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MoCI to encourage meat production

The Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MoCI), in co-ordination with the Ministry of Municipality, announced the start of registration for the national initiative to encourage local production and subsidise sheep meat prices for the blessed Eid al-Adha, from June 1 to June 13. The ministry said in a statement yesterday that this step comes within the framework of its keenness to encourage and support livestock breeders and farm owners in order to increase local production of sheep, and protect the commercial and economic environment in the country.

ChatGPT is coming to smartphones

ChatGPT, the artificial intelligence (AI) bot that became a global sensation for its powers to churn out human-like content and provide answers on all subjects, is now available in the Apple app store. OpenAI, the Microsoft-backed company behind ChatGPT, said the release came after it heard from users that they “love using ChatGPT on the go.” By moving to smartphones, OpenAI continues its encroachment on the search market, massively dominated by Google, which has been put under pressure by the rise of generative AI. Offered free of charge, the app will allow users to “get precise information without sifting through ads or multiple results,” OpenAI said on its website, in a subtle dig at Google’s search engine. The app can also give “guidance on cooking, travel plans, or crafting thoughtful messages,” the company added. OpenAI said it was starting the rollout in the United States and will expand to additional countries in the coming weeks. ChatGPT would be available on Android devices “soon,” it added.

Heavy fighting in Sudan’s capital

Heavy air strikes pounded southern areas of Sudan’s capital yesterday as clashes flared near a military camp, witnesses said, in fighting that has displaced nearly 1 million people and left residents of Khartoum struggling to survive. Air strikes by the army targeting the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) were heard across several residential neighbourhoods in southern Khartoum. Strikes could be heard across the Nile in the Sharg al-Nil district as well. The army has mainly used air power and heavy artillery as it tries to drive back the RSF, which spread out across large areas of Khartoum and its adjoining cities of Bahri and Omdurman across the Nile after fighting erupted on April 15. **Page 9**

Ukraine advances at Bakhmut fronts

Ukraine said it had repelled a day of Russian attacks in and around the ruined eastern city of Bakhmut yesterday and made gains of a kilometre in some places while buying time for “certain planned actions”. The head of the Wagner mercenary force said his forces had advanced up to 400 metres. “We’re pushing Bakhmut all the way to the end,” he said. While Russia boosted its forces in the city, attacked the suburbs to the north and engaged in fierce fighting in the southern suburbs, Ukraine’s forces advanced 500 meters in the north and in some areas in the south by one kilometre, Deputy Defence Minister Hanna Maliar said. **Page 9**

COMMUNITY

See Pages: 6 & 7

Qatar’s medium-term growth likely to rise to around 4–4.5%, says IMF

By Pratap John
Business Editor

Qatar’s medium-term growth is likely to rise to around 4–4.5% after the North Field expansion starts boosting LNG production, International Monetary Fund (IMF) said in a report released yesterday.

Aided by buoyant export revenue and public spending, Qatar’s fiscal and external current accounts are projected to be in surpluses throughout the medium term, IMF said.

The report, which was issued after a visit to Qatar by a team led by IMF’s Ran Bi in early May, said, “After very strong growth in 2022 boosted by the World Cup, the economy is expected to normalise in the near term while the outlook remains relatively favourable.

Real GDP growth is expected at 2–2.5% in 2023–24 on robust domestic demand and the ongoing LNG expansion, with inflation moderating gradually to around 3%.”

Risks to Qatar’s outlook are broadly

Country’s real GDP growth expected at 2-2.5% in 2023-24 on robust domestic demand and ongoing LNG expansion

balanced. Downside risks stem mainly from an unfavourable global environment, including a sharper-than-expected global growth slowdown, tighter and more volatile global financial conditions, increased commodity price volatility, and further worsening of geopolitical tensions.

On the upside, accelerated reform

efforts guided by the 3rd National Development Strategy, to be unveiled in the summer of 2023, could boost productivity and promote economic diversification. Sustained high hydrocarbon prices would further strengthen the outlook.

“Fiscal discipline has been broadly maintained in 2022, with most of the hydrocarbon windfalls saved and overall expenditure largely kept within the budget envelope. As a result, fiscal surplus rose to around 10% of GDP in 2022, from close to zero in 2021. Central government debt declined by 16 percentage points to around 42% of GDP during the same period.

