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The Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) announced the working hours during the month of Ramadan of the Medical Commission department, birth registration offices, and the Health Medical Relation and Treatment Abroad Department, noting that the Medical Commission department will receive patients from 9am until 5.30pm. MoPH noted that the birth registration offices will receive patients for the registration and issuance of birth certificates for newborns from 9:30am to 1:30pm, in the Women's Wellness and Research Center, Al Wakra Hospital, Al Khor Hospital, the Cuban Hospital, Sidra Medicine, Al Ahli Hospital, Doha Clinic Hospital, and Al Emadi Hospital. As for the afternoon shift in the Women's Wellness and Research Center, Sidra Medicine, and Al Ahli Hospital, working hours will be from 1:30pm-4:30pm. MoPH explained that appointments for the Health Medical Relation and Treatment Abroad Department at MoPH's building will be available from Sunday to Thursday, from 9:30am to 1pm, with the need to book an appointment through the appointment booking system on the dedicated electronic link. **(QNA)**



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani met with President of the Republic of Rwanda Paul Kagame at Sheikh Abdullah Bin Jassim Majlis at the Amiri Diwan yesterday. During the meeting, they discussed relations between the two countries and ways to support and enhance them in various fields of co-operation, especially in the economic and investment fields. Also, they exchanged views on regional and international issues of common concern. The meeting was attended by a number of ministers. From the Rwandan side, it was attended by members of the official delegation accompanying the president. His Highness the Amir hosted a luncheon banquet in honour of the Rwandan President and the delegation accompanying him. **(QNA)** Page 2



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani awarded the Hamad Bin Khalifa Sash to HE Sheikh Khalid bin Khalifa bin Abdulaziz al-Thani, in recognition of his valuable efforts in serving the country, when the Amir met him at Sheikh Abdullah Bin Jassim Majlis at the Amiri Diwan yesterday. HE Sheikh Khalid bin Khalifa bin Abdulaziz al-Thani expressed his pride in this honour, extending his thanks and gratitude to His Highness the Amir for his support throughout his tenure. **(QNA)**

**By Peter Alagos**  
Business Reporter

Saudi Arabia's recent decision to ease its tourist visa policy has spurred a surge in demand for travel from Qatar, according to industry experts in Doha.

As the tourism industry in the Middle East and Gulf region continues to grow, travel agencies in Qatar have been playing a vital role in facilitating travel for tourists.

Earlier, Saudi Minister of Tourism and Chairman of Saudi Tourism Authority Ahmed al-Khateeb tweeted: "Saudi visa application is now simpler, more convenient and straightforward for residents of GCC States, regardless of their profession. Apply now!"

The visa, which can be for a single entry or multiple entries, enables the holder to visit Saudi Arabia for tourism and Umrah.

There are several tourism activities that are expected to be popular among GCC residents who are planning to visit Saudi Arabia, according to Tawfeeq Travel Group CEO Rehan Ali Syed.

“Saudi is undergoing a major transformation, the clients are keen to travel to explore the market. We have Qatari citizens, as well as residents traveling to experience the Riyadh season, Winter Wonderland, and new tourists.”

tic places in Saudi Arabia, especially Diriyah in Riyadh, Al Ula, and not forgetting the pilgrimage traffic, as well," Syed explained.

Syed noted that many people are looking forward to benefiting from this new policy by experiencing tourist destinations and exploring the different business opportunities available in Saudi Arabia.

"This is indeed a great initiative to attract different segments of travellers to visit Saudi Arabia...since the land border is opened for all vehicles, there is a big rush. Moreover, travelling to Riyadh is just five to six hours, and Dammam is just three hours, hence many families and individuals are travelling to experience the kingdom," he further explained.

He added: "Saudi was considered very conservative a couple of years back but now with the current transformation in progress, it is indeed an eye opener for all GCC states to open and let in the tourism business. Tourism plays a vital role in pushing the economy of any country."

“Qatar had a successful World Cup; tourists who visited Qatar have been totally mesmerised by the beauty and safety of the country. It is important for Qatar to capitalise on this positive image. More than 200,000 passengers arrived during the current cruise season on world-class cruise liners, such as Costa, TUI, Aida, Ponant, and MSC World Europa.” **To Page 7**

**By Shafeeq Alingal**  
Staff Reporter

**T**he holy month of Ramadan will begin tomorrow (Thursday), it was announced yesterday.

The Crescent Sighting Committee at the Ministry of Endowments and Islamic Affairs (Awqaf) said March 22 is the final day of Sha'ban and that March 23 (Thursday) will be the first day of Ramadan.

This came in the committee's statement after its meeting at the headquarters of the Awqaf ministry yesterday evening under the chairmanship of Sheikh Dr Thuqail al-Shammari, the official Qatar News Agency reported.

The committee said the Ramadan crescent was not sighted yesterday and, as a result, announced that Thursday would be the first day of the holy month.

The committee extended greetings to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani, His Highness the Father Amir Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani, and His



Sheikh al-Shammari making the Ramadan announcement.

Highness the Deputy Amir Sheikh Abdullah bin Hamad al-Thani, as well as the esteemed government and people of Qatar and all Muslims, on the advent of Ramadan.

Preparations have been finalised for the holy month, with the Awqaf ministry reading some 2,150 mosques across Qatar. The ministry has also made separate arrangements for women in 120 mosques. Arrangements are in place for Itikaf, the practice of secluding oneself during the final 10 days of Ramadan.

Besides, the ministry has announced various Ramadan activities while Iftar meals will be distributed for fasting people and food kits will be given to the needy. Awqaf has also lined up religious lectures and cultural and educational competition across Qatar.

Speaking to Qatar TV, al-Shammari urged believers to seek repentance from God and do more good deeds and charitable acts. "It's the season of worship and discipline," he said.

Al-Shammari advised people to take advantage of the holy month by doing good for all, reading the Holy Qur'an, doing charity and strengthening family relations.

Sheikh Mohamed al-Mahmoud, a member of the Crescent Sighting Committee, noted that the believers must take advantage of the holy month as it is a "virtuous and great occasion."

Fareed al-Hindawi, preacher and imam at Awqaf, also told Qatar TV that Ramadan is the season of goodness and discipline, and urged believers to invest in goodness during the holy month. **Pages 3, 12**



Today's **GULF TIMES** includes an 8-page supplement on

# AUTOMOBILES

*Ramādān Special*





## Rwanda president leaves Doha

Rwanda President Paul Kagame left yesterday after a working visit to the country. Seeing the president and the accompanying delegation off at the Hamad International Airport was HE the Director of the Department of Protocol Ambassador Ibrahim bin Yousif Fakhro, and ambassador of Rwanda to the State Igor Marara Kainamura. **(QNA)**



## Rwandan president meets PM

Rwanda President Paul Kagame met with HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohamed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani at the Sheraton Doha Hotel yesterday. During the meeting, they discussed bilateral relations between the two countries and ways to support and enhance them in all fields, in addition to discussing a number of regional and international issues of common concern. HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs affirmed during the meeting Qatar's keenness on supporting international endeavours to achieve security, stability and development in the African continent. **(QNA)**



# Qatar, Rwanda share close friendship, promising partnership

**QNA**  
Doha

Within the solid and distinguished relations that bond Qatar to Rwanda and their friendly peoples, comes the visit of Rwanda President Paul Kagame to Doha. His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani welcomed him to a meeting where they discussed bilateral relations between the two countries and ways to support and enhance them in various fields of co-operation, especially in the economic and investment fields.

The visit is seen as a good sign of the strength of relations between Doha and Kigali, reflecting the aspiration and keenness of the leadership in both countries to boost, strengthen, and develop them in all fields to serve the interests of both countries and their peoples. The visit and the talks that will take place will form a chance to strengthen the bonds between the two sides, discuss various partnership aspects, and

contribute to boosting bilateral co-operation in all fields, especially trade, economic, financial, and investment aspects. Qatar is seen as a strategic partner to Rwanda and the relations between the two countries have witnessed steady growth since establishing the diplomatic relations in 2017. Since then, the leaders of the two countries have met regularly, and the exchanged high-level visits between the two sides have contributed to boosting joint co-operation in various vital fields and enhancing the partnership between the two countries. In this regard, His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani visited Rwanda in April 2019 and made another visit in June 2022 to participate in the 26th Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Kigali. Meanwhile, the Rwanda president paid several visits to Doha in February 2022, October 2021, October 2019, December 2019, and November 2018.

Despite the novelty of the relations between Qatar and Rwan-

da, it can be described as ambitious and promising and reflects the determination of both sides to strengthen and enhance them in a way that serves the interests of the two friendly countries and peoples. The two countries are continuously working on building exemplary partnerships between them and co-operating on many issues to serve their interests and those of others.

Relations between the two countries are regulated by agreements and memoranda of understanding that cover several fields, such as politics, diplomacy, economy, trade, agriculture, culture, sport, investment, aviation co-operation, and avoidance of double taxation.

The two countries also signed an agreement to acquire 60 percent of the shares of Bugesera International Airport in Rwanda, and Qatar Airways signed two agreements with the Rwandan tourism air transport company and an agreement with the Rwanda civil aviation authority. There is also a memorandum of understanding (MoU) for defence



co-operation between the two countries. Qatar's Hassad Food Company, which invests in the food sector, signed an MoU with the Rwandan government aimed at opening opportunities for co-operation between the two sides and studying investment opportunities in the agricultural and food fields.

The Qatar Financial Centre (QFC) also signed an MoU with the Rwanda Finance Limited to launch joint initiatives that

its relation and economic partnership with Qatar, stressing that Qatar's development path is exemplary and that there is a great opportunity to develop economic and trade co-operation between Qatar and his country as one of the fastest growing economies in Africa. Rwanda offers a thriving and stable investment system in industries such as textiles, clothing, leather, agriculture, livestock, industry, tourism, information and communication technology, and pharmaceuticals, in addition to the services sector's provision of a significant contribution to the gross domestic product, he added, affirming that his country enjoys many advantages for investment, but it must rely on itself to achieve what it aspires to, by working hard and persistently.

Rwanda is located in the middle of the African continent to the south of the equatorial circle within the range of the Plateau of Lakes, and it is an inland country that has no coasts, connected to the outside world through its neighbouring countries, espe-

cially through the ports of Dar es Salaam in Tanzania and Mombasa in Kenya.

Rwanda's area exceeds 26,000sq km, and its population is estimated at 12mn, 83% of whom live in rural areas.

In the early 1990s, the country witnessed one of the bloodiest ethnic clashes in history, but was able to rise and stand on its feet again to build a prosperous unified country, full of hope, success and competitiveness at the regional and global levels. The story of Rwanda's success is one of brightest examples of the human ability to change and transform, as this small and poor country in Africa was able to achieve great accomplishments in several areas, starting from achieving political and security stability, to transforming its economy from traditional agriculture to a technology-based knowledge economy service, in addition to encouraging foreign investments, easing restrictions on them, allocating incentives for foreign investors and opening all sectors to them.

We extend our heartiest greetings to

His Highness  
**Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad Al Thani**  
Amir of the State of Qatar

His Highness  
**Sheikh Hamad Bin Khalifa Al Thani**  
Father Amir

His Highness  
**Sheikh Abdullah Bin Hamad Al Thani**  
Deputy Amir

and to all the honorable people of Qatar  
on the occasion of

# Ramadan

We hope for more returns of this memorable occasion and wish that Qatar always enjoys security, welfare and prosperity under the wise leadership of His Highness The Amir



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# Ramadan crescent sighting: astronomical calculations vs the naked eye

Every year with the end of the month of Sha’ban, Muslims around the world await the sighting of the crescent of the month of Ramadan in preparation for fasting and to revive the Sunnah of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), when he said in the Hadith “whenever you sight the new moon (of the month of Ramadan), observe fast, and when you sight it (the new moon of Shawwal), break it, and if the sky is cloudy for you, then observe fast for thirty days.”

Whenever the month of Ramadan approaches every year, Muslims wonder how and when to monitor and observe the crescent, its conditions, and its requirements. This is due to the different

locations of countries in terms of latitude and longitude, the times of sunrise and sunset, and points of view on the interpretation of religious scripts regarding sighting the crescent. In his remarks to Qatar News Agency (QNA), HE the President of Qatar Centre for Space Sciences and Astronomy, Sheikh Salman bin Jabor al-Thani, said that according to the Sunnah, observing the crescent of the month of Ramadan starts from the 29th day of Sha’ban as people try to apply the Sunnah, which is to observe and try to see the crescent over the western horizon after or with sunset, as it becomes easier to see after sunset.

On the conditions and circumstances that should be met for the

validity of the crescent’s observing and sighting, he explained that some things are preferably done for the sighting process, including assuring the birth of the crescent before sunset and a sufficient distance between the moon and the sun, so that the moon creates sufficient light, making it easier for the observer to see it. It is also preferable for crescent observers to be in an area free of environmental and light pollution, away from beaches, so that sea humidity does not affect the possibility of seeing it.

Regarding the process of observing itself, Sheikh Salman said that observers should begin by focusing on the western side from the beginning of contact with the



HE Sheikh Salman bin Jabor al-Thani

sun to the western horizon in order to take advantage of as much time as possible to try to see the crescent. There is nothing wrong with using binoculars, and using

them is acceptable in validating the birth of the crescent. As for digital cameras, they are unacceptable because their capabilities far exceed the human eye.

Sheikh Salman said that the existing or the mentioned difference between countries is not of a big significance as religion is supposed to make people’s lives easier not harder, and Allah told Muslims to fast Ramadan for 29 days or 30 days according to the possibility of observing the crescent, which is also affirmed in several Hadiths of the Prophet (peace be upon him).

He said that some people deliberately create controversy among countries or sheikhs for media publicity by denying the cres-

cent sighting while the Crescent Sight Committee is meeting on the investigation day, warning of the ensuing social rows. Sheikh Salman stressed that there is no disagreement among sheikhs or astronomers, calling on the public to listen only to the Crescent Sighting Committee.

Arab and Islamic countries use binoculars to see the crescent at a time when other countries adopt astronomical calculations, he said, noting that seeing the crescent with the naked eye is highly recommended among Muslim fuqaha’ (Islamic jurists) in accordance with the Holy Qur’an.

Most Islamic countries depend on the spatial visibility of the crescent on the 29th of Sha’ban

in every possible place by committees composed of fuqaha’, astronomers and ordinary citizens, he added, highlighting the inevitability of collective investigation of the crescent as the best way to ensure what is being seen is the crescent.

He also noted that the duration of fasting hours in Ramadan vary from one country to another according to their latitude and longitude, highlighting the variance within large countries by area, such as Algeria and Saudi Arabia.

There will be a few-minute increase in the duration of fasting hours during Ramadan coinciding the approach of summer when daylight hours increase, he said. (QNA)



## QIB unveils ‘Double your Points’ Ramadan campaign

QIB has announced ‘Double your Points’ Ramadan campaign until April 20 for its credit and charge cardholders. Customers can double rewards on all their local and international spends at supermarkets such as Al Meera, LuLu, Carrefour, Monoprix using their Visa and Mastercard credit cards and charge cards, as well as the bank’s co-branded cards with Qatar Airways.

During the campaign, customers can double their points, in the form of ‘Absher’ points when using their credit and charge cards, or ‘Avios’ when using the QIB-Qatar Airways co-branded cards.

To double the points, the minimum of each transaction should be equal to or more than QR1,000 with local and international su-

permarkets at any POS, including online local or international purchases.

The maximum loyalty points customers can receive is 25,000 points per customer, which will be credited by end-May in the customer’s respective Absher or Avios accounts. During Ramadan, supermarkets witness high usage for personal and family consumption or for charity for the less fortunate.

QIB rewards its valuable customers on all their supermarket spends with a spirit of giving back to the community.

On the launch of the new campaign, D Anand, QIB’s general manager – (Personal Banking Group) said: “Our Ramadan campaign aims to reward our customers on their supermarket



spends during this month. With the rise of digital payments, we are confident that the new campaign will accelerate the adoption of a safer and more rewarding experience.”

