will feaand live performances, sports competitions, exhibitions, culinary festivals, photography projects, residency and volunteer



Left: HE Sheikha Al Mayassa bint Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani and Indonesian ambassador Ridwan Hassan at the opening of the Qatar-Indonesia 2023 Year of Culture yesterday at the MIA. PICTURE: Qatar Museums

Above and right: Members of the Indonesian community in Doha performs at the ceremony. PICTURE: Thajudheen



HE Sheikha Al Mayassa bint Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani at the Qatar-Indonesia 2023 Year of Culture opening yesterday. PICTURE: Qatar Museums

programmes, among other activities, the OM noted.

Speaking at the event, the Indonesian ambassador said: "Esntially, Year of Culture is in line with our national motto, Bhinneka Tunggal Ika, which means

'unity in diversity." "As a multicultural country, which has an estimated population of more than 279mn, and more than 300 distinct ethnic and linguistic groups, Indonesia ethnic, religious and linguistic diversity," Hassan said. "On the other hand, Qatar is the epitome

of diversity in the Middle East,

with more than 100 nationali-

"These similarities make two countries are less difficult to eration," the ambassador added. "Our Qatari colleagues have been excellent partners in opening their hearts to many new Indo-

nesian cultural experiences."

Hassan noted that the embassy and members of the Indonesian community in Doha took part in Qatar National Sport Day, where Pencak Silat athletes and performers demonstrated their skills during an event at Education

City: an exhibition of Minang Culture (supported by the Ministry of Culture and the QM) at Bait Al Sulaiti last month, which performances; and a friendly competition between the Qatar Horseback Archery Centre and the Indonesian Horseback Archery Association, also in Febru-

"Indonesia welcomes the opportunity to celebrate our robust partnership with Qatar through the Oatar-Indonesia 2023 Year of Culture," the envoy said. "Thank you Qatar, for always facilitating the diversity. That we, from every corner of the world, could embrace and celebrate our culture,

just like in our own country." In a press statement, the QM's Cultural Diplomacy director Aisha Ghanem al-Attiya said: "The Indonesian national motto of Bhinneka Tunggal Ika, Unity in Diversity, perfectly expresses the spirit of the Qatar-Indonesia 2023 Year of Culture."

"Through our many programmes, to be held in both nations, we will weave together a tapestry of relationships that are as varied as they are strong and resilient," she said.

As part of the 2023 Year of Culture, the MIA is featuring a spectacular collection of Indonesian artefacts in new galleries dedicated to Southeast Asia (17 and 18), which opened to the public vesterday.

According to the QM, the galleries remind visitors that the region today is home to the largest Muslim community worldwide, underlining the connection between different cultures through exhibits on the trade of commodities and the exchange of ideas across the Islamic world and beyond.

Displays feature beautiful Indonesian gold jewellery and tex-

The MIA's Curatorial Affairs deputy director Shaika Nasser al-Nassr said: "At the MIA, we tell the story of the spread of Islam around the world and its influence on art and culture."

story complete with the addition of galleries on the Indian Ocean region and Southeast

SC unveils YouTube series showcasing musical journey of Qatar 2022

8-part docuseries features exclusive interviews and behind-the-scenes footage

The Supreme Committee for Delivery & Legacy (SC), in collaboration with Katara Studios, has released a new eight-part docuseries that takes a deeper look at the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 Official Soundtrack.

Called Now is All: The Tracks, the first episode is available to view now on the Oatar 2022 YouTube channel (https:// www.youtube.com/@Qatar2022).

Viewers will get a glimpse of the incredible vision and effort behind the music videos and the stunning opening and closing ceremonies for the tournament, the SC says in a report.

This includes behind-the-scenes footage and interviews with artistes, producers, directors and special guests.





Viewers will get a glimpse of the incredible vision and effort behind the music videos and the stunning opening and closing ceremonies for the tournament.

Instead of just one official song for the FIFA World Cup like previous editions, a full official soundtrack was released for Qatar 2022.

The soundtrack featured hits such as Hayya Hayya (Better Together), Arhbo and Light the Sky, as well as the chart-



topping Dreamers, featuring Jung Kook from Korean super-group BTS.

The docuseries includes interviews with stars RedOne, Ozuna, GIMS, Nora Fatehi, Fahad al-Kubaisi and many more, taking viewers on a visual journey through everything involved in bringing smash hits to the world stage. There are also episodes dedicated to the spectacular opening and closing ceremonies, and La'eeb - the Official Mas-

cot for Qatar 2022. The episodes are between 5-8 minutes in length.

Recognising that music, like football, is a universal language, bridging cultures and uniting people from all over the world, Now is All: The Tracks captures

the magic behind creating music for a

major sporting event. The series also highlights the welcoming spirit of Qatar, the festival of cultures combining through song, the passion of the artistes and fans, and everything that made the first FIFA World Cup in the Middle East and Arab world so memorable.

Subscribe to the Qatar 2022 YouTube channel now to catch the latest episodes as and when they are released.

MoCI announces list of discounted consumer goods for Ramadan

The Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MoCI) has announced the discounted consumer goods list for the holy month of Ramadan (1444 AH) 2023

The list includes more than 900 commodities and the discounted prices, which are offered in co-ordination with major

consumer and retail entities. The initiative came into effect yesterday and continues until the end of the holy month.

"On the occasion of the advent of the holy month of Ramadan, we are pleased to announce the discounted consumer goods initiative from March 12 until the end of the holy month," the ministry said in a tweet.

The reduced prices will help meet the needs of families in terms of food and other products during the blessed month. the MoCI said.

The list of discounted consumer goods covers all essential goods needed during the holy month, including flour and related products, grains, dairy products, juices, salt, cooking oil. pasta, rice, nuts, meat and poultry items, in addition to non-food commodities consumed in large quantities during Ramadan. The full list of discounted consumer goods can be found at https://www.moci.gov.qa//wp-content/uploads/2023/03/ moci001.pdf



Rain expected today

Thundery rain is expected in the country today along with strong winds and poor visibility at times, the Qatar Met department has said Similar conditions have been forecast in offshore areas,

too, in addition to high seas. The wind speed may go up to 35 knots inshore during

thundershowers and 30 knots offshore, with the sea level rising to 10' at times. The detailed forecast says cloudy conditions and slight to

blowing dust are expected inshore today, and there is a chance of rain that may become thundery at times. Visibility, meanwhile, may drop to 2km or less in some

. Clouds and rain are likely offshore as well, along with thundery conditions occasionally.

The temperature will range from 22-26° Celsius in Doha

Cloudy conditions were seen in Doha and other places yesterday, while scattered rain was reported from the southwestern parts of the country, according to the Met department.

Pictured are overcast conditions in Doha yesterday. PICTURES: Thajudheen and Shaji Kayamkulam