“The 2023 budget balances continued discipline and sustaining domestic demand, with a broadly unchanged wage bill and cuts in public investment from 2022 outturns. The upcoming medium-term budget, for 2023–25, will be developed following the release of the 3rd National Development Strategy to balance aspiration for transformation and fiscal discipline.” **To Page 12**

Amir to head Qatar’s delegation to Arab Summit in KSA today



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani will head the delegation of Qatar to participate in the 32nd regular session of the Arab League Council at the summit level, which will be held today, in Jeddah, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA). His Highness the Amir will be accompanied by HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohamed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani, and an official delegation. **(QNA)**

PM attends graduation ceremony of Doha Institute



HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohamed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani witnessed yesterday evening the graduation ceremony for the seventh cohort of master’s students of Doha Institute for Graduate Studies (DI), at the Ritz-Carlton Hotel, Doha. HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, along with DI’s Chair of the Board of Trustees Dr Azmi Bishara and DI’s President Dr Abdelwahab El Affendi, honoured the 174 male and female students from various disciplines. A number of ministers, heads of diplomatic missions accredited to the State, senior officials, academics, faculty staff and the graduates’ families attended the ceremony. **(QNA) Page 12**

New book takes readers on an architectural journey of Qatar

● **Ibrahim Jaidah launches his newest book, *Discovering Arabian Deco, Early Modern Architecture in Qatar***

By Joey Aguilar
Staff Reporter

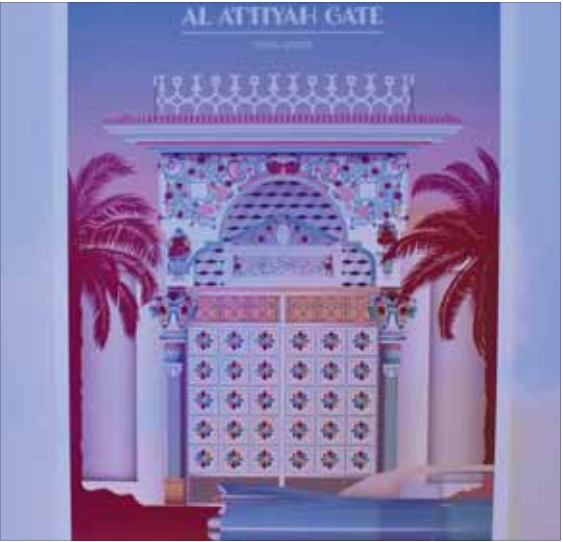
Architect Ibrahim Mohamed Jaidah has launched his newest book, *Discovering Arabian Deco, Early Modern Architecture in Qatar*, taking readers “on an architectural journey of urban development since the discovery of oil through the three most significant decades.”

The publication features an exceptional collection of rare photographs, drawings, and reproductions, as well as underlines the architectural transformation in the capital city from the “1950s to urban necessity in the 1960s to urban modernity in the 1970s.”

“This is my fourth book. I did a history of architecture in Qatar



Architect Ibrahim Mohamed Jaidah signing his latest book, *Discovering Arabian Deco, Early Modern Architecture in Qatar*, at the launch event. **PICTURE:** Thajudheen



Al-Attiyah Gate, an illustration from the book.

before the oil period, I did the interior designs the Qatari style, the 99 domes, but this book is about Discovering Arabian Deco, the Qatari Early Modern Architecture, from the discovery of oil until the end of the 70’s,” the author said on the sidelines of a signing ceremony at Msheireb Museum’s Bin Jelmood House at Msheireb Downtown Doha (MDD) on Tuesday.

Jaidah’s book also puts a spotlight on the 1960s movement, named ‘Arabian Deco’, and presents some of the pivotal moments during these periods that shaped Doha’s development.

“You got the first school, first apartment buildings, first banks, it is also documented in this (book). It’s a very important era (1950s, 1960s, and 1970s).” **To Page 12**

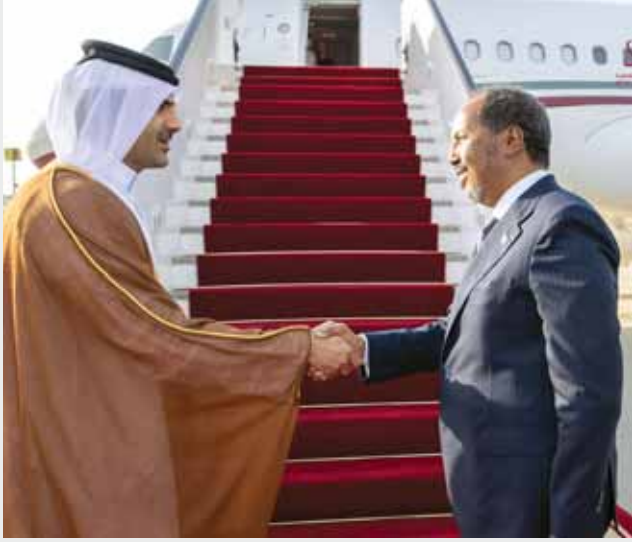
President of Qatar Olympic Committee attends SOP competitions