More information about the Ramadan campaign and other QIB offers, as well as the bank’s products and services, can be from [www.qib.com.qa/en-ramadanoffer](http://www.qib.com.qa/en-ramadanoffer)

# Awqaf ministry hosts Ramadan programmes

The Ministry of Endowments (Awqaf) and Islamic Affairs has announced its nationwide programmes and events for the holy month of Ramadan.

HE the Director -General of the General Directorate of Endowments Sheikh Dr Khalid bin Mohamed bin Ghanim al-Thani said in a press conference that the multiple and varied Ramadan activities build bridges of communication with partners in society, under the slogan ‘endowment is societal partnership’.

The activities are divided into community partnerships, six of which will be announced during the holy month, with Qatar Diabetes Association, Qatar Society for Rehabilitation of Special Needs, Comprehensive Empowerment School, Qatar Autism Society, and HMC Heart Hospital and A Flower Each Spring Programme, he said.

Among the events will be Ramadan Iftar tables and educational activities and Qur’an

competitions. There will also be two qualitative initiatives – the ‘endowment scouts’, which will be the largest database of endowments, and the announcement of university scholarships in co-operation with the Education Above All Foundation, Sheikh Dr Khalid said. Assistant Undersecretary for Da’wah and Mosques Affairs Mohamed Hamad al-Kuwari said that the department prepared a group of distinguished Qatari reciters to participate in Taraweeh and Qiyaam (Ramadan-associated night prayers).

The Director of the Zakat Affairs Department, Saad Omran al-Kuwari, said that the Zakat Fund would receive requests and interview cases in the morning and evening, whether virtually or in-person at the Zakat Fund building.

The Director of the Department of Religious Call and Guidance, Mal Allah Abdulrahman al-Jaber, said that the department will organise 950 field Ramadan

activities including lessons in mosques, seminars and competitions for children and adults, field visits to patients in hospitals, an intellectual programme in addition to ‘Our Religion’ TV show in co-operation with Qatar Television.

The Director of the Sheikh Abdullah bin Zaid Al Mahmoud Islamic Cultural Centre, Dr Saleh Ali al-Akhan, said that the centre will present a number of Ramadan programmes and events that aim to highlight the holy month from the perspective of Qatari traditions.

The Head of the Islamic Research Department, Mishary al-Namlan, said that the department will organise a seminar on a range of different intellectual and social issues.

The seminar will bring together a group of specialised academics and intellectuals who will present research papers on the topic of the seminar and provide effective solutions and forward-looking studies. (QNA)

## Ooredoo revamps Shahry 5G, Qatarna 5G plans

Ooredoo – Qatar’s leading telecommunications operator – has announced a major revamp of its Shahry 5G and Qatarna 5G plans, a statement said. The new Shahry+ and Qatarna+ plans offer a wide range of features and benefits, with two key elements; customers can always rest assured they remain in complete control of their bills, and will not ever pay a riyal more than they expect, and that they can remain connected with unlimited voice calls and data depending on their choice of plan.

Sheikh Ali bin Jabor al-Thani, CEO at Ooredoo, said: “We are so excited to launch our new Shahry+ and Qatarna+ plans; plans we have meticulously designed after extensive market research and assessment of customer wants and needs. These new plans will enable our customers to upgrade their worlds, in perfect alignment with our strategic commitment to complete customer satisfaction.”

The new Shahry+ and Qatarna+ range includes three plans under each product; Shahry+ Select, Active and Max, and Qatarna+ Pro, Premium and Platinum, enabling customers to choose the features and benefits that best suit their needs. All plans automatically feature the Worry-Free Key, protecting



Ooredoo CEO Sheikh Ali bin Jabor al-Thani and Qatari rally champion Nasser Saleh al-Attiyah.

customers from any charges beyond their agreed monthly plan price and ensuring they remain in complete control of their bills. Unlimited voice calls and data feature heavily across the six options, meaning customers will be able to stay connected throughout each month.

Customers looking to design their own plan and pay only for what they want will enjoy Shahry+ Select, which enables customisation of allowances and the option to make changes to both allowances and Add-ons each and every month if required.

Extra benefits can also be purchased throughout the month. Current Shahry S customers will automatically be upgraded to the new Shahry+ Active plan and will be able to enjoy more benefits such as more local data and more non-telco benefits such as entertainment and lifestyle subscriptions. Customers who currently have a Qatarna 5G Platinum plan will automatically be upgraded to a Qatarna+ Platinum plan, with the plan price staying the same and the benefits being enhanced with unlimited roaming voice calls and data in 27 countries including the GCC, the US and across Europe. Nasser Saleh al-

### PHCC provides guidelines for chronic diseases management during Ramadan

The Primary Health Care Corporation (PHCC) has offered important health tips for fasting people in the holy month of Ramadan. “We, as doctors, believe that fasting is a patient’s personal right, and our mission is to help them take the right decision and fast safely,” said Dr Naela Darwish Saad, manager of PHCC’s Umm Salal Health Centre.

One of the most important risks that older persons face while fasting is dehydration and complications of chronic diseases, added Dr Saad. These include heart disease, diabetes, high blood pressure, and kidney failure. Add to that medication non-adherence as well as malnutrition and deficiency of some vitamins, minerals, and calcium.

Dr Saad advised older persons with chronic diseases to see a doctor early enough before Ramadan to check if it is safe to fast, and to manage their medications and determine the proper timings for taking them. Further, she advised to hasten to break their fast and avoid high-fat.

For people suffering from chronic diseases, Dr Saad said that they should consult their



Dr Naela Darwish Saad

doctor before fasting to check if it is safe to fast and develop a treatment plan for them. “People with type1 diabetes who are on insulin or people with type 2 diabetes on several doses of insulin a day, are not advised to fast. However, if a patient takes one injection of insulin, it should be before Iftar. If taken twice a day morning and evening, the main dose should be before Iftar and the lowest dose before Suhoor, according to their doctor’s instructions.

“For diabetics who take a tablet once a day, it can be taken before Iftar. For tablets taken twice a day, a dose can be taken before Iftar and the other be-

fore Suhoor. For some types of tablets, the patient may need to reduce the dose taken at Suhoor, according to their doctor’s instructions.”

Dr Saad noted that all fasting diabetics need to measure their blood sugar levels at home to ensure that they control their sugar levels properly. Home tests should be done before Iftar and Suhoor meals and two hours after the two meals.

“Patients with acute hepatitis and decompensated liver failure cannot fast as they desperately need sugars and they develop ascites.

“Patients with chronic hepatitis and hepatic steatosis can fast, keeping in mind that they should avoid fatty foods. They should also quit smoking and reduce animal protein to 50-80gm.

“Fasting is not advisable for some patients with cardiovascular disease such as those who experienced a recent stroke during the first six weeks, unstable angina, acute heart failure, heart arrhythmias, some cases of valve stenosis, and some cases of uncontrolled high blood pressure.

“Patients with kidney failure should not fast. If a patient is

undergoing dialysis, they can fast on the day when they are not undergoing dialysis. It is also advisable not to fast for patients with kidney stones, especially on extremely hot days.

“For asthma patients, fasting have benefits such as improving the lungs capacity and asthma. Patients can use bronchodilators while fasting, according to religious scholars’ fatwas as well as the doctor’s instructions.”

Dr Saad stated that fasting for pregnant women does not negatively affect the growth of the foetus if she follows a healthy lifestyle and diet. However, she has to consult her doctor to avoid any risks she or her unborn baby may be exposed to or any pain she may feel.

“Some pregnant women are not advised to fast such as mothers with low blood pressure, severe vomiting in the early months of pregnancy, and some chronic diseases that require a specific medication. They also should not fast if there is a decrease in foetal movement or weight, if they suffer from preterm labour pain, if they are taking medication to prevent preterm labour.”

# QF to organise Ramadan activities in Education City

Health, education and cultural traditions are the focus of Qatar Foundation (QF)’s Ramadan activities this year, taking place online and in-person in Education City.

Throughout the month, people from across Qatar are invited to participate in a range of family-friendly events, educational programmes, fitness activities, and Islamic readings and lectures that encapsulate QF’s core values of learning, culture, and community connection.

Mayan M Zebeib, chief communications officer at QF, said: “During Ramadan, we have a special opportunity to focus on our values and traditions. Embodying these values, celebrating the local culture, and participating in new Ramadan Cultural Nights – offered nightly from April 3-8 in Education City – these edutainment activities, for children and adults, provide information about Islam and Ramadan from across different cultures, including how to implement and maintain healthy habits during the holy month.

**Ramadan Storytime and competition at Qatar National Library:** Ramadan Storytime will take place on Instagram @QNL\_children every Monday and Wednesday from 5pm-5:30pm where stories of Islam will be narrated. Children can also take part in a compe-

tion every week by answering a question on a Ramadan-related topic. To participate, visit [www.instagram.com/qnl\\_children/?hl=en](http://www.instagram.com/qnl_children/?hl=en)

**Glow Run:** In conjunction with QF, TriClub Doha will hold Education City’s first glow run on April 7 at 10pm. Starting at Chef’s Garden, the 5K race is open to all levels and ages.

**Minaretein:** From the Saturday Kids Islamic Programmes and ladies only teachings to a journey through the Qur’an and preparing for Eid, there are multiple programmes and activities taking place at Minaretein. Garangao Night: Taking place on April 5 at Oxygen Park, a Garangao station will be available for children to collect nuts and candy goodie bags as part of the Ramadan tradition.

**Kids Corner:** Children can participate in workshops, Lego and robotics activities, arts and crafts, and educational games at Oxygen Park.

**Embrace Doha:** Taking place every Friday and Saturday from March 31 to April 15 at Oxygen Park, Embrace Doha will showcase Qatari culture and educate visitors about Islam and Ramadan. Activities include face-painting, puppet shows, storytelling workshops, sadu weaving, cultural sessions, Islamic geometry workshops, and Arabic calligraphy. Qatari food will also be on offer.



### Secretary of foreign affairs of Philippines meets Qatari envoy



Secretary of Foreign Affairs of the Philippines Enrique Manalo met with ambassador of Qatar to the Philippines Ahmed Saad al-Hamidi. During the meeting, they discussed aspects of bilateral co-operation between the two countries. **(QNA)**

### Assistant FM meets Afghan minister



HE the Assistant Foreign Minister Lolwah bint Rashid AlKhater met yesterday with Minister for Public Health of the Afghanistan caretaker government Qalandar Ibad, who is visiting the country. During the meeting, they discussed progress in the plan to develop the health field in Afghanistan, in addition to the results of the roundtable meeting, which was hosted by Qatar, between a delegation from Afghanistan and two delegations from the World Health Organisation (WHO) and the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (Unicef). HE the assistant FM stressed Qatar's position in supporting the Afghan people, especially in the health and education sectors. She commended the efforts made by the Afghan Ministry of Public Health despite the scarcity of resources, stressing the importance of the international community's continued support for the health sector in Afghanistan, as well as strengthening the infrastructure that most Afghan cities lack. She also praised the continued work of Afghan women in the health sector, calling for the continuation of developing the human capacities of the health sector in Afghanistan. **(QNA)**

### Official

#### Amir sends cables of congratulations to Namibia president

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani and His Highness the Deputy Amir Sheikh Abdullah bin Hamad al-Thani sent cables of congratulations to President of Namibia Hage Geingob on the anniversary of his country's Independence Day. HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohamed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani also sent a similar cable to Namibia PM Saara Kuugongelwa-Amadhila on the occasion. **(QNA)**

# Qatar roundtable to facilitate Afghan health programmes

**QNA**  
Doha

Qatar hosted a roundtable meeting between delegations from the Ministry of Health of the Afghan caretaker government, the World Health Organisation (WHO), the United Nations Children's Fund (Unicef), and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to co-ordinate efforts to eradicate polio and discuss the health situation in Afghanistan.

Minister of Health in the Afghan caretaker government Qalandar Ibad, HE the Assistant FM Lolwah bint Rashid AlKhater, HE the Assistant Minister of Public Health Dr Salih al-Marri, representing HE the Minister of Public Health, WHO representatives headed by Director of the Polio Eradication Program at the WHO Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean Dr Hamed Jafari, Unicef representatives led by Deputy Regional Director of Unicef South Asia Noala Skinner, and Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation delegation chaired by the foundation's Director of the Polio Eradication Program Dr Jay Wenger participated in the meeting.

During the meeting, they discussed the progress made by the Ministry of Health in the Afghan caretaker government to eradicate polio and identified existing challenges and plans that could be adopted by the authorities to support the efforts of the Ministry of Health in the Afghan care-

taker government in responding to the disease. Also, the meeting discussed the possibility of expanding polio eradication programmes to build solid foundations for a health system that responds to the needs of the Afghan people.

In her opening speech at the meeting, HE the Assistant Foreign Minister affirmed Qatar's position in support of Afghanistan and its brotherly people, praising the important role played by specialists and workers in the healthcare field, both women and men. She pointed out that good healthcare helps in the prosperity of local economies, stressing the readiness of Qatar to contribute by providing training and projects to build the capacity of the health cadre in Afghanistan.

In his speech, HE Dr al-Marri stated that polio is one of the diseases that the global community is about to eradicate. He underlined that concerted international efforts to eradicate the disease in Afghanistan would contribute to the total eradication of the disease, which is the goal that the WHO Subcommittee on Polio Eradication, co-chaired by the State of Qatar, is working on.

In turn, the delegation of the Ministry of Health in the Afghan caretaker government extended their thanks to Qatar for its support for the Afghan people. The delegation affirmed their readiness to support international programmes that benefit the Afghan people, and the importance that those programmes employ



Qatar hosts meeting between Afghan Health Ministry, WHO to co-ordinate polio eradication drive in Afghanistan.

Afghan staff. The delegation also expressed their hope for taking decisions on the promises previously made regarding various projects.

During the discussions, the delegations of Unicef, WHO, and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation praised the efforts of the Ministry of Health in the Afghan caretaker government during the past period to address Covid-19 and polio, enumerating the restrictions that impede their work in Afghanistan and ways to facilitate their work by the caretaker government. The delegations noted the identification of the eastern and southeastern regions as areas of the spread of the disease and the measures taken to

implement the optimal model for testing the population and providing preventive vaccinations by intensifying home visits.

In the closing session, the Qatari and the Afghan sides agreed to work together to facilitate the work of international health agencies in Afghanistan and employ Afghan cadres in their projects. The delegation of the Ministry of Health in the Afghan caretaker government shall present a clean sheet indicating the basic needs of the Afghan health sector, in addition to the preparation of signing a memorandum of understanding (MoU) between the Ministry of Public Health of Qatar and the Afghan Ministry of Health to co-operate

in the field of capacity building and enhancing the capabilities of the Afghan health sector.

Polio is one of the infectious diseases that the world suffered from in the past, as it affected about 125 countries in 1988, which led to the infection of 1,000 children daily at that time. However, the great progress in the eradication programs of this disease led to its elimination by 99 percent. Therefore, the emergence of this disease again in regions such as Afghanistan and Pakistan is a matter of concern, and hence the importance of international action to contain the phenomenon before it exacerbates and spreads to other parts of the world. **(QNA)**

## Farewell to Algerian envoy






HE the Secretary-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Dr Ahmed bin Hassan al-Hammadi met yesterday with ambassador of Algeria to Qatar Dr Mustafa Boutoura on the occasion of the end of his tenure in the country. HE the Secretary-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs extended thanks to the ambassador for his efforts in bolstering and enhancing the bilateral relations, wishing him success in his new duties. **(QNA)**

## Katara to hold 23 Ramadan events

The Cultural Village Foundation (Katara) has unveiled its programme for this year's holy month of Ramadan — 23 cultural, educational and entertainment activities directed to different age groups. Among the activities that Katara will host in Ramadan are the Islamic Stamps Exhibition at the Postal Museum in Building 22 and the Fine Art and Photography Exhibition in Building 18, in addition to cultural seminars on Arabic literature by the Katara Library for Arabic Novel in Building 48.

The Wisdom Square will host a Ramadan-associated mural, and the Creativity Square will host the Storytellers Stories. The religious activities include lectures and a Holy Qur'an memorisation competition at the Katara Mosque for male and female children born between 2009 and 2012. The activities are due to start on March 26, and its activities will continue weekly from Sunday to Thursday. Katara also launches the Katara Prize for Arabic Poetry, Katara Ramadan competition for the short story and the photography competition.

There will be also a number of sports tournaments including popular games, beach volleyball and chess, as well as intellectual activities. On March 27, the World Theatre Day activity will discuss the reality of the Qatari theatre. **(QNA)**



### Public Announcement

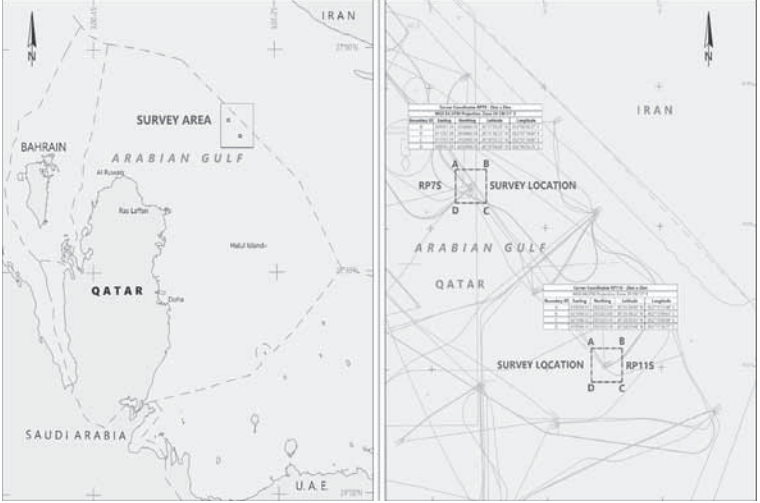
To all Ships, Fisherman and Mariners  
Subsea Survey Works Offshore in QatarGas Fields  
By the Vessel "Stanford Hobby"

Subsea Survey Works Offshore Qatar from 23-March-2023 to 30-April-2023

In pursuant to and under directives from the Department of Marine Regulations, Ministry of Transport, State of Qatar, this announcement is to inform all Vessels, Mariners and Fisherman that QatarGas intends to undertake subsea survey works by the vessel "Stanford Hobby" in QatarGas Field locations, bound by the coordinates and location map shown below.

Coordinates for Offshore (RP75):-		
Point	Latitude (N)	Longitude (E)
A	26° 31'59.28"	52° 06'08.37"
B	26° 31'58.72"	52° 07'18.63"
C	26° 30'53.72"	52° 07'18.00"
D	26° 30'54.28"	52° 06'05.75"

Coordinates for Offshore (RP115):-		
Point	Latitude (N)	Longitude (E)
A	26° 25'34.94"	52° 11'57.44"
B	26° 25'34.32"	52° 13'09.63"
C	26° 24'29.33"	52° 13'08.94"
D	26° 24'29.94"	52° 11'56.77"



All Vessels, Mariners and Fishermen are expected to keep clear of the survey locations during the operations. QatarGas takes no responsibilities for any loss or damage caused to outside parties in association with this operations following publication of this notice.

For more details contact 44426038

## Sharek platform meeting held

The Civil Service and Government Development Bureau (CSGDB) organised yesterday the first co-ordination meeting for the Sharek platform project, to introduce participating government agencies to the platform. A total of 120 representatives of 30 government agencies took part in the co-ordination meeting.

HE the President of CSGDB Abdulaziz bin Nasser bin Mubarak al-Khalifa said that linking all government agencies' digital media platforms via the Sharek platform is a significant step, unifying communication to a single platform, accelerating responsiveness, improving co-ordination and allowing for user experience measuring mechanisms, which can then be used to improve service quality.

He highlighted the co-operation between CSGDB and GCO in supporting agencies to successfully transition digitally through practical training.

For his part, HE the Director of the Government Communications Office (GCO) Sheikh Jassim bin Mansour bin Jabor al-Thani said that the CSGDB's efforts in creating the Sharek platform and its employment of advanced technology of artificial intelligence is qualitative, innovative, and a highly efficient addition to the system of interactive government communication, connecting with users on social and media platforms. He expressed the GCO's readiness in permanent and fruitful co-operation with CSGDB in supporting all government initiatives to enhance State services provided to citizens and residents in Qatar, expressing its constant keenness to improve government institutional performance in response to the vision and aspirations of the country's leadership.

The mechanism for implementing the stage of linking all digital media affiliated with government agencies through the Sharek platform was also discussed, which is one of several stages that will contribute to creating a comprehensive unified platform that guarantees a distinct experience for both customers and government service providers.

Director of Government Development Affairs at CS-GDB Hassan Abdulrahman al-Ibrahim said that the Sharek platform is one of the CSGDB's strategy most important components for government development. CSGDB development affairs' strategies focus on achieving the Qatar National Vision 2030 by developing a competitive government sector capable of monitoring and measuring the performance of its agencies and services, as well as developing them according to customers' need.

Qatar's CSGDB has announced earlier developing the Sharek platform in co-operation with the Sprinkl software company, as a unified governmental service digital platform, in a manifestation of CSGDB's priority to simplify governmental procedures and enhance communication with users.

## ARPM Tender Committee announces the following Tender

Tender No	Scope of work	Tender Fee	Tender Bond	Opening Date	Closing Date
ARPM/126/2023/TEN/DOH	Provision and Installation of Pro-Sports Artificial Grass at Al Bidda Park	1,000	20,000	22-Mar-23	17-Apr-23
ARPM/127/2023/TEN/DOH	Converting Basketball Court into Football Court at Al Bidda Park	1,000	20,000	22-Mar-23	17-Apr-23
ARPM/128/2023/TEN/DOH	Diving Centre Operations in Banana Island Resort, Doha	500	10,000	22-Mar-23	17-Apr-23
ARPM/129/2023/TEN/DOH	Water Sports Facility Operations in Banana Island Resort, Doha.	500	10,000	22-Mar-23	17-Apr-23

- Interested parties can collect copies of the tender documents from ARPM Purchasing department, via email to m.aseef@arpm.com.qa and L.cabral@arpm.com.qa during working hours 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. (Fri & Sat Closed)
- A payment of a non-refundable document's fees should be deposited in cash to:
  - Beneficiary Name:** Al-Rayyan Projects Management (ARPM)
  - Account No.** 00134022375-004 (Qatar National Bank)
  - IBAN No.** QA86QNBAA000000000013022375004

- And the original deposit receipt should be submitted upon receiving of the terms and conditions.
- A tender bond (as stated above), issued by a bank operating in the State of Qatar and valid for 120 days from the closing date should accompany tenders. **The executed tender bond should be included with the technical offer.**
  - All tenderers MUST collect their original bonds from ARPM – Purchasing department upon expiry of the Tender Bond, unless alternative instructions are issued by ARPM.
  - Copies of valid **Company Commercial Registration, Computer Card & Authorization Letter** must be submitted in order to collect the tender documents.
  - The successful tenderer is required to submit a performance bond issued by a bank operating in the State of Qatar equivalent to 10% of the total contract sum and shall be valid for a period expiring 30 days after contract expiry.
  - Offers should be valid for 90 days commencing from the closing date (as stated above).
  - ARPM has the right to increase or decrease the scope of services by 20% with the same terms and conditions.
  - ARPM is not bound to accept the lowest tender or any other tender and is under no obligation to show any reasons thereof.
  - Bids should be submitted not later than 12:00 noon on the closing date and must be deposited into the Box, provided in the ARPM Purchasing office, located at the 0<sup>th</sup> Floor, ARPM, Head office and should be in sealed envelopes addressed to the Chairman - Tenders Committee, quoting the Tender Number and Subject.
  - Offers arriving thereafter may not be considered.

CHAIRMAN – TENDER COMMITTEE  
TEL: 40341804



# Qatar seeks peaceful settlement over deadlocked Syria political solution

Qatar has stressed that the chosen path to reach a political solution in Syria has almost reached a deadlock due to the lack of seriousness of the Syrian regime and its insistence on using the security and military solution based on arbitrary detention, enforced disappearance, killing, torture, destruction, siege, the use of internationally banned chemical weapons, and the deliberate targeting of civilians and civilian objects, and committing the most heinous crimes and gross violations of human rights.

This came in the statement of Qatar delivered by HE the Permanent Representative of Qatar to the UN Office in Geneva Dr Hind Abdulrahman al-Muftah during the interactive dialogue with the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic yesterday, within the framework of the 52nd session of the Human Rights Council.

She agreed with what was stated in the report regarding the danger of the absence of a credible political process, which will fuel conflict and increase instability. She pointed out the harsh situations that Syrian people had to face while providing relief for the affected people during the earthquake



HE the Permanent Representative of Qatar to the UN Office in Geneva Dr Hind Abdulrahman al-Muftah.

recently, and the delay that occurred in the arrival of the humanitarian and relief assistance to the most affected people.

She also referred to the Syrian regime's attempts to use the humanitarian disaster to gain more time and achieve political gains, which is considered a stark reminder that the current situation and half-solutions must not continue, and that the actors and the international community should

take further measures to ensure the protection of the Syrian people, alleviate their suffering, ensure that all people responsible of crimes and violations against Syrian people will be held accountable, and reach a peaceful settlement based on the full implementation of the Security Council Resolution 2,254, in a way that achieves the legitimate aspirations of the Syrian people and preserves the unity, sovereignty, and independence of Syria. (QNA)

## PHCC implements growth charts, visual acuity test programmes in public schools

The Primary Health Care Corporation (PHCC) has announced the implementation of annual growth charts and visual acuity test programmes in all public schools in the country, in co-operation and prior co-ordination with the Non-Communicable Diseases Department at the Ministry of Public Health.

The PHCC stated that the application of the World Health Organisation's growth charts programme targets all public school students from the first to 12th grade on an annual basis, pointing out that the programme aims to provide a database and build a surveillance system to monitor the growth of school students, and early detection of cases of growth disorders that may be related to the diet or lifestyle in general, which is represented in weight loss or short stature on the one hand, or weight gain and obesity on the other hand.

The School Health Department succeeded in completing the implementation of health surveys for the two programmes of growth plans and examination of visual acuity, and the completion of all procedures and requirements necessary for their implementation.

The number of those targeted in the growth plans programme reached 93,218 male and female students, and 92,984 male and female students were examined, with a rate of 98.1%, the PHCC said.

It noted that the results of the health surveys of the growth charts programme showed that approximately 8,226 students have a defect in their growth indicators, and it was found that 43,000 suffer from short stature problems, 6,817 suffer from obesity problems and 463 suffer from thinness and underweight problems, explaining that all these students were transferred to health centres to be followed up by doctors specialising in this field and to receive the necessary

medical care. The PHCC explained that the visual acuity test programme aims at early detection of cases of weakness and defects in visual acuity among students, as school health nursing has received theoretical and practical training on appropriate methods and the health requirements followed in examining visual acuity, in addition to the mechanism of electronic documentation and the proper transfer of cases discovered for students who suffer from a vision rate less than normal. It includes transferring them to the ophthalmology clinic and the optometry clinic of the PHCC in order to dispense medical glasses and provide them with appropriate treatment.

As for the implementation of the visual acuity test programme, the PHCC revealed that the number of targeted students reached 50,065 students, with the visual acuity measured for 48,923 male and female students at a rate of 97.8%. The results of the surveys revealed 6,256 male and female students, which constitutes a rate of 12.8%, suffer from poor visual acuity, and 99.6% of the detected students were transferred to the health centres of the PHCC for follow-up and to receive the necessary medical care.

Out of keenness to achieve the goals of the programme and with the joint co-operation with the Ministry of Public Health, a training workshop was organised for all school health nurses on how to use devices that measure indicators of growth and body mass indexes recommended by the World Health Organisation, the PHCC said.

The PHCC confirmed that it was able, through the health files system, to follow up and track the implementation stages of the two programmes accurately and effectively, in co-operation with the PHCC's Department of Health Information Systems. (QNA)

## QU receives WSCUC's institutional accreditation

Qatar University received accreditation from WSCUC, Senior College and University Commission, the QU announced in a press conference on Monday.

Speaking at the press conference, President of QU Dr Hassan al-Derham which included vice-presidents, deans, senior officials in QU and others, he said: "Obtaining this important international accreditation is in line with the mission of Qatar University to be regionally recognised for its distinctive excellence in education and research, and as an institution of choice for students and scholars and as a catalyst for sustainable socio-economic development in Qatar."

He added: "Qatar University's obtaining institutional accreditation from WSCUC is an important and essential step to confirm the university's commitment to its students and community to continuous improvement, and to provide a high-quality educational environment whose objectives and procedures are in line with local and international standards." The initiative to obtain institutional accreditation is one of the initiatives that contribute to achieving Goal 5.7 of the university's current strategic plan, which contributes to



achieving the fifth goal of Institutional Excellence, which stipulates that Qatar University is recognised as a benchmark for organisational and operational excellence, and sustainability. Dr Hassan al-Derham added: "The university's selection of the most prominent internationally known accreditation institutions such as WSCUC, reinforces the university's commitment to continuous improvement and providing a high-quality educational environment for the community, based on the mission of WSCUC."

QU Chief Strategy and Development Officer Dr Khalid al-Khanji spoke about some of the desired objectives of institutional accreditation, such as reassuring stakeholders of QUs commitment to high-quality education, facilitating the process of transferring students' earned credit hours between

accredited institutions, enhancing institutional effectiveness through continuous self-improvement, and spreading the culture of evidence-based decision-making to support institutional planning.

Director of Institutional Research and Effectiveness at QU, Dr Moumen Omar Hasnah, who oversaw the process of accreditation, said: "Qatar University has the institutional practices and resources necessary to obtain international institutional accreditation. Qatar University has reached a level of advancement and institutional stability that enabled it to successfully achieve its goal of obtaining institutional accreditation."

The purpose of the Commission is to foster excellence in elementary, secondary, adult and post-secondary institutions, and supplementary education programmes. (QNA)



US deputy chief of mission Natalie Baker hosts reception for women in celebration of Women History Month.

## Girl students experience 'Diplomat for a Day'

A number of diplomatic missions in Qatar welcomed girl students from the Georgetown University in Qatar (GU-Q) to the 'Diplomat for a Day' experience in commemoration of International Women's Day, a statement from the US embassy said yesterday.

The students were welcomed by female ambassadors and deputy heads of mission of diplomatic missions, including those of the US, Greece, Netherlands, Canada, Austria, Bulgaria, Guinea, Mexico, Thailand, Singapore, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and the United Nations Offices of Counter-Terrorism, Trade and Development, and International Organisation for Migration, throughout March.

The programme aimed to encourage students to become leaders and advocates in their communities by providing them with mentorship opportunities and first-hand experience of what it means to be an official representative. US deputy chief of mission Natalie Baker said: "The programme is part of the US embassy's efforts to

promote gender equality and women's empowerment. We are committed to supporting initiatives that empower women and girls and promote their full and equal participation in all spheres of life, including in diplomatic missions."

Students were paired with female heads of diplomatic missions to learn about their day-to-day work, including attending meetings and briefings with consular, public affairs, and trade sections.

The programme concluded with a reception where the participants had the opportunity to network with other diplomatic missions and meet their counterparts.

Participating ambassadors shared their observations of meeting young women eager to learn about the work of diplomats. Karin Fichtinger-Grohe, Austrian ambassador, said: "The programme encourages young women to pursue careers in diplomacy, politics, and other fields where they can make a positive impact." Isabelle Martin, ambassador of Canada, highlighted

the importance of strong female role models in empowering women and continuing the work of integration for total and systematic gender equality.

Valerie Lusamba Kabeya, ambassador of the Democratic Republic of the Congo in Qatar, emphasised the necessity of women's active participation for the development of nations and the importance of gender equality.

Inna Cherniak, a participant, described the programme as one of the highlights of her university experience and renewed her hope for her country's future. Fatima al-Kuwari, a participant in the programme, described the initiative with the Austrian ambassador as a truly immersive experience that taught her a lot about the work of diplomats.