HE the President of the Qatar Olympic Committee Sheikh Joaan bin Hamad al-Thani attended the competitions of boy schools of the 16th edition of the Schools Olympic Program (SOP), which were concluded at the Aspire Dome yesterday. The SOP boys' closing ceremony was also attended by HE the Minister of Education and Higher Education Buthaina bint Ali al-Jabr al-Nuaimi, Secretary-General of Qatar Olympic Committee Jassim Rashid al-Buainain, HE the Undersecretary of the Ministry of Education and Higher Education Dr Ibrahim bin Saleh al-Nuaimi, President of the Qatar School Sports Association (QSSA) and Chairman of SOP Organising Committee Sheikh Khalifa bin Khalid al-Thani. The 16th edition of SOP has seen students competing in 11 sport disciplines, including football and basketball, volleyball, wrestling, gymnastics, athletics, swimming, table tennis, taekwondo, hockey, and shooting. This year's edition brought together an amazingly big number of students, to prove that SOP has rounded the corner, going on the right path to promote the culture of sport, encouraging students to adopt healthy lifestyles in a way to join the national clubs and teams in the future, namely, in Asian Games Doha 2030. HE the Vice-Chairperson and CEO of Qatar Foundation Sheikhha Hind bint Hamad al-Thani crowned the winners of girls events at the conclusion of the 16th SOP held at Al-Andalus Educational Complex in Lusail city. The first edition of SOP was launched during the school year 2007-2008 under the slogan (Sport and Health), as Qatar was the first-ever and a leading nation worldwide that adopted this programme in its schools. **(QNA)**

Somali president leaves Doha

President of Somalia Hassan Sheikh Mahmoud left Doha yesterday after an official visit to Qatar. The president and the accompanying delegations were seen off at Hamad International Airport by HE Minister of Culture Sheikh Abdulrahman bin Hamad al-Thani, Qatar's ambassador to Somalia Dr Abdullah bin Salim al-Nuaimi and charge d'affaires at the Somali embassy in Qatar Ruun Said Korshel. **(QNA)**



Qatar welcomes Black Sea grain export deal extension

Qatar welcomed the extension of the Ukraine Black Sea grain deal for two more months. In a statement yesterday, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs expressed the State of Qatar's appreciation for the efforts made by the United Nations and the Republic of Türkiye and the role they played in extending the deal in a way that facilitates the unhindered flow of grain and food supplies and contributes to strengthening and ensuring global food security. The ministry reiterated the State of Qatar's support of all the international efforts aimed at finding a solution for the Russian-Ukrainian crisis. **(QNA)**

Al-Sulaiti receives message from Turkish counterpart



HE the Minister of Transport Jassim Seif Ahmed al-Sulaiti received a written message from Minister of Transport and Infrastructure of Türkiye Adil Karaismailoglu on enhancing bilateral relations in the areas of transportation, ports, and civil aviation. The message was delivered by the ambassador of Türkiye to Qatar Dr Mustafa Goksu as he met with HE the Minister of Transport yesterday. **(QNA)**

Experts affirm museums' role in sustainability, well-being

QNA
Doha

Museums are vital cultural platforms and unique spaces for education and social communication. At a time when awareness of environmental challenges and the need for sustainability is being heightened, the role of museums in bringing about positive change is being increasingly recognised.

And in light of the role that museums play in protecting and documenting the cultural and historical heritage, the world celebrates on the 18th of May every year the International Museum Day to highlight museums as a cultural institution that preserves material and immaterial evidence of peoples and civilisations.

International Museum Day was established in 1977 by the International Council of Museums (ICOM – established in 1946), with the adoption of a resolution during the ICOM General Assembly in Moscow, Russia. The objective was to create an annual event “with the aim of further unifying the creative aspirations and efforts of museums and drawing the attention of the world public to their activity.”

On this occasion, it is recalled that “Museums are an important means of cultural exchange, enrichment of cultures and development of mutual understanding, co-operation and peace among peoples.”

Since 1992, an annual theme was set to celebrate International Museum Day, and in 1997 a visual identity was allocated for this day by issuing an official poster for this event representing the celebrated theme.

Regarding the celebration of International Museum Day this year, which came under the theme “Museums, Sustainability and Well-being”, a number of local and international specialists in the field of museums agreed, in exclusive statements to Qatar News Agency (QNA), on the importance of this event, emphasizing the role of sustainability in these facilities that preserve the memory of nations and peoples.

In this regard, Director of International Co-operation and Governmental Affairs in Qatar Museums Fatima Hassan al-Sulaiti said, “Museums are an important means of cultural exchange, enrichment of cultures, exchange of



The National Museum of Qatar.

concepts and co-operation between peoples.”

She added that at Qatar Museums they work hard to highlight the various museums with their diverse activities, and they are keen to make the visitors' experience unique.