Sheikha Aldana Nasser al-Thani described the 'Diplomat for a Day' programme with the Royal Thai Embassy as an unforgettable experience that expanded her understanding of diplomacy and its role in promoting global harmony and progress.



**Qatar attends Riyadh meeting**

Qatar participated in the 37th meeting of the directors general of criminal investigation in the GCC states, which concluded in Riyadh yesterday. Qatar was represented at the two-day meeting by Director General of Criminal Investigation at the Ministry of Interior Brigadier General Jamal Mohamed al-Kaabi. The meeting discussed issues of common concern related to strengthening co-operation in the criminal field and exchanging expertise and experiences. (QNA)

## First Edition of 'Hayya Run' kicks off with global participation



5 Km Open Category - Flag off Time

Qatar witnessed the first edition of the 'Hayya Run 2023', a mini-Marathon jointly organized by Raheep Media and Naseem Healthcare with the theme 'Lets Run for a Healthy Heart'. The event saw participation from 750 individuals aged 3 to 60, representing 60 countries, including America, the Philippines, Australia, Sweden, India, Britain, Egypt, Russia, Kenya, and Nigeria.

The 'Hayya Run' was flagged off at Doha Aspire Park by Qatar national volleyball player Mr. Khalid Shamieh, in the presence of distinguished personalities, including Indian Sports Center President E. P. Abdul Rahman, Mr. Hashim Irshad, Finance Head of Naseem Healthcare, ICBF Managing Committee Member TK Kunhi Muhammad, Grand Mall Regional Director Ashraf Chirakkal, Raheep Media MD Shafi Parakkal, and Total Tools Qatar Marketing Manager Hashim.

The event comprised four categories, a 10 km race, a 5 km race, 2.5km and an 800m kids category. The 5 km race was flagged off by Shine Gold Marketing Head, Sameer Adam, while Stada Country Manager Karim Al Karamani flagged off the 2.5 km race, and the 800m kids category was flagged off by Naseem Healthcare Branding & CSR Head, Anvar Hussain.

A dedicated medical wing of expert doctors and around 30 volunteers was set up by Naseem Humans, a CSR initiative of Naseem Healthcare.

The pre-run warm-up session and the post-race cool-down exercise were led by trainers from City Gym. Aerobic and Zumba exercise demonstrations were also held for participants and spectators.

The award distribution ceremony saw the winners of the 10 km category being awarded medals by Qatar National Volleyball Player Khalid Shamieh, Raheep Media MD Shafi Parakkal, Naseem Healthcare Head of Branding & CSR Anwar Hussain, Shine Gold and Diamonds Head of Marketing Sameer Adam, Domasco Communication Manager Leon Lopez, Naseem Healthcare Finance Head Hashim Irshad, Libano Insurance Tele Marketing Head Govindan Kutty, Nikai Electronics Country Manager Muhammad Hashir, Naseem Health Medical Center C Ring Branch Head Riyaz Khan, City Gym Division Manager Ajith Kumar, Naseem Healthcare Marketing Assistant Manager Iqbal Abdullah, Elite Motors Representative Mustafa, Naseem Medical Center D Ring Branch Head Dilshad, Naseem Dental Centre, Azeeziya Dental surgeon Dr. Rinsi Riyas, Raheep Media Director Naseema Shafi, Naseem Healthcare Marketing Assistant Manager Sandeep G Nair, and Hayya Run Project Director Rafeeq RV.

The 'Hayya Run' was an exciting event promoting fitness and a healthy lifestyle, with the organizers ensuring the safety and well-being of all participants and attendees.



Chief Guest - Qatar National Volley ball player - Khalid Shamieh



Hayya Run 2023 - 5km Flag off, 3km Open category, Medal Distribution - Chief Guest - Qatar National Volley ball player - Khalid Shamieh, Guest - EP Abdul Rahman - Indian Sports Center President, Guest - Ashraf Chirakkal, Regional Director - Grandmall, Shafi Parakkal - MD Raheep Media



Mr. Ahmed Cosmo Trade, Mr. Mohamed Hadi, Syria - 10k Second Position, Mr. Kareem Al Karamani, Country Manager - Stada, Mr. Abdulaziz Alkhalaf - Qatar - WINNER, Mr. Anwar Hussain - Head of Branding & CSR - Naseem Healthcare, Mr. Abdulkreem Alenzi - Qatar 3rd Position



# ‘Cultural diplomacy effective tool to serve national interests’

HE Qatar’s Permanent Representative to the UN Sheikhha Alya bint Ahmed bin Saif al-Thani took part in the second edition of the Libraries Lead Forum held in Doha.

In her speech at the Forum, HE Sheikhha Alya extended thanks to HE Chair of the Board of Trustees of Qatar National Library Sheikhha Hind bint Hamad al-Thani for her kind invitation to deliver a speech highlighting the role and impact of cultural institutions, initiatives and efforts of Qatar on cultural diplomacy in the United States.

She expressed her pleasure at the launch of the second edition of the prestigious forum of the Qatar National Library, and also praised the pioneering humanitarian role played by the library in the field of developing and disseminating knowledge as an elite research institution that preserves the national heritage of Qatar and the region.

HE Sheikhha Alya stated that she deeply believes in the role of cultural diplomacy as an effective tool of soft power influencing the service of the vital national interests of states, and in making an influential position in the international arena, and added that cultural diplomacy



HE Qatar’s Permanent Representative to the UN Sheikhha Alya bint Ahmed bin Saif al-Thani.

works to accumulate soft power, whose impact and effectiveness can be stronger and deeper than hard power in many cases.

Cultural diplomacy plays a fundamental role in cementing states’ strength and international position, she said adding that cultural institutions and initiatives in Qatar play a vital and inspiring role in addition to development, educational and media institutions, as tools of soft and influential power.

With regard to Qatar Museums, she stated that Qatar pos-

sesses some of the most prominent and ancient international art collections. She also pointed to the 2022 partnership between Qatar Museums and the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, which included the Hall of the Islamic World dubbed “Qatar Hall” in the Metropolitan Museum in the heart of New York -- as it expresses the symbolic and strategic dimension of this initiative in the context of cultural diplomacy.

He lauded the other creative projects and initiatives of Qatar

Museums in the field of cultural diplomacies, such as the initiative to organise cultural years, which included several countries, like Japan, the UK, Brazil, Turkiye, China, Germany, Russia, India, France, and the US.

She also pointed to the great role of the Cultural Village Foundation – Katara and the smart strategic partnerships with international cultural institutions, and the membership of Qatar in the largest of these institutions, adding that the international conferences and forums hosted by the Qatar every year play a role in building bridges of human and civilised communication, such as The Doha Forum, which is hosted by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the World Innovation Summit for Education (WISE) and the World Innovation Summit for Healthcare (WISH), which are organised by Qatar Foundation.

She pointed out that Qatar’s hosting of the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 was the largest example of integration and harmony between well-known traditional diplomacy, cultural and sports diplomacy, and added that Qatar succeeded in hosting the most successful World Cup in the history of football. (QNA)

# Crucial diplomatic role of cultural institutions stressed

Participants in the Libraries Lead Forum – Qatar National Library’s (QNL) annual forum for library professionals – stressed the need to strengthen the diplomatic role of cultural institutions during the conclusion of the forum’s sessions.

Speaking to Qatar News Agency (QNA), Director of Research and Learning Services at QNL Abeer al-Kuwari said the forum is an annual occasion that enhances communication among library specialists in Qatar and beyond, pointing out that the forum chose the theme of cultural institutions’ role, namely libraries, museums, archives, and exhibitions, in promoting cultural diplomacy, due to the emergence of cultural diplomacy as a type of soft power for states, in bringing closer people of the world and in raising their multicultural understanding.

She added that the forum concluded with the recommendation of raising awareness amongst state institutions and ministries of the importance of establishing a partnership between public diplomacy and cultural diplomacy.

Al-Kuwari revealed that the forum chose next year’s theme to be on libraries and Artificial Intelligence.

President of the Arab Federation for Libraries and Information Dr Nabhan al-Harrasi said at the conclusion of the forum that the Libraries Lead forum succeeded in bringing together library experts from around the world, to emphasise this year’s theme on the diplomatic role of cultural institutions, which could serve as soft power in civilisational interactions among states, noting that the presentations made during the Forum raised some recommendations to promote the dissemination of the Arab culture abroad, and its integration with other cultures.

The second day of the forum saw a number of sessions, the most important of which was a seminar on “using culture to strengthen local, regional and international relations.” Librarians from Qatar and the region gave quick presentations on libraries as a motivating force.

QNL’s Eman al-Shammari presented a paper entitled ‘National libraries as political catalysts’, and Sheikhha Maryam al-Thani from Qatar University



Library presented an intervention entitled ‘Introducing library users to the history and heritage of Qatar’. Sarah al-Safadi presented a research paper under the title ‘Cultural institutions...a diplomatic tool in confronting extremism, ignorance and problems of relationship with the other’, and Tasneem Dari of the Museum of Islamic Art presented a paper entitled ‘Refugees, brave Afghans tell their stories to the library of the Museum of Islamic Art’. Topics on the mechanisms of restitution of cultural heritage property and the diplomatic role of the Palestinian National Library were also discussed. In an inaugural speech on Sunday, HE the Minister of State and President of QNL Dr Hamad bin Abdulaziz al-Kawari said that there is an increasing need to strengthen the bonds of cultural diplomacy among the people of the world amid the fluctuations the humanity is going through due to pandemics, diseases, natural disasters, wars and conflicts.

This has generated an intense and strong desire among people to search for rapprochement more than searching for difference, al-Kawari said, noting the essential role played

by cultural institutions in being bridges of communication.

Al-Kawari also highlighted the manifestations of cultural diplomacy represented in sports during Qatar’s hosting of the 2022 World Cup, with the Qatari culture being represented in museums, galleries, historical facilities, libraries, local customs and traditions.

Al-Kuwari discussed QNL’s efforts and its diplomatic initiatives as an ambassador of Arab culture in international cultural forums, and its use of cultural diplomacy tools to build bridges of communication with other cultural institutions, whether in the Arab world or globally, the most important of which was QNL’s exchange of books with national Arab libraries and the embassies of friendly and brotherly countries in Doha, collecting Arab and Islamic manuscripts and relocating them digitally.

HE al-Kawari pointed to the success of the library in gaining the confidence of the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) to play the role of the IFLA regional centre for preserving heritage materials, preserving it in Arab countries and the Middle East. (QNA)

# World Water Day: ‘Accelerating Change’ a necessity to solve crisis

Countries of the world will celebrate today (March 22), as the World Water Day for the year 2023.

This year’s theme is “Accelerate Change” to solve the water and sanitation crisis, with the aim of raising awareness on all matters related to water and inspiring others to take the necessary measures towards the most important challenges facing the population of the planet today, which is water scarcity, that comes as a result of natural and human causes and factors.

The main focus of this occasion is to support Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 6, which stipulates the need to address the issue of water availability and sanitation facilities for all by 2030.

Dysfunction throughout the water cycle undermines progress on all major global issues, from health to hunger, gender equality to jobs, education to industry, and disasters to peace.

Access to water, sanitation and hygiene is a human right, but billions of people and countless schools, businesses, healthcare centres, farms, and factories still face daily challenges in accessing even the most basic services.

Qatar, along with the rest of the world, celebrates this occasion, out of its awareness of the importance of water and the need to save it, rationalise its consumption and manage its



resources in a way that achieves sustainability, especially since these aspirations are in line with Qatar National Vision 2030, which aims to transform the country by 2030 into a state capable of ensuring the continuation of a decent life for its people, generation after generation.

Qatar is also working to sustain the provision of high-quality water services and is continually striving to upgrade them to the best levels while adhering to local, international health and safety standards, and this is implemented through a comprehensive strategy to achieve integrated and sustainable management of the country’s water resources and through the na-

tional programme, TarSheed, which succeeded in reducing the water consumption rate per capita in the country by a large percentage.

Over the past years, Kahramaa has succeeded in meeting the increasing demand for water in the country, despite an annual increase in water consumption, and achieved its strategic goals by consolidating the water security in the state, increasing the capacity of the strategic water reserve, and raising the capacity of the water system to enable it to cope with severe emergencies, as the storage capacity was increased from 1,000 to 2,400mm gallons, creating an increase of 140% in Kahramaa’s

drinking water reserves. In 2022, Kahramaa launched the National Water Control Center, after completing its renovation and development work, and announced establishing of the National Emergency Control Center.

This launching came within the framework of the long-term strategic plan 2030 of the corporation, and to ensure the flow of water services at the highest levels. Kahramaa continued its achievements and successes in ensuring water security in Qatar through the completion of many projects and works to provide safe and healthy water to all residents.

The total annual water production in Qatar reached 671mm cubic metres in 2022.

New water networks with a length of 151km were launched to improve the performance of the water network and connect new customers in response to high demand, urban expansion, and great economic renaissance taking place in the country.

In a message marking World Water Day, United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said that water is the lifeblood of our world, “but drop by drop, this precious lifeblood is being poisoned by pollution and drained by vampiric overuse, with water demand expected to exceed supply by 40% by decade’s end.” (QNA)


### QNL picks ‘artificial intelligence’ as main theme for Libraries Lead 2024

Qatar National Library (QNL) announced that it will choose ‘artificial intelligence’ as the main theme for its Libraries Lead forum 2024.

The selection of artificial intelligence for the next annual forum came during the conclusion of the QNL’s Libraries Lead 2023, held under the theme GLAMs and Cultural Diplomacy (GLAMs refers to galleries, libraries, archives and museums).

Speaking to Qatar News Agency (QNA), HE Minister of State and President of QNL Dr Hamad bin Abdulaziz al-Kuwari said choosing the topic of cultural diplomacy as a title for this year’s forum comes from the fact that culture in all its complex and multiple dimensions and aspects bring people and nations closer together, and that official and unofficial cultural institutions in any country have an indispensable role in drawing the features of the cultural identity of this country. They play the role of ambassadors for communication, love and acquaintance among the people of the world.

His Excellency added that culture is synonymous with moral and social responsibility in internal, external, national and international policies, highlighting that the gateway to achieving the concept of safe coexistence based on peace comes only through culture. The firm belief proven by the cultural history of human relations is that the various aspects of culture is the easiest way to bring people and nations together, he said. (QNA)



## ANNOUNCEMENT

I, **VEA ANDREA MARILAO DELOS REYES**  
holder of  
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**QID No. 29060800169**  
  
hereby change my name  
  
from  
**VEA ANDREA MARILAO DELOS REYES**  
  
to  
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Any objection, please contact  
**THE PERMANENT COMMITTEE FOR NATIONALITY AFFAIRS**  
within 15 days from the publication of this notice.

# Alecso official reveals plan to hold Arab forum on water scarcity

Director-General of the Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organisation (Alecso) Dr Mohamed Ould Amar said that the organisation plans to organise an Arab forum on ‘water scarcity and control in semi-arid regions’ at the end of this year, calling for participation in this specialised forum to find practical solutions to issues related to water shortage and scarcity.

During the annual ceremony of the Arab Scientific Community Organisation to announce the winner of the organisation’s encouragement award for 2022, he added that the organisation’s future action plan 2023–2028, which Alecso launched in implementing its first tranche at the beginning of this year 2023, will take care of strengthening the role of scientific research and technological de-

velopment in Arab societies, developing and supporting science policies, scientific research and innovation, deepening the role of scientific and technological ethics, benefiting from applications of artificial intelligence technology in the field of agriculture and environmental protection, using big data analyses in the field of environmental protection and achieving sustainable development goals, publishing and exchanging ground observation data in Arab countries, interacting with research results and influencing environmental decision-making, and developing scientific publications in high-quality specialised journals.

He highlighted the role of the Tunis-based Alecso, which operates under the umbrella of the Arab League, in promoting Arab, regional and international co-



A speaker at the annual ceremony of the Arab Scientific Community Organisation.

operation in the fields of education, culture, science, scientific research and joint Arab action,

and supporting it to contribute to achieving comprehensive development and facilitating communication between regional and international partners.