Recently, she indicated, a new definition of the museum was adopted by the International Council of Museums (ICOM), which is: “A museum is a not-for-profit, permanent institution in the service of society that researches, collects, conserves, interprets and exhibits tangible and intangible heritage.”

Open to the public, accessible and inclusive, museums foster diversity and sustainability. They operate and communicate ethically, professionally and with the participation of communities, offering varied experiences for education, enjoyment, reflection and knowledge sharing.” She noted that this is an indication of the importance of the role played by museums and the feasibility behind developing and changing the concept of museums in societies.

Director of Cultural Heritage Protection at Qatar Museums Abdullatif al-Jasmi, said in a similar statement to QNA that International Museum Day is not only an occasion to spread awareness of the importance of museums as educational institutions, but also an occasion to change perceptions about the importance of cultural, artistic and creative exchange and to preserve the lessons learned throughout history.

He noted that through the approved theme for the International Museum Day 2023, Qatar Museums, as a leading institution in museum work, is stimulating reliance on sustainable solutions

in museums and cultural spaces of all kinds, and the development of well-being in the cultural heritage sector, in order to ensure its continuity for future generations and transfer part of the Qatari cultural heritage to the outside world.

In his statement to QNA, Director, Dadu, Children's Museum of Qatar Essa al-Mannai, expressed his happiness with the opening of Dadu Gardens in 2022 during the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022, and the frequent visits from the public, who expressed their happiness at providing learning opportunities and developing children's abilities through a safe, fun environment that promotes innovation, in addition to the school and community programs that the team has provided over the past years.

Essa al-Mannai thanked Qatar Museums for its interest in establishing a children's museum, as well as all sponsors of the Children's Museum in Qatar, expressing his aspiration for more cultural and educational achievements at the level of Qatar, the Arab world and the world.

President of Arab Organisation of Museums-ICOM ARAB and Director of Maroc Telecom Museum Ech cherki Dahmali stressed, in a statement to QNA, the role of museums in sustainability, which is the theme of this year's celebration on the occasion of the International Museum Day, as museums can preserve the environment and spread awareness among visitors of the importance of preserving it, noting that museums have a major role in sustainability, as museums around the world are experiencing great challenges today, especially with regard to financial sustainability.

In this regard, he said that Arab museums need to restore the status

of museums within our societies in order to preserve our movable heritage and our intangible heritage.

Secretary of the International Committee for Museum Management (Intercom), affiliated to the International Council of Museums (ICOM) Maria Cristina Vannini, praised Qatar's organisation of the Intercom Doha 2023 Conference, which coincided this year with the celebration of the International Museum Day, and she said in this regard that the International Committee of Museum Management of the International Council of Museums did not find a more appropriate partnership than Qatar Museums in organising the conference “Museum of the Future, which was held in Doha from 6 to 9 May. Qatar National Museum hosted more than 200 museum professionals and researchers from all over the world.

She pointed out that the goal of the International Museum Day for this year is “museums, sustainability and well-being”, will focus on three of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals, as the third goal is “Good Health and Well-being” by ensuring a healthy life and promoting well-being for all at all ages, especially with regard to mental health and social isolation.

The 13th goal is “Climate Action”, by taking urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts, and the 15th goal is “Life on Earth, conserve and restore our terrestrial ecosystems.

Vannini said that through what we can witness during our stay in Doha and through our partnership with Qatar Museums for the Museum Leadership Conference, the sensitivity towards the role that museums play in conveying messages that help improve the daily lives of visitors and promote profound behavioural change in community relations.

She stressed that the involvement of the elderly in participatory meetings to transfer memories and oral transmission to the younger generations is a way to maintain links and understanding across generations.

Vannini concluded by saying that all these comments do not change the fact that Qatar Museums take museums and their values seriously, visitors, their lives and the environment in which they live are at the heart of Qatar Museums inspiration for a better and more sustainable future.

QFFD director-general meets Somali minister of education



HE the Director-General of Qatar Fund for Development (QFFD) Khalifa bin Jassim al-Kuwari met with Minister of Education, Culture and Higher Education in Somalia Farah Sheikh Abdulqadir. The two sides discuss bilateral relations and QFFD's existing projects in Somalia. **(QNA)**

Shura Council takes part in APA meeting in Bahrain

QNA
Manama

The Shura Council participated in the meeting of the Standing Committee on Economic and Sustainable Development at the Asian Parliamentary Assembly (APA), which was held in Bahrain.

The meeting reviewed several draft decisions, which included the establishment of an Asian energy market, environmental issues, economic growth, poverty eradication, the role of APA parliaments in supporting the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, “adopting a roadmap providing for measures to stimulate green finance”, and the Asian Climate Finance Initiative.

In a statement on the sidelines of the meeting, Mohamed bin Eid al-Kaabi, a member of the Shura Council, confirmed that hotbeds of conflict in more than one region around the world lead to a state of security instability, and the resulting slowdown in achieving sustainable development, referring to the efforts of Qatar and its constant pursuit, according to the



directives of its wise leadership, to achieve peace and development, and its provision of humanitarian aid to brotherly and friendly countries.

HE al-Kaabi stressed that Qatar has achieved, in light of the recovery from the Covid-19 crisis and the challenges it left behind, great achievements within the economic transformation, especially in vital sectors such as oil, gas and petrochemicals, in addition to diversifying its economy and develop many other sectors such as tourism, industry, financial services and others, which promote sustainable development.

He pointed to Qatar's commitment, based on Qatar National Vision 2030, to achieving

environmental sustainability by taking a number of steps to promote environmental preservation, through the implementation of many projects in this regard. In his statement, HE al-Kaabi touched on the steps that Qatar is taking internationally and locally toward achieving sustainable and balanced economic growth to achieve the goals of sustainable development and to focus on the human element as a crucial element in achieving sustainable success.

On the sidelines of the meeting, the Shura Council team met delegations from a number of friendly countries and discussed with them ways to enhance and develop joint parliamentary work.

Municipality ministry marks annual GIS Technology Day

QNA
Doha

The Ministry of Municipality celebrated the annual GIS Technology Day with the participation of a contingent of professionals in GIS from various state ministries, institutions, authorities, universities, and other relevant entities.

On this occasion, Assistant Director of the Geographic Information Systems (CGIS) at the Ministry of Municipality Amer al-Humaidi said this year's celebration highlights the GIS' success story in Qatar in addition to following-up on its evolution over many years, as well as introducing the GIS applications and the positive impact of the evolution of geospatial technologies worldwide.

This year's celebration comes under the theme of: "Artificial



Intelligence (AI) and sustainability and how GIS technology can cater to it," al-Humaidi added, pointing out that experts concur in the fact that combining AI and geospatial tech-

nologies can handle enormous quantities of data and conduct spatial analysis on them in addition to coming out with new and more accurate digital and spatial products to help deci-

sion-makers achieve the strategic objectives and better understand the clients to serve them, he said.

He outlined that AI's applications in GIS include identifying



Snapshots of GIS Technology Day.

the geographic elements to be ultimately classified and processed, pointing out that machine learning algorithms help extract spatial patterns and relationships between data elements, and this includes improving performance and pushing towards digital transformation, which leads

to organisations achieving their sustainability goals. The strategy of the Geographic Information Systems lays the foundations of fulfilling Qatar's increasing geospatial needs through adopting the cutting-edge technologies to build effective and smart community and improve life quality,

al-Humaidi underlined. The digital transformation is the essence of economic and social development for Qatar in conformity with the Qatar National Vision 2030, he stressed, noting that Qatar is pivoting towards digital technology in all fields to accelerate this direction.



'Police Officers of Tomorrow' initiative to start in July

The Police Academy yesterday announced the launch of the fourth edition of the 'Police Officers of Tomorrow' initiative. Addressing a press conference, Capt. Hamad Khaled al-Mannai, chairman of the initiative, said the training programmes for the first and second batches will be held from July 1 to July 13. The third and fourth groups will attend the programme from July 15 to July 27 while the fifth and sixth groups will attend the training from July 29 to August 10.

The students will be divided into six groups, with three attending the training in the morning from Sunday to Thursday while the training for the other three groups will be held in the evening from Saturday to Wednesday. The programme features military and athletic field training to upgrade the participants physical fitness and learn the core skills of marksmanship, swimming and self-defence, in addition to the recreational and athletic contests and educational lectures.

The objective is to instil allegiance and belonging to the country in the heart of the graduates, and this will be achieved to enhance the societal partnership and prepare the military students to carry out works that benefit the public interest. Registration can be made through Metrash 2 or by contacting via "WhatsApp" on the number 51113599.

Al-Mannai said the latest version of the programme includes field visits to a number of Ministry of Interior (MoI) departments including the Police Rescue Department (Al Fazaa), the General Administration of Coasts and Borders Security, the General Administration of Civil Defence and the National Command Centre. The programme, according to al-Mannai, is implemented in co-ordination with the Ministry of Endowments and Islamic Affairs (Awqaf), the Amiri Guard, the National Agency for Cybersecurity, Qatar TV and the Shafallah Centre.

QNA
Doha

The Cultural Village Foundation (Katara) opened on Wednesday the 'Creativity Forum' in Building 18, Hall 2. Organised by Katara in collaboration with Rassem Centre for Creativity, the exhibition's opening saw the attendance of several diplomats accredited to Qatar, along with artists and media professionals with the participation of Qatari and Kuwaiti artists. The exhibition will continue until May 29.