President of the Doha-based Arab Scientific Community Organisation Dr Moza bint Mohamed al-Rabban explained that the general objective of the award, which was organised in collaboration with Alecso, is to encourage young scientists in Arab research institutions to direct their research and studies towards all that serves the localisation of science and building their own scientific traditions whether in basic sciences or applied sciences.

In addition, it encourages applied research directed towards finding appropriate scientific solutions to the problems affecting the Arab region, linking science and its results with reality, and encouraging building scientific communication between scientists and society. (QNA)



# Al Meera launches first e-waste recycling station



As part of its commitment to reduce the volume of waste sent to the landfills, Al Meera Consumer Goods Company has collaborated with Seashore Recycling and Sustainability and launched the first dedicated electronic waste (e-waste) recycling station in celebration of this year's Global Recycling Day.

The pilot project is in Al Meera Legtaifiya branch parking lot, with plans to expand the project to other branches across the country.

The project is part of Al Meera's ongoing sustainability initiatives to ensure that its operations and services are environment-friendly in line with its efforts to translate the sustainability pillar of the Qatar National Vision 2030 into action.

The e-waste recycling initiative will

help reduce the hazardous effects on the environment.

In celebration of Global Recycling Day, Al Meera also rewarded its members with five times the usual Meera Rewards points when recycling during the weekend via any of their reverse vending machines across 20 branches.

As a result, customers recycled a total of 238,372 plastic bottles and aluminium cans and Al Meera has given away approximately QR24,000 worth of points.

Al Meera has initiated several campaigns to spread awareness of the best green practices and the importance of environmental sustainability in line with its Corporate Social Responsibility strategy.

These include promoting reusable bags and green checkout counters in-

stead of single-use plastic bags, introduction of reverse vending machines to recycle plastic bottles and aluminium cans, paper recycling, beach clean-ups with universities and government entities, battery recycling initiative, and the award-winning campaign "The Truth Bottle" which raised awareness on excess water consumption.

The e-waste recycling station will accept all types of electronic waste, including but not limited to small and large appliances, computers and telecommunication equipment, and medical devices.

The material collected is sorted out and categorised into groups such as glass, metals, plastics, aluminium, gold and silver, and forwarded to markets for use as raw materials in manufacturing processes.

## HMC, RCSI Faculty of Dentistry stage awards, graduation celebrations

Hamad Medical Corporation (HMC) Dental Services hosted representatives from the Faculty of Dentistry at the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland (RCSI) for a 5-day RCSI HMC Intensive MFD/Continuing Professional Development Review Course 2023 for dentists and a RCSI HMC Intensive Course for Paediatric Dentistry Programme.

The MFD (Membership of the Faculty of Dental Surgery) part 2 examination was also held by the following day.

The week-long course concluded with the graduation of participants and awards conferring ceremony for the 2021-2023 batches that was attended by the graduates, their families, faculty, administrators, and special guests.

HMC Dental Services chairman Dr Khalifa al-Ansari said that this was a special occasion as it was the first awards and graduation ceremony held after following the challenges of the coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic.

"I am extremely proud of all our graduates who have demonstrated high commitment and capability in managing their studies alongside work and home life," he said. "The amazing achievement in their scholastic results is a testament to their abilities and the amazing faculty who have supported them along the way."

Dr Abdullatif al-Khal, deputy chief medical director and director of medical education, received an honorary title as Fellow of the Faculty of Dentistry at the RCSI, in recognition of his leadership and support for the development of dentistry training programmes in Qatar.

During the ceremony, he was presented with the fellowship certificate.

Special recognition also went to HMC chief medical officer Dr Abdulla al-Ansari and former HMC Dental Services chairman Dr Ghanim al-Mannai for their contributions.

The awards and graduation celebration saw the recognition of the Paediatric Dentistry Diploma graduates, who achieved a 100% pass rate.



Dr al-Khal receiving the certificate and award recognising him as a Fellow of the Faculty of Dentistry at the RCSI.

Prof John S Walsh, the immediate past dean of the RCSI's Faculty of Dentistry and director of the post-graduate paediatric programme in Qatar, pointed out: "We have 11 dentists who have graduated from the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland, and we have a 100% success

rate here, while the international success rate is about 53% - so that means that the candidates from Qatar are among the best in the world."

The internationally accredited post-graduate dental education programme offered by the HMC in collaboration with the RCSI is in line with the guidelines of Qatar's National Oral Health Strategy.

## SC, MoECC hold first One Tide Industry Coalition workshop

### Al Thumama Stadium gathering follows group launch during Qatar 2022

Following the launch of the One Tide Industry Coalition by the Supreme Committee for Delivery & Legacy (SC) and the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change (MoECC), the body held its first workshop at Al Thumama Stadium recently.

The event was aimed at translating the endorsements and commitments made at the launch in December 2022 - during the FIFA World Cup - into a tangible action plan towards the goal of plastic diversion from landfill and a circular economy in Qatar.

Attendees, who included representatives of local, regional and global organisations, learned more on recycling, renewable materials and diverting waste from landfill during presentations from the SC, MoECC and coalition members.

A summary of best practices



Participants of the workshop.

and group workshops were also held.

The one-day workshop proposed a number of solutions to address challenges related to plastic waste management.

By the end of the session, a high-level project plan was implemented to encourage stakeholders to adopt sustainable consumption and production practices.

"The coalition brings together experts from across the field of

sustainability and is an example of the strong legacy that Qatar 2022 will have in this area," said SC sustainability executive director Bodour al-Meer. "Our meeting strengthened this network and looked at ways we can utilise a circular economy."

"We are committed to addressing the impact of climate change on Qatar in light of the urban, economic and social progress being witnessed by our country," said MoECC head of

sustainable practices Mohamed al-Badr. "Circular economies enable us to conserve resources and preserve our environment for future generations."

The One Tide Industry Coalition aims to leverage Qatar's successful hosting of the FIFA World Cup to promote awareness and positive environmental actions to support the local economy.

Its members include Seashore, Averda, Baladna, Al Rayyan Water, Twyla, Modern Cleaning

and Trading MCC, APEX Waste Management, the Coca-Cola Company - Al Ahlia Beverages, Doha Plastics, Jama Plastics, Polytech Plastics, UFPP Plastic, Al Meera, Carrefour, Lulu, P&G, Pepsi, Unilever, and Nestle Middle East FZEE.

Launched by the SC in March 2022 and delivered by Seven Clean Seas, One Tide is a programme that raises awareness and engagement on the issue of plastic pollution in Qatar.

## Doha Municipality action against improper food preparation, storage

Doha Municipality has taken action against an individual found preparing and storing food items improperly.

The offender was spotted while a house at Madinat Khalifa North was being vacated to implement an administrative decision regarding Law No 15 of 2010 on the Prohibition of Workers Camps within Family Residential Areas.

A violation report was issued and the person referred to the security entities concerned.

Since February this year, Doha Municipality has evacuated 27 buildings, cut electricity supply to 34 buildings, and spotted 36 unregulated storehouses inside residential areas, in addition to detecting four vehicle parking areas converted into food outlets.

The campaign to evacuate the illegal workers camps will continue until the targets are achieved.

## Qatar Museums launches Spring 2023 internship programme

Qatar Museums (QM) has announced the launch of its Spring Internship Programme, an ongoing initiative that provides opportunities to university students, recent graduates, and members of the community.

The programme is aimed at enhancing the trainees' skills and broadening their work horizons by matching their skills with institutional and labour market needs.

The trainees will gain practical professional experience, learn about various career paths, and enhance their work skills such as discipline, time management, and co-operation with competencies from diverse cultural backgrounds.

This programme also provides opportunities to network within the field.

Jabr Mohammed al-Nuaimi, the acting director of Human Resources and director of the Procure-

ment Department, said: "We encourage qualified candidates to apply before the deadline of April 6."

Over the course of the programme, trainees will be exposed to the world of arts and culture, be involved in working on many projects, and be committed to performing tasks on specific dates.

They will also receive ongoing support from mentors and management team members.

The programme is flexible, allowing trainees to work on a regular or mixed basis, depending on job requirements.

The internship programme will take place over a period of 1-6 months.

University students, recent graduates, and community members aged 18 and above can apply to the programme via the Qatar Museums website: <https://qm.org.qa/en/about-us/careers-and-opportunities/internships/>

## 'New visa rules spur Qatar-Saudi travel'

From Page 1

Similarly, Anshad Ebrahim, general manager of Akbar Travels of India, said Saudi Arabia's new tourist visa policy is expected to create a positive impact on Qatar's tourism industry, as well.

"This is a great opportunity considering the fact that now people can travel

to Qatar on a visit visa and then avail of a tourist visa to travel to Saudi Arabia if

they are accompanied by a Qatar RP holder. This is a great initiative to promote both Qatar and Saudi Arabia," he pointed out.

Ebrahim said, "Saudi Arabia is a land of diversity both in cultures and landscapes. People can enjoy the best of both worlds. They can enjoy the summer, the craggy mountains, and dense forests in Abba and Taif, as well as the beautiful beaches in Jeddah, Al Khobar, Dammam, and Jubail, among other destinations."

Citing the company's offices in Qatar, India, and other international locations, Ebrahim noted that several regional airlines have increased capacity into many cities in Saudi Arabia, giving travel agents the opportunity to offer many options to travellers.

"With the current travel trends and Saudi Arabia being largely untapped, this news



Anshad Ebrahim, general manager of Akbar Travels of India.



Tawfeeq Travel Group CEO Rehan Ali Syed.

is creating interest among avid travelers within the GCC, as well as India," Ebrahim noted, adding that the company is anticipating catering to MICE (meetings, incentives, conferences and exhibitions) movements to Saudi Arabia," he added.

## NCCCR to extend social, psychological support for cancer patients, families

The National Centre for Cancer Care and Research (NCCCR), under Hamad Medical Corporation (HMC), is set to extend psycho-social support for cancer patients and their families.

An official source with the HMC told local Arabic daily *Al-Arabiya* that the centre has adopted the psychological oncology model as part of a range of support services needed for cancer patients.

"Since the cancer diagnosis may be a challenge for patients and their families, the psycho-social oncology model for comprehensive care has been adopted by the psychotherapy unit," the source said. "This model provides an open platform to support patients and their families to promote healthy coping or coping strategies and psychological resilience."

The new model ensures that each patient receives high-quality individual care to help him overcome the many challenges that cancer brings while addressing other emotional, personal and family problems along with matters.

"For patients and their families, cancer is a journey full of challenges that requires the assistance and contributions of various professionals, including mental health professionals," he said.

## Alecso celebrates Poetry Day

The Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organisation (Alecso) honoured yesterday the late Qatari poet Sheikh Ali bin Saud al-Thani, the Tunisian poet Adam Fathi, and the late Iraqi poet Nazik al-Malaika, on the occasion of the celebration of the 9th session of the Arab Poetry Day, which falls on March 21.

Maryam al-Hammadi, director of the Department of Culture and Arts at the Ministry of Culture, said that the ministry appreciates this well-deserved honour for the late Qatari poet, and for all Qatari writers and poets, and an opportunity to introduce Qatari creations at the Arab and international levels, official Qatar News Agency reported.



Alecso headquarters in Tunis



## 1,050kg of expired rice, lentils seized and destroyed

Personnel from Al Wakra Municipality's Health Control Section acted upon a complaint of rotten rice being stored at food store and carried out an inspection campaign.

Accordingly, 1,050kg of expired rice and lentils were found and a violation report was issued based on Law No 8 of 1990 on the Regulation of Human Food Control.

The seized items were destroyed in co-operation with the General Cleanliness Department.

Meanwhile, the meat health unit at the section carried out earlier an awareness and inspection campaign targeting vehicles that transport meat to shops and the slaughterhouse.

This was done to ensure that the mechanisms comply with the requirements for the safe transportation of meat.





## Rally champion Nasser al-Attiyah is QRCS humanitarian ambassador

Qatar Red Crescent Society (QRCS) yesterday signed an agreement with Nasser Saleh al-Attiyah, announcing the world-level Qatari rally driver and Skeet shooter as a humanitarian ambassador. Pursuing the common goals of sports and humanitarian action, this partnership is aimed at advocating major social and humanitarian causes; promoting humanitarianism, community service, and volunteerism; and mobilising support for QRCS's humanitarian activities both locally and internationally. Among his numerous championships, al-Attiyah is a five-time winner of the Dakar Rally, and he won a bronze medal for skeet shooting in the London 2012 Olympics. With his exceptional motivation and inspiring personality, he has become an icon of Qatari sports and a role model for youth. "It is my honour to be a QRCS humanitarian ambassador, supporting its humanitarian operations in Qatar and all over



the world," said al-Attiyah. "As athletes, it is our duty to stand hand-in-hand with you, offering as much as we can for nothing in return. It is a message that we would like to convey to the public. Everyone would wish to be part of your team, helping people in emergencies". Faisal Mohamed al-Emadi, acting secretary-general of QRCS, commented: "Welcome Nasser

al-Attiyah as a new member of the QRCS family. When we contacted you on a short notice, you did not hesitate to accept our request. Thank you! You are expected to actively contribute to QRCS's 45-year humanitarian legacy as a leading organisation that is part of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. Let's embrace the slogan 'Humanity First'".



## Lusail University launches LU Press

QNA  
Doha

Lusail University (LU) yesterday announced the launch of LU Press, a move seeking to publish specialised, teaching and reference books and scientific journals as a link between authors and readers across various fields of knowledge to advance and enrich the global conversation. The publications will come out in paper, digital, audio and open access formats and in line with the needs of people with visual impairments, the university said. Speaking to Qatar News Agency (QNA), Dean of LU, Prof Nitham Hindi, said the move comes in line with the LU's strategic plan, which aims to enhance the culture of scientific research, highlighting that its mission is based on providing a stimulating envi-

ronment for scientific research and knowledge production that contributes to sustainable development, and promotes service and community building. With most publications available today being concerned with Arab and foreign law, the new project will start with publications (paper books and e-books) related to Qatari law, Prof Hindi said. Most of the House's books will be available in Arabic, and the most important English books will be translated into Arabic to offer a true benefit for the society, he added. Director of Publications and Artistic Works Department at the Ministry of Culture, Mubarak bin Abdullah al-Khalifa, hailed the move as a distinguishing initiative in elevating the cultural activity in Qatar, noting the ministry's support and welcome of various initiatives that promote cultural activity.

LU's launching of the publishing house with the aim of enhancing the knowledge and cultural aspects of the concerned groups are highly appreciated, al-Khalifa said. Director of LU Press, Dr Murielle El Hajj Nahas, said the house will offer a large-scale publication of the LU staff's papers, highlighting the House's policies that ensure the accuracy and authenticity of scientific publications and journals. The LU Press will also translate scientific research published in Arabic into English, so that it can be recognised globally, Dr Nahas said. She added that the House will contribute effectively to highlighting the distinction of Qatari and Arab culture, by publishing academic works on Qatar and the region, highlighting the debut textbook entitled Introduction to Qatari Law.

## Doha Debates launches Arabic-language podcast

Qatar Foundation's (QF) Doha Debates has released its first Arabic-language podcast, Lana, which explores timely issues impacting young Arabs. Doha-based journalist Rawaa Augé hosts the podcast, produced in partnership with the Amman-based podcasting company Sowt. Lana - the Arabic word for 'Ours' - features young Arabic speakers who represent different sides of an issue, but are committed to listening to one another and engaging in open, thoughtful dialogue. During the podcast's first season, guests will discuss contemporary issues such as 'cancel culture' and beauty standards, as well as long-standing challenges such as immigration and work. The podcast's launch event on March 18 took place at the TEDinArabic summit, organised through a partnership between TED and QF. Lana is hosted by Rawaa Augé, a news anchor, producer, moderator, and digital content host at Al Jazeera Media Network. Augé hosted and executive-produced 70 episodes of the award-winning show Bekasretaa (which means Women's Voices) for Al Jazeera Arabic TV from 2019-2021. The inaugural episode of Lana explores the use and value of online debate. Other episodes in the first season address the evolution of the Arabic language, mental health issues affecting younger generations



and the complex topic of immigration and asylum. Doha Debates' managing director Amjad Atallah said: "We've been able to create a number of spaces for people with diverse viewpoints to seek common ground despite their differences. We've found an excellent partner in Sowt for our first Arabic-language podcast, and we're confident that it will create a similar space for Arab youth to engage in the kind of constructive dialogue that leads to social change." Ramsey Tesdell, CEO of Sowt, added: "Sowt's goal has always been to create thought-provoking, intellectual and engaging content. When we started speaking with Doha Debates about a podcast, it was clear that we are closely aligned on this goal."