In statements to Qatar News Agency (QNA), Director-General of the Cultural Village Foundation (Katara) Prof Khalid bin Ibrahim al-Sulaiti emphasised Katara's keenness to co-operate with various entities and centres to present a wide range of cultural and artistic events that would consolidate the relations among the artists and enable them to share expertise and introduce their artworks.

He lauded the artworks showcased by the Qatari and Kuwaiti artists, pointing out that Katara works to extend the bridge of communications between artists from around the world especially in the GCC states to enrich the cultural and artistic arena and demonstrate the evolution of the Gulf creativity. In similar statements to QNA, plastic artist and Director of the Rassem Centre for Creativity Mona al-Sada said the exhibition is a product of a workshop

'Creativity Forum' opens in Katara



The exhibition showcases works of Qatari and Kuwaiti artists.



associated with the first creativity forum, adding that works that were showcased include paintings brought by some

participating artists, including other artworks that were accomplished during the workshop. She indicated that this



was the centre's third participation in Katara after two previous exhibitions, lauding the Cultural Village Foundation for

opening the doors to innovators from Qatar and abroad, describing Katara as the incubator of culture and arts.



Civil Defence honours winners of Ramadan cultural contest

The General Directorate of Civil Defence (GDGD) organised recently an award ceremony for the winners of the cultural competition organised by the Civil Defence directorate, in co-operation with the Public Relations Department at the Ministry of Interior, during the holy month of Ramadan as part of the 'Safe Ramadan' campaign for school students.

More than 5,000 students from 12 community schools,

along with parents and school staff, participated in the event in order to raise awareness of fire safety and prevention methods.

Lt-Col Abdullah Mohamed al-Hail, director of Operations at the GDGD, thanked the principals, parents and students for their active participation in the virtual awareness seminars.

He underscored their role in communication between the General Directorate of Civil Defence and community schools

and various relevant institutions, as these seminars included many awareness topics, including home safety procedures, fire extinguishers and lessons on how to use them, as well as how to deal with fire and evacuation procedures. At the end of the ceremony, the students toured the Operations Department, during which they were introduced to vehicles and devices used in different operations and how to deal with communications.



The students toured the Operations Department.



From the award ceremony.

Exhibition showcases skills of students with special needs

QNA
Doha

He the Undersecretary of the Ministry of Education and Higher Education Dr Ibrahim bin Saleh al-Nuaimi inaugurated the first technical and vocational tracks' exhibition for students with special needs for the academic year 2022-2023.

Organised by the Special Needs Education and Gifted Care Department of the MoEHE, the exhibition featured the participation of 18 public secondary schools for boys and girls.

Commenting on the occasion, Dr al-Nuaimi lauded the exhibition's content that demonstrates high-level of qualitative and innovative works and reflects students' skills and their inspired innovative ideas.

He noted the efforts undertaken by the officials in the Special Needs Education and Gifted Care Department of the MoEHE in preparing and organising the event, especially the provision of a conducive environment for students, along with the material and human resources and encourage students to pursue innovation and creativity everyone in his/her own field.

He pointed out that he had sensed desire and willingness from students with special needs from males and females who work with their hands and subsequently turned their disability into opportunities and have been powerful in demonstrating a wide range of skills that were translated into high-quality products.



Glimpses from the exhibition.

Regarding the future vision of the exhibition, Dr Ibrahim said the ministry will provide opportunities to students with special needs to embark on their private works and projects in the field of entrepreneurship, including projects marketing and sales, in addition to introducing information technology and artificial intelligence to students' works.

He urged other entities in the country to attract students with special needs and employ them based on their potential and capabilities.

For her part, acting director of the Special Needs Education and Gifted Care Department at MoEHE Fatima Saeed Salem al-Saadi said the exhibition intends to introduce the public to the capabilities of students with special needs, along with their technical and vocational works, in addition to fostering their partnership and spreading the policy of comprehensive integration into the community. On the students' continu-



ation of their higher education, she indicated that co-ordination is ongoing with the relevant entities in this regard

to provide higher education and enable them to complete the college education based on their abilities.

Qatar affirms importance of utilising huge potential of ICT



QNA
Geneva

Qatar has affirmed that it attaches great importance to utilising and investing in the enormous potential offered by information and communication technology (ICT), and considers it an essential element to move forward towards achieving sustainable development.

This came in a statement by HE the Permanent Representative of the State of Qatar to the United Nations Office in Geneva Dr Hind bint Abdulrahman al-Muftah, during the celebration

of the World Telecommunication and Information Society Day, which focuses this year on empowering the least developed countries through ICT.