## QC delivers Eid Charity-funded aid to quake survivors in northern Syria

Qatar Charity (QC) has started to deliver a new batch of urgent relief assistance to those affected by the earthquake in northern Syria. The aid funded by Eid Charity is expected to benefit 5,750 people in northwestern Syria. This is part of QC's continuous efforts to contribute to meeting the basic needs of the earthquake victims. The aid, worth QR2mn, includes the installation and equipping of 1,150 shelter tents and the provision of primary shelter materials, which comprise mattresses, blankets, fire extinguishers, and first aid kits. QC emphasised the importance of co-operation and concerted efforts to respond to humanitarian crises. It stated that the co-operation with Eid Charity came as an extension of the strategic partnership between both organisations, and joint response from both to the great damage inflicted on Syrian whose suf-



fering doubled after the earthquake. QC noted that it seeks through this project to protect children and families, mitigate the damage to them, provide them with psychological support, and ensure their safety and security. Eid Charity stated that it extended a helping hand to those affected by the earthquake in northern Syria, in co-operation with one of its most important strategic partners, which is QC, based on its humanitarian and pioneering role towards the international community around the world. It indicated that relief assistance of all kinds come within the framework of its most important priorities to help the affected, the displaced, and refugees. Eid Charity pledged more strategic cooperation with QC through several important humanitarian projects to contribute to achieving the Qatar National Vision 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals.

## QCDC trains practitioners on supported employment for people with disabilities

Qatar Foundation's Qatar Career Development Center (QCDC) successfully conducted the Supported Employment Training Programme: Soft Skills from March 5-9. The programme, aimed at enhancing career guidance services provision for students with mild and moderate learning challenges, was based on adapting international best practices in the field to the local context. It was divided into three main pillars: enhancing career guidance provision, promoting an inclusive employment culture, and mobilising key stakeholders to bring meaningful employment opportunities for people with disabilities, particularly those affected by neurodiverse and cognitive conditions; aggregated into various training modules and workshops. Professionals from various sectors participated in the programme, including school counsellors, parents, social partners, industry partners, employers, managers, job coaches, teachers and family members of neurodiverse youth. The programme aimed to train participants on various soft skills related to employment, including hidden curriculum, social skills, stress management, self-awareness, self-management, communication, self-regulation and self-advocacy. The programme was facilitated by two internationally



The programme aimed to train participants on various soft skills related to employment.

recognised experts in supported employment for people with disabilities, Dr Stephen Shore and Dr Robert Naseef. Dr Shore, a professor at Adelphi University, specialises in matching best practice to the needs of people with autism. Dr Naseef, a psychologist with over 30 years of experience, specialises in families of children with disabilities. Upon the conclusion of the programme's activities, Abdulla al-Mansoori, director of QCDC, said: "I am delighted by the success of the Supported Employment Training Programme, the turnout and participation were

beyond our expectations. We have a responsibility to ensure that everyone has equal access to career development opportunities, regardless of any disabilities or cognitive conditions they may have." "We are particularly proud of this programme that we have put together to enable practitioners and teachers in providing the best possible assistance to people with disabilities. The programme provided them with tailored training and support to help them overcome any challenges they may face in reaching out to their students. It also helps

us to localise the immense expertise provided by our guests by transferring them to our professionals," al-Mansoori added. At the conclusion of the programme, each participant received a certificate of completion that acknowledges their appreciated participation, in addition to copies of all the educational materials provided and covered during classes, to ensure they are able to carry on with this enriching experience and transfer it in turn to their immediate circles, towards the overall improvement of our career guidance and development capabilities.

## Regional acclaim for QCDC's research paper

Qatar Career Development Centre (QCDC), member of Qatar Foundation for Education, Science, and Community Development (QF), participated in the 2023 Arab Career Development Conference (ACDC), held from February 27 to March 1 in Aswan, Egypt. During the conference, the centre's delegation presented a research paper, highlighting Qatar's leading capabilities in the field of career guidance and development, to a group of senior experts and specialists from all over the Arab world. The conference's workshops, numbering over 30, provided the delegation with a unique platform to exchange experiences and knowledge related to the field of career development, discuss international best practices, and explore ways to develop and coordinate career development efforts across the Arab world, among the 1,000 expert attendants and representatives of 42 governmental and non-governmental entities from across 12 Arab countries. QCDC's participation in the conference is a testament to the centre's commitment to promoting career development and fostering an inclusive employment culture in Qatar, a press statement noted. Saad al-Kharji, Career Programmes & Services manager at



From QCDC's participation in the conference.

QCDC, presented a case study titled 'Enhancing the Inclusion of People with Disabilities in Qatar's Labour Market: A Case Study', which reviewed the intensive efforts made by the centre to promote an inclusive employment culture in Qatar, the successes they have achieved, and the challenges still facing this endeavour. The centre has long provided inclusive career development services, with facilitated access for people with disabilities, through the 'Inclusive Career Development Initiatives' cluster, which represents a qualitative leap in the field of career development for people with disabilities. Al-Kharji also discussed transferring the knowledge and experience behind these programmes to the wider region and applying them within bespoke Arab contexts.

"Our participation in this prestigious event was an opportunity to represent Qatar on an international platform and showcase the country's achievements in promoting inclusivity in career development, and we were proud to present our successful initiatives in this regard. We believe that by collaborating with other stakeholders in the region, we can continue to promote positive change in the labour market and create more opportunities for all individuals to reach their full potential," said Abdulla al-Mansoori, director of QCDC. Ahmad Kamal, president of the Arab Career Development Conference, said: "Considering that this conference was organised to be a bridge between Arab career development experts and practitioners, I can confidently say that

QCDC's participation was crucial to the success of the conference. We were delighted to know more about career development inclusivity efforts in Qatar, and the career development landscape in general. The insightful case study presented by QCDC's delegation warrants deep reflection on their experience, and how it can enrich career development in the whole region." QCDC's representatives were accompanied by a delegate of the Civil Service and Government Development Bureau. Dhabya al-Buainain, director of Nomination and Replacement, gave a presentation that discussed the bureau's efforts in providing career guidance and development for job seekers through the national e-recruitment portal (Kawader).



## Doha Bank partners with Bank Al Habib for money transfer

Doha Bank has signed an agreement with Bank Al Habib, which is one of the leading commercial banks in Pakistan, to support the online electronic funds transfer from Doha Bank to Pakistan. The agreement was recently signed in Doha by Gudni Stiholt Adalsteinsson, acting chief executive officer and chief treasury and investment officer and Qamber Ali, Divisional Head - Business Development Bank Al Habib. Highlighting the presence of Pakistani community in Qatar, Adalsteinsson said that Doha Bank is committed to serve the non-residents from Pakistan and this tie up will benefit the Pakistani community in Qatar. Bank Al Habib has a network of more than 1,080 branches and sub-branches in 438 cities across Pakistan. "Bank Al Habib continues to



Doha Bank and Bank Al Habib officials after inking the pact.

play a vital role in routing remittances through banking channels and feels immense pleasure to provide our services in collaboration with Doha Bank. These services will be offered free of charge for customers under Pakistan remittance initiative scheme," Ali said. Sheikh Abdulrahman Fahad al-Thani, deputy chief executive

officer and Braik Ali H S al-Marri, chief retail banking officer, were present at the occasion for the signing ceremony. Al-Marri mentioned that this tie up is addition to the arrangements in place for Indian, Filipinos, Sri Lankans and Egyptian residents in Qatar to remit funds in a secure and cost-effective manner.

# QRDI concludes 3rd edition of Corporate Innovation Leaders Programme

**Q**atar Research, Development and Innovation (QRDI) Council successfully concluded its third edition of the Corporate Innovation Leaders Programme, recently.

Launched last year, the programme is considered one of the council's main initiatives in supporting the QRDI 2030 strategy of enhancing the country's innovation ecosystem.

Omar Ali al-Ansari, secretary-general of the QRDI Council, explained: "Through the Corporate Innovation Leaders Programme, we are witnessing a positive impact on the participating companies, as they are gaining practical knowledge and skills in the areas of innovation and competitiveness. The success of this programme reflects our commitment to supporting Qatar's vision of becoming a knowledge-based economy that prioritises innovation."

The four-day workshop, led by QRDI Council in partnership with the leading Silicon Valley Accelerator, Alchemist, aims to support and empower large local enterprises (LLEs) in Qatar that seek innovation to drive business growth, competitiveness, and productivity.

It brings together leaders from enterprises in critical sectors across Qatar to find out how to be champions of innovation and create effective partnerships with innovative businesses.



It is also an essential element of QRDI Council's strategy to develop Qatar's innovation ecosystem through capacity building and connecting key national entities with innovators to further their operational and strategic goals.

Mohamed al-Saqatri, director, Service Operations at Meeza said: "As an IT and security service provider, we have innovated for local companies in Qatar. We also provide machine learning and data, where we collect data to do reporting, dashboard and predict any issues that might occur in the future. Innovation is required to improve the society - where we use key technology that helps our society improve and our community to grow."

David Luong, senior manager from Hamad International

Airport, stated: "Being able to connect our passengers with our airline company 24/7 is very important as innovation helps us to continue to improve our services for passengers and airline customers."

Norman Pipitone, vice-president, Continuous Improvement and Transformation from Qatar Airways, commented: "I think innovation is always important. I believe it is a great moment now to kick it off in a new way. Now is the moment where we are the number one airline in the world, and we want to keep improving ourselves to remain the number one in the world."

Nicolas Stephan, executive director of Es'hailSat, said: "I learned many techniques such as pitching and how to create

a positive mindset towards innovation. I think that was the most important part that I've enjoyed - giving the tools to try and change the mindset of people towards innovation."

Dr Mabrouk Ouederni, RDI manager at Qapco, noted: "We learned about the open platform and new tools, as well as the partnerships that QRDI are doing to help the local industry. I think we will go back now and apply all these tools."

Gwyn Balmes, senior manager at Gulf Warehousing Company, added: "Innovation is important because it is one of the best tools to grow as a company. We learned about culture change and the mindset, including the use of tools on how we use and introduce innovation in our companies."

## UDC launches tree-planting initiative at The Pearl Island

**U**nited Development Company (UDC), master developer of The Pearl and Gewan islands, has reaffirmed its commitment to practising the highest standards of global environmental sustainability by launching eco-friendly initiatives in line with Qatar National Vision 2030 objectives represented in the Qatar National Strategy for the Environment and Climate Change.

In keeping with UDC's development vision that emphasises environmental sustainability, UDC has stepped up its efforts to make The Pearl Island a healthy and sustainable community for all residents and employees by launching a variety of environmental initiatives that contribute to environmental sustainability.

Among the most prominent initiatives launched by UDC recently is to plant trees for every new employee who joins the company and successively for every five years spent at UDC.

The initiative aims to reduce carbon dioxide emissions in the air and maximise the island's green spaces, which currently house 7,700 trees compensating for almost 197 tonnes of carbon dioxide.

The initiative, which was launched in October 2022 during Qatar Sustainability Week, reiterates UDC's international commitment to the Paris Climate Change Agreement, which aims to reduce carbon emissions.

To set off the initiative at The Pearl and Gewan islands, 600 different trees were planted thus far with each new employee receiving a certificate recognising his or her tree planting and commemorating their joining the company in an eco-friendly way.

In partnership with the UN, the Green Organisation has planted 160 trees as part of its global campaign to plant 1tn trees.



UDC stressed that reducing carbon dioxide emissions is more effective than offsetting them, which is key to achieving environmental sustainability and preserving the environment for future generations.

To achieve this, UDC urged individuals to practice sustainable solutions to the environment, such as turning off lights and air conditioners after working hours, separating food waste, using reusable water bottles, limiting the use of non-biodegradable plastic, and rationalising energy and water consumption.

UDC has also urged its staff and residents at The Pearl Island to recycle waste as a daily habit, partake in recycling campaigns, tree planting, and use products of sustainable materials, with aim of protecting the planet.

UDC's environmentally friendly practices continue inspiring The Pearl Island visitors, residents, and UDC staff to work together towards accomplishing UDC's vision of environmental sustainability and reflecting eco-friendly values through facing climate change, increasing environmental awareness, and preserving the island's marine environment.

## Tree week to conclude today



The activities of the tree week at Al Shamal Municipality for the ninth season under the motto 'Trees for generations' will conclude today. A workshop and a lecture on the importance of trees are among the activities. A number of students took part in planting trees at the municipality garden. Al Wakra Municipality also continued its celebrations of the tree week with various related activities.



# Digital technologies major enablers of change in future: UDST vice-president

By Tawfik Lamari  
Staff Reporter

Computer scientist, academic, researcher, keen squash player, doting husband and father. Professor Rachid Benlamri, vice-president of the University of Doha for Science and Technology (UDST) is a multi-faceted researcher and a distinguished academic administrator who has left an indelible mark on all the positions he has held and the different roles he has played, endowed with resourceful enthusiasm and abundant energy to lead younger generations to push boundaries to even greater heights. *Gulf Times* met with Prof Benlamri, a well-versed academic with a passion for sports who discovered the virtues of leadership, good organisation and time management at a young age during scouts' camps. He says: "I strongly believe that success starts from a young age, a number of characteristics shaped my life and made me successful. Resiliency, creativity, optimism and sociability. I see them as a must for any youth in order to be successful. "I was lucky to join the boy scouts, the school of life, and this made me work hard, be at the top of my class. I got my BSc in Computer Science from the University of Constantine in Algeria. I was top of my class, this got me a scholarship to study at one of the top schools in computer science, Manchester University, where the world's first stored program digital computer was designed and built by the late Tom Kilburn and Freddie Williams. "I was fortunate to be in the research



Professor Rachid Benlamri

group of one of the leaders in computer science, professor David Aspinall, who worked under the supervision of Tom Kilburn and designed the fastest computer in the world in 1962, namely Atlas Computer. "Being there gave me the opportunity to get an international experience, to work with scholars and leaders who made the first footprints in computer science. This gave me the extra mile to innovate, and to be with the big players in this field." Prof Benlamri has previously held academic and leadership positions in the UAE for 25 years, and transformed a number of small institutions into big ones. "The unique turning point in my life was when I joined the UAE University in 1996, as the head of the computer science department." This mindset has always accompanied

Professor Benlamri. He contributed to academia in Canada for 16 years, mainly in research, "where I built research centres in the health informatics sector, computing and healthcare, developing smart healthcare systems using AI, IoT and knowledge engineering to address crucial healthcare challenges; thus impacting the health of people and programs that are still used in the healthcare system in Canada." This enhanced his international experience after working as an academic in Algeria, a researcher in the UK, along with the UAE know-how, to give him a rich experience and a different approach to understand challenges and work from the experience he gained. This consequently impacted his joining of College of the North Atlantic - Qatar, which is now UDST. He sees this as