HE al-Muftah pointed out that Qatar's strategy and projects for digital inclusion will contribute, by raising the level of basic digital skills for all, to many of the United Nations' sustainable development goals, stressing Qatar's keenness to promote the use of technology in the implementation of most of its economic, social, environmental and development programmes, and establishing sustainable societies.

She stressed that Qatar's support for the development plan

for the least developed countries was and will always remain constant, adding that hosting the 5th UN Conference on the Least Developed Countries (LDC5) last March constituted another great opportunity to renew global solidarity with the least developed countries.

The second pillar of the Doha Work Programme associated with LDC5 focuses on benefiting from the power of science, technology and innovation to combat multidimensional weaknesses and achieve sustainable development goals, and also provides concrete proposals to access modern technologies for sustainable development, to support

the efforts of the LDCs to significantly improve their capabilities to achieve digital development.

HE al-Muftah asserted that LDCs need financial and technical support, whether through multilateral or bilateral development co-operation, in a spirit of fair and genuine partnerships that would contribute to structural transformation and enable long-term achievements in the field of sustainable development.

She called upon all states, development partners and international organisations, including the International Telecommunication Union, to support the implementation of the Doha

Work Programme by continuing partnership with LDCs, particularly with regard to supporting these countries in building their broadband infrastructure.

HE al-Muftah referred to the "SDG Digital Day" event, slated for September 17 in New York, and co-sponsored by the State of Qatar and Singapore, in co-operation with the International Telecommunication Union and other partners, explaining that the event aims to highlight, among other things, the potential of data and digital technologies to accelerate progress towards the sustainable development goals, and called on everyone to actively participate in it.

Qatar University hosts tadTalks 2023

QNA
Doha

The Qatar University (QU) organised the fifth annual tadTalks 2023 in the presence of a number of officials, ambassadors of the state, members of diplomatic bodies and interested parties from various fields.

tadTalks provides a unique platform to showcase impactful graduate research that addresses global challenges and brings graduate researchers together from around the world to coalesce in a spirit of inquiry.

In her speech on the occasion, Prof Mariam al-Maadeed, Vice-President for Research and Graduate Studies at QU, said, "The meeting of this elite group of students from several universities and disciplines is an embodiment of communication and co-operation between higher education institutions from different regions, and it is a source of inspiration for all, as it is an opportunity to invest and employ the outputs of your research and innovations and deliver them to stakeholders in your countries."

The keynote address was delivered by Director of Development, Arab Youth Climate Movement Qatar Hessa al-Noami, who spoke about her journey in research, innovation and education, in addition to touching on the Arab Youth Climate Movement and the story of its establishment.

The Arab Youth Climate Movement focuses on environmental awareness, climate policy and in bringing more people into the environmental movement.

This year, the event included various sessions and panel discussions discussing the most important challenges facing the world today, in addition to proposing appropriate solutions presented by invited guests, as well as open discussions presented by graduate researchers from Qatar University, Doha Institute for Graduate Studies, Hamad Bin Khalifa University, Texas A&M University at Qatar, and researchers from Argentina, Canada, Brazil, Morocco, Palestine, and Ghana.

This year's event was made more unique through its Junior tadTalks, featured promising researchers from Qatar University



Snapshots from the event.



gentina, Canada, Brazil, Morocco, Palestine, and Ghana.

This year's event was made more unique through its Junior tadTalks, featured promising researchers from Qatar University

and research. The tadTalks programme was first initiated in 2019 as part of Qatar University's commitment to building a strong sense of graduate community, enhancing the graduate experi-



ence, and supporting graduate research.

Universities from countries all over the world have participated in this unique international graduate event.

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Universities from countries all over the world have participated in this unique international graduate event.

Qatar set to attend WHA events in Geneva

QNA
Doha

Qatar is participating in the meetings of the 76th session of the World Health Assembly (WHA), and in several accompanying meetings and events, which will be held in Geneva, Switzerland, from May 21-30. Qatar's delegation to the meetings is headed by HE the Minister of Public Health Dr Hanan Mohamed al-Kuwari.

The main theme of this year's World Health Assembly is 'WHO 75 Years of: Saving Lives, Advancing Health for All'. The assembly meetings will address several important topics under the four pillars of WHO: ensuring that 1bn more people benefit from universal health coverage, that 1bn more people enjoy greater health and well-being, that 1bn more people are better protected from health emergencies, and that WHO is more efficient in providing support to countries.

In partnership with the Supreme Committee for Delivery & Legacy, Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) also organises an event accompanying the meetings of the assembly on 'Building a legacy for sport and health after major sporting events' on May 23 in Geneva, during which lessons learned from Sport for Health Partnership at the World Cup FIFA Qatar 2022 will be reviewed, with the participation of host and organisers of major sporting events, beside athletes to share the expertise, advocacy and commitment to a sustainable global movement for sport and health.