"a lifetime opportunity in terms of joining a technical college that was in the transition of becoming the first national applied science and technology university in Qatar." Talking about the last one-and-a-half years of being here, Prof Benlamri said: "We made a fantastic transition. We are also making our partners very active in the delivery of our technical programmes that address Qatar's needs, which are aligned with the strategic goals of Qatar National Vision 2030. These are a very good fit for the needs of the industry, with which we create very close relationships to be unique in this area." He stressed that "the mindset about applied science institutions has completely changed. The world is about jobs now - startups, creating new industries; therefore, technical skills, competencies, innovation, leadership and being sustainable in your way of thinking are the major drivers of the landscape in education in the future. We are witnessing an era where many big companies are falling down. The leading ones in terms of job creators are the companies who were not here five or 10 years ago, such as Snapchat, Instagram, Twitter, TikTok, Google, Amazon, etc. These are the main players of the future industries. "In the knowledge economy, students equipped with leadership skills, soft skills and professional competencies are the main assets for developing and accelerating the building of a new wealth for our nations." Prof Benlamri said he is grateful to "the presidents of universities I worked with, who shaped my life and provided me with opportunities to take up new leadership positions and make

a change. In Canada, I worked with president Brian Stevenson, I built many projects there. In Qatar, I am fortunate to work with Dr Salem Al-Naemi, who has an inspirational vision for applied education and long, rich experience in industry. We met the challenges and put large perspectives for UDST, set high goals for it and made progress in this big project." The UDST vice-president is of the view that applied research is a major driver: "We promote STEM/STEAM education building on our legacy of 20 years of TVET (Technical and Vocational Education and Training) excellence. We strongly believe that there are many new creative industries that mix arts with technology, especially in the media, digital communications, and artistic production, where we can lead and be unique. We try to inspire our youth that the future jobs are vocational, professional, and the challenge of the future is to be able to compete, get a job, and make a change. We strongly believe that digital technologies - AI, IoT, Cloud computing, data science, cybersecurity and 5G+ - are the major enablers of change in the future, in industry, and they are also vital to support the healthcare system and its sustainability. That's what we are teaching our students at UDST." Prof Benlamri grew up in Constantine, Algeria, and talked about his hobby and family. "My favourite sports are squash and swimming. I have been raised in a family of nine kids, I am the middle one, my grandfather was an entrepreneur, and he owned a successful construction company in the east of Algeria, Constantine. My father took over from him after being

a teacher and went into business. That is why I am inspired about achieving and not shunning challenges. We are a typical middle-class family who values culture, and our Islamic values. I am also a young grandpa. I have two successful daughters, we gave them all the support. "One is a doctor, a neo-natal specialist at the University of Calgary, and the second specialised in mental health and works at a hospital in Ottawa, Canada. They were raised in the Gulf and then went for higher education to Canada. We nurtured them well and they are very successful. They follow the footsteps of their parents, I am very proud of them." He also reflected on the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022. "I think the World Cup has been a worldwide lesson, and brought about a change in mindsets the world over. Many of the de facto western perceptions in general towards the Arab and Muslim world have changed because of what was witnessed during the World Cup - the ability to run a mega project with excellence, and people in our region have the leadership and are able to run such a scale project in all its aspects. Also, the cultural perspective, that this part of the world is a very safe place. Those who came here experienced a very social and friendly atmosphere, and discovered the real Islamic values, a safe and hospitable society and a wealthy nation. "From our perspective, making Qatar a regional educational hub and to promote study in Qatar, where we provide education, empower youth to make a change, and a very safe student life."



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**GULF TIMES**

# End to era of easy money and race to contain the banking crisis

Policymakers are racing to ease growth strains and a loss of confidence in the global financial system after the collapse of Silicon Valley Bank and as UBS Group agreed to buy Credit Suisse Group in a government-brokered deal.

Over the weekend, the Federal Reserve and five other central banks announced co-ordinated action to boost liquidity in US dollar swap arrangements.

Central banks opened spigots wide to keep the global financial crisis of 2008 from triggering a depression, using low interest rates and other measures to try to stimulate business activity.

They kept rates low for years in the face of a notably anaemic recovery, then opened the faucets again when the pandemic struck: The Fed cut interest rates back to near zero and didn't raise them until March 2022.

It helped fuel a period of extraordinary growth in US financial markets, save for the short, sharp pandemic drop in 2020.

The US stock market rose more than 580% after the financial crisis, accounting for price gains and dividend payments.

It also led to a massive increase in debt taken on by companies and countries.

From 2007 to 2020, government debt as a share of gross domestic product globally jumped to 98% from 58%, and non-financial corporate debt as a share of GDP surged to 97% from 77%, according to data compiled by Ed Altman, professor emeritus of finance at New York University's Stern School of Business.

**No banks were unaffected by the interest-rate changes: At the end of 2022, according to the FDIC, US banks had suffered \$620bn in losses on their holdings**

It also left the Fed facing even greater difficulties in balancing its inflation fight against the damage aggressive monetary policy can cause.

Lending rules were tightened after the collapse of credit markets in 2008, especially for the largest banks, leading to bolstered confidence in the financial system's resilience.

But no banks were unaffected by the interest-rate changes: At the end of 2022, according to the Federal Deposit Insurance Corp (FDIC), banks had suffered \$620bn in losses on their holdings.

JPMorgan Chase has estimated the US economy faces a potential hit to gross domestic product of a half to a full percentage point from diminished credit growth in the aftermath of the latest banking-sector troubles.

The worst outcome would be a giant bank failure that would dry up the flow of credit and almost guarantee a recession.

Credit Suisse's crisis came shortly after the failure of three US regional lenders and underscored how some less well-managed financial institutions have struggled since the era of rock-bottom interest rates came to an end.

Its demise may push other banks to lower their risk profile, which means issuing fewer of the loans that enable economies to grow. That would make it harder for central banks to keep raising benchmark rates to cool red-hot inflation without causing recessions.

Investors have been abandoning bets on more rate hikes and now see US rate cuts coming as early as the summer.

European Central Bank president Christine Lagarde said on March 16 that the financial market turmoil could hit credit conditions and dampen confidence. However, she said the banking sector is "in a much, much stronger position than where it was back in 2008."

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# Waking up to the world's water crisis

By **Quentin Grafton, Joyeeta Gupta**  
and **Aromar Revi**  
New York City

The world is becoming accustomed to the drip-drip of catastrophic headlines following each new climate-driven disaster. Increasingly frequent and severe heatwaves are causing wildfires in California and widespread coral die-offs in Australia. Unprecedented floods have wreaked havoc in Pakistan, Germany, China, and New Zealand. Drought in the Horn of Africa is causing famine for millions. And this list could go on.

The common element underlying all these cataclysms is water. From the forced shutdown of nuclear reactors in France to the heavy snowfall that covered large swaths of North America in December, or the recent cholera outbreak in Lebanon, we are witnessing the symptoms of a mounting global water crisis – either too much, too little, or too dirty.

Yet water remains mostly absent from global discussions. While concerns about the geopolitical order, climate change, and the Covid-19 pandemic have understandably been in the spotlight, water is rarely discussed outside the context of humanitarian responses to local, national, or transboundary floods or droughts. This is a major blind spot: In the World Economic Forum's 2023 Global Risks Report, nine of the ten biggest risks for the next decade have a water-related component.

For at least the last 5,000 years, human communities and civilisations have deliberately regulated water in order to survive. Even today, many people see water as a gift from God – or, in more secular terms, as a key part of a universal cycle that demands our respect and appreciation. However, in most places where water is “controlled” through dams and pipes, and made safe and available around the clock, we have come to take it for granted. And when concerns about access to safe water or exposure to extreme weather events are raised, they are generally ignored or treated as a low priority.

This apathy is no longer tenable. The injustices associated with water-driven disasters are growing, and the global water cycle itself is changing. Human freshwater use has exceeded blue-water capacity (rivers, lakes, and aquifers), creating huge risks for everyone and the planet's ecosystems. Around 20% of global water consumption for irrigation now comes from overuse of groundwater sources, and about 10% of the world's food trade comes from non-renewable groundwater.

Climate change is amplifying these challenges. Global warming increases demand for water as temperatures rise and as water requirements for food increase with the decline in relative air humidity. By 2070, two-thirds of the world's land mass will experience a reduction in terrestrial water storage, and the land area subject to extreme hydrological droughts could more than

double to 8%. Southwestern South America, Mediterranean Europe, and North Africa are all projected to suffer unprecedented and extreme drought conditions by 2050.

The UN 2023 Water Conference in March – the first such gathering in almost a half-century – must mark a turning point in our relationship with water and the water cycle. Only by fundamentally re-examining our relationship with water, revaluing its many uses, and treating it as a local and global common good can we achieve a safe and just future.

As the lead experts at the Global Commission on the Economics of Water, we see three areas that require transformation. First, we must consider the entire water cycle and how it is connected with biodiversity, the climate, human well-being, and ecosystem health – all key factors in socioeconomic and ecological prosperity. That means “connecting the dots” and promoting resilient relationships between water and food, water and energy, and water and the environment.

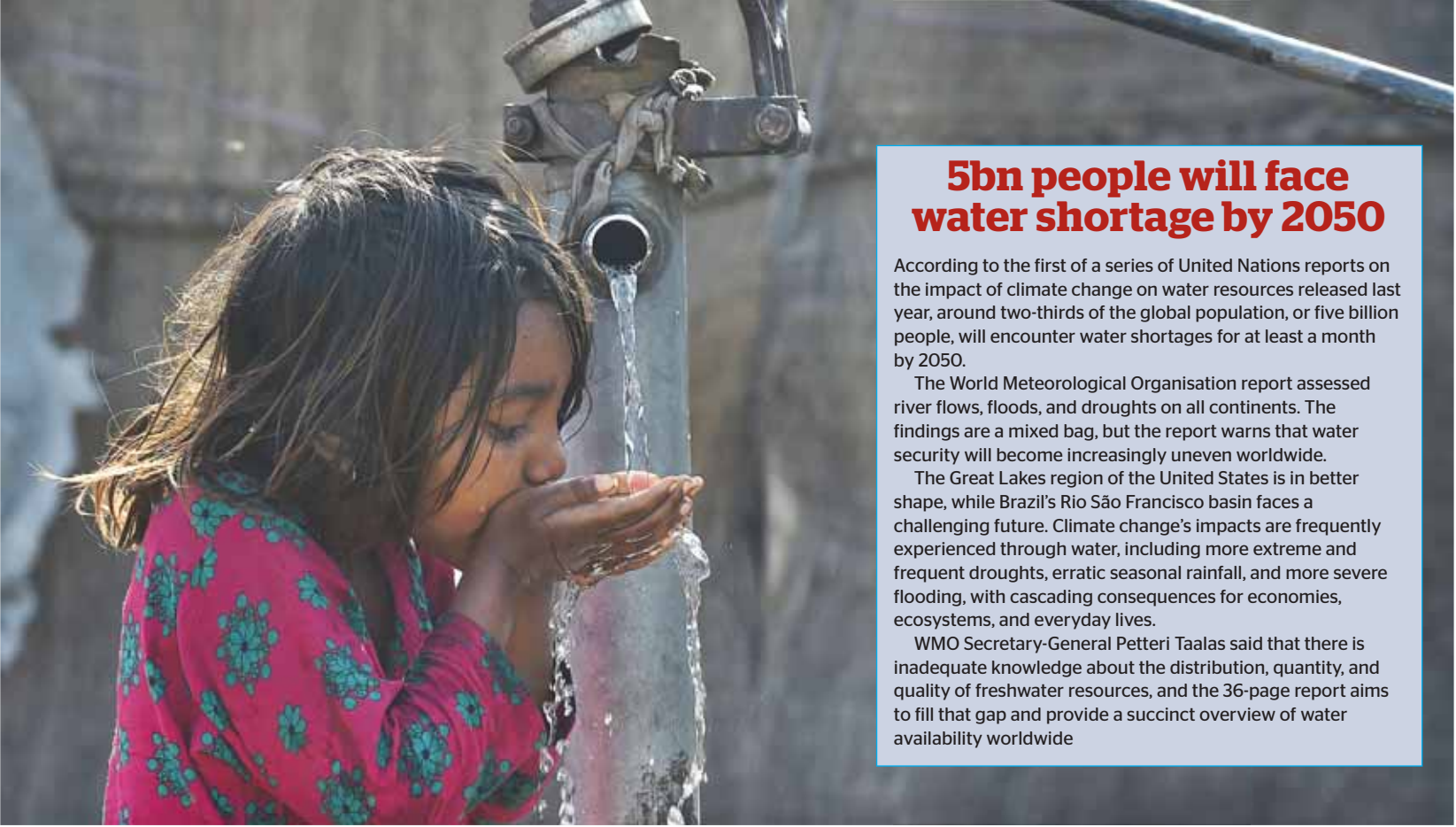
Second, water and the water cycle must be governed as global common goods. The ongoing proliferation of water crises calls for a new economic framework based on a systems approach to the water cycle, societies, and economies. We must develop a better understanding of existing “lock-ins” (including property rights, bilateral treaties, and corruption) and other structural challenges that impede water reallocation for the common good.

Moreover, an inclusive interdisciplinary framework – with a portfolio of new instruments and metrics – is needed to manage the systemic risks associated with the water cycle and its alteration by humans. Creating such a framework must begin by acknowledging water's central role in driving economic, sociocultural, and environmental change.

Lastly, we must bring everyone into the decision-making process – starting with marginalised communities – to develop new strategies for properly valuing water. When nature and freshwater are not valued in the marketplace, we still pay a price for their misuse, which increases dramatically when we cross planetary boundaries.

The UN 2023 Water Conference offers a unique opportunity for the world to respond effectively to a critically important but neglected issue. Confronted with the world water crisis, we can either embark on a sustainable and just pathway or carry on with business as usual. The survival of human civilisation as we know it demands that we make the right choice. – Project Syndicate

- *Quentin Grafton is Professor of Economics at the Crawford School of Public Policy at Australian National University.*
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- *Aromar Revi is Director of the Indian Institute for Human Settlements.*



A Pakistani girl drinks water from a hand water pump in Lahore on World Water Day today. (AFP)

## 5bn people will face water shortage by 2050

According to the first of a series of United Nations reports on the impact of climate change on water resources released last year, around two-thirds of the global population, or five billion people, will encounter water shortages for at least a month by 2050.

The World Meteorological Organisation report assessed river flows, floods, and droughts on all continents. The findings are a mixed bag, but the report warns that water security will become increasingly uneven worldwide.

The Great Lakes region of the United States is in better shape, while Brazil's Rio São Francisco basin faces a challenging future. Climate change's impacts are frequently experienced through water, including more extreme and frequent droughts, erratic seasonal rainfall, and more severe flooding, with cascading consequences for economies, ecosystems, and everyday lives.

WMO Secretary-General Petteri Taalas said that there is inadequate knowledge about the distribution, quantity, and quality of freshwater resources, and the 36-page report aims to fill that gap and provide a succinct overview of water availability worldwide



Johnson denies lying over ‘partygate’ on showdown eve

Britain's former prime minister Boris Johnson said yesterday he inadvertently misled parliament over the “Partygate” scandal but blamed top aides, ahead of a televised grilling that could determine his political fate. Johnson released a 52-page dossier detailing why he denied breaking the rules over two years of Covid lockdowns, when his staff were often partying in 10 Downing Street. He was fined himself by police for one gathering, along with his then finance minister and current Prime Minister Rishi Sunak. The former Conservative leader apologised and corrected the parliamentary record last May after previously insisting to MPs that the gatherings were above board. Johnson refused to quit at the time but did so in July, after a ministerial rebellion over a separate ethics scandal, and the stakes are high as his supporters agitate now for his return to power. “I did not intentionally or recklessly mislead the House on 1 December 2021, 8 December 2021, or on any other date,” he wrote in the submission, which was reportedly drafted by one of London's most expensive lawyers. “I would never have dreamed of doing so.” A guilty verdict could lead to his suspension from the House of Commons. If the suspension is more than 10 sitting days, it could trigger a special election for his west London seat.

Macron defiant amid pension fury

French President Emmanuel Macron appeared defiant yesterday after his government narrowly survived no-confidence votes, telling allies he would stand by his beleaguered prime minister. Ignoring calls from opponents, Macron said there would be no government reshuffle, no fresh parliamentary elections and no referendum on his controversial pension reform, even in the face of widespread protests that have brought millions into the streets. Police arrested another 234 people in Paris on Monday night during clashes between protesters and security forces, with several groups burning trash bins, bikes and other objects. The latest unrest came after Macron's centrist government narrowly survived two no-confidence motions in parliament on Monday, clearing the way for the legislation to raise the retirement age from 62 to 64 to enter into force.

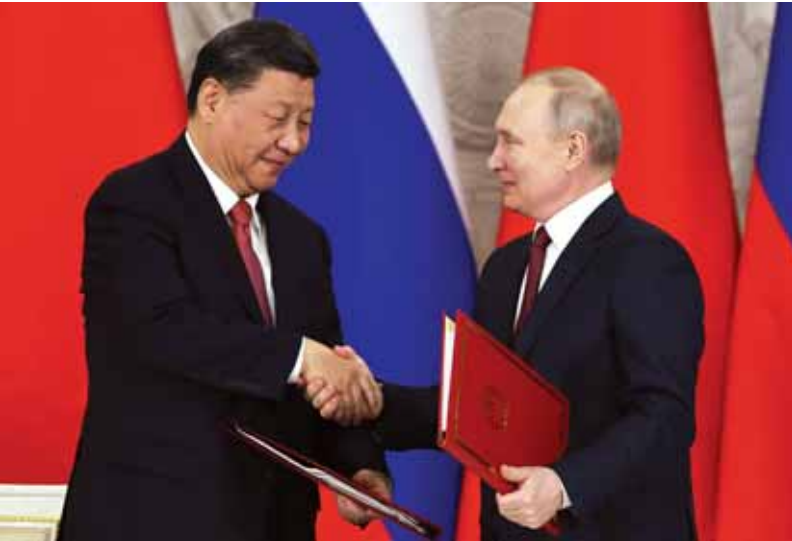
Quake hits Pakistan and Afghanistan

A strong earthquake lasting for at least 30 seconds was felt across much of Afghanistan, Pakistan and parts of India last night, with the United States Geological Survey putting the magnitude at 6.5. “People ran out of their houses and were reciting the Qur'an,” an AFP correspondent in Pakistani city of Rawalpindi said, with similar reports coming from elsewhere in the country and in Afghanistan. USGS said the quake was centred near Jurm in northeastern Afghanistan and had a depth of 187km. Afghanistan is frequently hit by earthquakes, especially in the Hindu Kush mountain range, which lies near the junction of the Eurasian and Indian tectonic plates.

Putin: Chinese proposal could be basis for peace in Ukraine

Reuters  
Moscow

Russian President Vladimir Putin said after talks with Chinese leader Xi Jinping yesterday that Chinese proposals could be used as the basis of a peace settlement in Ukraine, but that the West and Kyiv were not yet ready. In a joint statement issued at the end of Xi's state visit to Moscow, the two men cautioned against any steps that might push the Ukraine conflict into an “uncontrollable phase”, adding pointedly that there could be no winners in a nuclear war. Putin accused Western powers of fighting “to the last Ukrainian”, while Xi reiterated China's “neutral position” on Ukraine and called for dialogue. “We believe that many of the provisions of the peace plan put forward by China are consonant with Russian approaches and can be taken as the basis for a peaceful settlement when they are ready for that in the West and in Kyiv. However, so far we see no such readiness from their side,” Putin said. China's proposal — a 12-point paper calling for a de-escalation and eventual



Russian President Vladimir Putin shakes hands with Chinese President Xi Jinping during a signing ceremony following their talks at the Kremlin in Moscow yesterday. (Reuters)

ceasefire in Ukraine — lacks details on how to end the war. The United States has been dismissive of the Chinese proposal, given Beijing's refusal to condemn Russia over Ukraine, and says a ceasefire now would lock in

Russian territorial gains and give Putin's army more time to regroup. Kyiv has welcomed China's diplomatic involvement but says Russia must pull its troops out of Ukraine, and underlines the importance of Ukraine's territorial integ-

India resists calls for more air access

India dampened foreign airline hopes for more access to its airports yesterday, with its aviation minister urging domestic carriers to fly long-haul and help establish new hubs as it seeks to recapture control of Indian travel from foreign rivals. It is also asking aerospace companies to step-up local production and will soon finalise rules to safeguard rights of lessors on repossession of jets, in a bid to level up with major global aviation markets, Jyotiraditya Scindia told Reuters. “India is now at that inflection point,” Scindia said during an interview at his office in New Delhi. “We are going to see an explosion of air traffic in India in the years to come,” he said, adding he wanted domestic carriers to look at international expansion with greater focus. The South Asian nation is one of the fastest-growing aviation markets in the world where demand for air travel is outstripping the supply of planes, but the bulk of international traffic is captured by global carriers with efficient hubs. Now, India wants to harness these economic gains for itself by boosting growth of its airlines and airports. Air India last month placed a record order for 470 jets and is making an aggressive push in the international market. Domestic rival IndiGo is also in talks for a new order of more than 500 planes, Reuters reported earlier this month, even as it waits to take delivery of the same number from an older order. Scindia said India was not looking at increasing air traffic quotas with Gulf states and instead wanted Indian carriers to offer non-stop long haul flights on larger planes. He said Air India's widebody plane order and IndiGo's twin-aisles to some destinations were signs that “transition” had begun.



French freed hostage journalist Olivier Dubois (left), who was held hostage in Mali for nearly two years, is welcomed by family members and French President Emmanuel Macron (second right) upon his arrival at the Villacoublay airport yesterday. (AFP)

Pak parliament summoned to ‘take important decisions’

Reuters  
Islamabad

Pakistan's parliament is to meet in a special joint session today to “take important decisions” to enforce the state's authority, media reported, in the midst of prolonged anti-government defiance by former prime minister Imran Khan. Former cricket star Khan was prime minister from 2018 until 2022, when he was ousted from office in a controversial parliamentary vote. Since then, he has been demanding a new election and holding protests across the country to press his case. He also forsook his party's governments in the Punjab and Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa provinces, necessitating elections there within 90 days, which the ruling coalition tried to thwart but the Supreme Court ordered it to do so. His supporters have clashed with police several times over recent days as authorities try to force him to appear in court in connection with various cases brought against him. The office of the speaker of parliament, in calling today's joint session, did not give a reason but the state-run Associated Press of Pakistan (APP) said the ruling coalition had called for parliament to “take important decisions” to ensure the writ of the state was enforced. The APP, reporting on a meet - ing attended by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and his cabinet,



Pakistan's former prime minister Imran Khan (centre) leaves after appearing before a court for a protective bail in relation to two cases in Lahore yesterday. (AFP)

cited the participants as saying Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) was not a political party but “rather a gang of militants”, and its “enmity against the state” could not be tolerated. Sharif has rejected Khan's demand for a new election saying it would be held as scheduled later this year. Parliament will meet in the capital, Islamabad, as Khan's supporters gather for his latest rally in the eastern city of Lahore. The clashes between Khan's supporters and the security forces have brought a new round of political instability to the nuclear-armed country of 220mn people, which is in the midst of a crippling economic crisis. Khan says the government and the powerful military are try-

ing to stop him from contesting the next election, scheduled for November. If convicted in a case, Khan could face disqualification from the polls. Both the government and military deny this. Police have arrested hundreds of Khan's supporters in raids in recent days in response to the clashes. Khan appeared yesterday before the Lahore High Court to apply for protective bail in fresh cases against him, PTI leader Mussarat Jamshed Cheema told Reuters. The former prime minister is also appearing before a bench hearing a case he has filed against the police for raiding his home, which he says was in violation of court orders granting him protective bail last week.

Judge to Trump: Trial date in NY civil fraud case ‘written in stone’



SETBACK: Donald Trump

A New York judge yesterday rejected former US president Donald Trump's bid to delay the scheduled October 2 trial in state Attorney General Letitia James' civil fraud lawsuit, calling the date “written in stone.” Justice Arthur Engoron in Supreme Court in Manhattan agreed to requests by Trump and other defendants to push back some deadlines for gathering evidence. “You can move anything else in between,” the judge told

lawyers at a two-hour hearing, which was delayed by a bomb scare. “I don't want to move that trial date.” The schedule means the former president could face trial in James' case just two blocks from the Manhattan criminal court building where he is expecting to be indicted for covering up a hush money payment to porn star Stormy Daniels. Both cases come during Trump's third White House run, in which he is a leading

Republican candidate. James sued Trump, three of his adult children, the Trump Organisation and others last September over an alleged decade-long scheme to manipulate more than 200 asset valuations and Trump's net worth, to win better terms from banks and insurers. The attorney general has long accused Trump of stalling to delay her case. On Monday, she accused the Trump Organisation's accounting firm of failing

to produce documents she subpoenaed and improperly asserting privilege. Trump has called James' case a partisan witch hunt. He had originally sought a delay that would have likely pushed any trial to the spring of 2024, when the race to become the Republican presidential nominee might be sewn up. James countered that her office had already turned over “enormous” quantities of evidence to the defendants,

enough to prevent any trial from “becoming a game of surprise.” Engoron also said many disputes are easy to resolve, including whether Trump overstated the value of his Trump Tower penthouse apartment by inflating its size. “A triplex apartment is worth less money if it is 11,000 square feet than if it is 30,000 square feet,” he said. “You do not need to be an expert ... to know these things. You don't even need a high school diploma.”

Among the other defendants are Trump's adult children Donald Jr, Eric and Ivanka, and the jailed former Trump Organisation chief financial officer, Allen Weisselberg. Christopher Kise, a lawyer for Trump, said the defendants' confidence is growing as they learn more about James' case. “Once everybody knows exactly what happened, then they're going to see that President Trump has done absolutely nothing wrong,” he said.



## Minister opens Khalid Bu Matar's 'Faces' art exhibition at Katara



**H**E the Minister of Culture Sheikh Abdulrahman bin Hamad al-Thani opened the "Faces" art exhibition by Qatari painter Khalid Bu Matar, at the Katara Arts Centre (Building 5) on Monday.

Organised by the Katara Art Centre in co-operation with Dar Hessa Arts, 40 portrait acrylic paintings are on display, some of which are digital art paintings.

The organisers describe the exhibition as a tribute to the power of faces, and an invitation to explore the beauty and complexity of the human experience, noting that each painting is a visual representation of the unique features, emotions and stories that make up a person's face.

Bu Matar expressed his gratitude to HE the Minister of Culture for opening the

exhibition and for supporting all forms of art, the mirror that reflects the civilised features of Qatar.

He said that the exhibition reflects his passion for drawing faces.

Portrait is one of the most difficult types of drawing because it requires gathering lots of feelings and diligence. – **QNA**

# HMC hospitals celebrate World Social Work Day

**H**amad Medical Corporation (HMC)'s Social Service Department recently celebrated World Social Work Day, which fell this year on March 21, under the theme *Respecting Diversity Through Joint Social Action*.

The celebration of the World Social Work Day was held to honour HMC social service leaders and clinical social workers in recognition of their continued efforts to serve patients, visitors, and their families and offer high-quality social services across all HMC facilities.

Acting HMC Corporate Social Service executive director Bashayr al-Rashid stressed the importance of clinical social workers' role in healthcare, which is to provide psychosocial support to patients to ensure that they are able to make the most of the benefits the healthcare services.

The role of social workers is mainly focused on helping improve the quality of life for pa-

tients and enabling them to access and benefit from the services that best meet their needs.

"Clinical social workers play a vital and essential role in providing a link between the patient and their family on the one hand, and the multidisciplinary care team on the other, to ensure the comprehensive treatment plan for the patient is progressing well," she said.

"Clinical social workers also co-ordinate the meetings that multidisciplinary care teams hold with patients' families to clarify the treatment plan and its stages," al-Rashid added. "They also provide social support and assist in solving problems that some patients may face, including social, legal, or family issues."

She explained that the HMC's Corporate Social Service Department supervises social service sections across the corporation's network of hospitals and assumes responsibility for organising tasks, monitoring performance, and evalu-



Observing Social Work Day at the HMC.

ating the quality of services delivered by these sections.

The department also reviews policies and procedures that regulate the delivery of social services at the HMC.

"Outstanding social work can make a difference in a patient's life," al-Rashid said. "Clinical social workers at the HMC strive to make a real difference in the lives of patients and their families and empower them by providing psychosocial support, developing strategies for social intervention using professional methods, and collaborating with multidisciplinary care teams to ensure the continuity of patient care."

The importance of the role of clinical social workers in hospitals has continued to increase due to the development of healthcare services in Qatar, the expansion in the establishment of health facilities in the country, and the increase in the number of patients driven by the growing population.

Clinical social workers contribute to alleviating the burdens on hospitals by facilitating the discharge of patients to safe environments in collaboration with the authorities concerned.

They also contribute to the development of social policies in the medical field to improve the quality of services provided to patients.

The HMC's Corporate Social Service Department has actively participated in planning committees that were tasked to prepare for the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 and helped in providing care services during the tournament.

With HMC hospitals receiving patients and visitors from different countries and cultures around the world, clinical social workers played an important role in providing psychosocial support services to these patients.

This participation has helped enrich the professional experience of the HMC's clinical social workers through effective communication with patients from diverse cultures.

## Cleaning drive ahead of Ramadan



The General Cleanliness Department's field operations section has carried out intensive cleaning works over three days in the souq area and Doha Corniche ahead of Ramadan, in addition to other key streets and areas across the country, covering around 150km in different directions.

## Workshop on child protection services

**T**he National Team for Child Protection against Violence has organised the third awareness workshop entitled *Better Together*, at the National Service Academy, to educate children and adolescents aged 10-18 years about their rights, duties, and proper upbringing.

The programme was developed in collaboration with entities concerned in Qatar and with the participation of social, educational, and mental experts specialised in this field.

The team comprises representatives from ministries and entities concerned with child protection in Qatar and established by the decision of the minister of public health in 2021.

Prof Khalid Mohamed al-Ansari, head of the National Team for Child Protection against Violence, said that the workshop aims to educate children and adolescents on building a sound culture consistent with religion and values, and to protect them against the risks they are exposed to, which have been aggravated by the negative content on social media and lack of censorship.

"We are guided by Qatar National Vision 2030 and its goals, especially those related to the pillars of social and human development," he said. "Caring for children, protecting, and raising them properly based on religious and moral values requires hard work and co-operation between all concerned entities in Qatar, embracing innovations and developing best practices in this aspect."

Mohamed Yahya Taher, head of the Moral



One of the sessions at the workshop.

Guidance Department at the National Service Academy, stressed upon the importance of the workshop in protecting young students, especially in this period of globalisation.

Prof al-Ansari, who is also head of the Paediatric Emergency Department at Sidra Medicine, spoke about the stages of growth of both genders and the biological change.

Abdulrahman al-Kadmami, a psychologist at the Behavioural Health Support Centre, spoke about the importance of fulfilling societal duty by providing correct information to children and adolescents from reliable scientific sources.

Naufar social specialist Fai al-Hajri, Min-

istry of Endowment (Awqaf) and Islamic Affairs family adviser Mohamed Abdul Latif al-Nuaimi, Ministry of Culture and Youth adviser Dr Issa al-Horri, Juvenile Police Department officer (Awareness and Information Section) First Lieutenant Mohamed Abdullah al-Naama, and First Lieutenant Khalid al-Shammari, awareness officer in the Community Police of the Ministry of Interior, also spoke at the event.

The *Better Together* workshop discussed all information relevant to child protection services provided in Qatar, such as how to access them and the entities' hotline numbers dedicated to answering inquiries and providing consultations.

## Traffic safety workshop held



The General Directorate of Traffic took part yesterday in a workshop on *How technology contributes to enhancing the safety of young drivers in Qatar*. The event, according to a tweet by the directorate, was within the framework of the joint co-operation between the General Directorate of Traffic and the Qatar Centre for Transportation and Traffic Safety at Qatar University.

## More inspections at food outlets

Inspectors of Al Wakra Municipality, in co-operation with the General Cleanliness Department, have carried out an inspection campaign on food stores at the Logistic Village area to ensure compliance with food health and safety regulations.

The campaign resulted in the confiscation and destruction of three tonnes of expired food products.

A violation report was issued regarding this incident according to Law No 8 for 1990 on the regulation of human food control.

Al Khor and Al Thakheira Municipality's Health Control Section has also carried a number of intensive inspection campaigns, which resulted in the shutting of five food outlets.