HE the Minister of Public Health and the delegation of Qatar are participating in the WHO event the 'Walk the Talk: Health for All Challenge' on May 21 in Geneva, which includes a walk. The initiative aims to encourage people to be physically and psychologically active to support their health.

The delegation of Qatar also participates in a number of meetings and events accompanying the meetings of WHA, including the 59th session of the Arab Health Ministers' Council, which will be held on May 21 in Geneva, and discuss a number of important topics, most notably the health conditions in the occupied Palestinian territories, including occupied East Jerusalem and the occupied Syrian Golan, Arab co-ordination for relief and humanitarian and health developments, and improving the health of mothers, children and adolescents in the Arab world. The meeting will be followed by the launch of the Arab Strategy for Health-Friendly Budget.

The delegation of Qatar will also participate in the ministerial briefing session for the Eastern Mediterranean Region, which will be held on May 20 in Geneva, and will present a summary of the most important items of WHA, in addition to two updates on emergencies in the region, and the polio eradication programme in the Eastern Mediterranean Region.

Gord hosts Kuwait students on sustainability education tour

The Gulf Organisation for Research & Development (Gord) hosted 30 students and faculty members from Kuwait University's College of Architecture on an educational tour to Qatar. The knowledge dissemination activity came as part of an ongoing collaboration between Gord, Kuwait University and Kuwait's Al Sayer Group.

The main objective was to introduce the visitors to Qatar's iconic projects, focusing on sustainability best practices achieved through the implementation of the Global Sustainability Assessment System (GSAS).

During the three-day programme, the students had the opportunity to visit some of Qatar's architectural legacies as well as its outstanding green building projects, including Al Janoub Stadium, Katara Twin Towers, Lusail City, Qatar National Library, National Museum of Qatar, Museum of Islamic Art, HIA expansion, The Pearl Island and Msheireb Downtown Doha. Sustainable transportation was also explored through the use of Doha Metro. Technical presentations along with guided walkthrough



The visiting delegation at The Pearl Island.

were delivered by Gord and various organisations.

Speaking on the sidelines of the event, Dr Yousef Alhorr, founding chairman of Gord, said: "At Gord, we are committed to driving sustainability and catalysing change towards a greener future. Our support in hosting this educational tour for Kuwait University's architecture students is aligned with our mission to invest in educational activities that prepare youth to create a climate-resilient future. We believe that by equipping the next generation with the knowledge and skills to imple-

ment nature-positive practices, we can pave the way for a more sustainable world."

Dr Omar Khattab, acting vice-dean for students affairs at the College of Architecture, Kuwait University, said: "This cross-country educational tour represents an excellent example of how we expose our students to real-world scenarios and inspire them to think critically about environmental sustainability. Qatar, with its many GSAS-certified sustainable buildings and innovative practices, provides an ideal setting for such an educational opportunity. By visiting

and studying these projects, our students learnt from best practices in the field and developed a deeper understanding of sustainable design principles."

Mubarak Naser al-Sayer, CEO in Al Sayer Group, said: "Al Sayer's dedication to sustainability is evident in our initiatives, including the implementation of GSAS in Al Sayer's flagship projects. Our commitment to the environment extends beyond industrial practices and includes investing in knowledge dissemination activities, such as the recent tour of Kuwait University's students to Qatar."



Qatar Youth Hostels marks 40th founding anniversary

QNA
Doha

Qatar Youth Hostels held a special event on Wednesday to mark the 40th founding anniversary in the State of Qatar as it was established in 1983. The Youth Hostels became member of the the Arab Union of Youth Hostels Associations in 1983 and joined the International Youth Hostel Federation in 1986.

In a statement, the Youth Hostels stated that the occasion was an opportunity to celebrate the efforts of all the leaders and workers who served the Qatar Youth Hostels and contributed to embracing and spreading the youth hostel movement. Since its establishment, it has contributed to empowering Qatari youth and working to provide the appropriate environment for youth tourism in the State of Qatar, appreciating the efforts and support of the Ministry of Sports and Youth represented by the Youth Affairs Department. During the celebration, the veterans leaders and employees were honoured in recognition of their efforts and what they have provided over



ate environment for youth tourism in the State of Qatar, appreciating the efforts and support of the Ministry of Sports and Youth represented by the Youth Affairs Department. During the celebration, the veterans leaders and employees were honoured in recognition of their efforts and what they have provided over

the past years. In conjunction with the celebration, the Qatari Youth Hostels concluded the first edition of the Tourism Ideas Incubator programme that was launched last March to present projects that support youth tourism to which the Youth Hostels contributes facilitating their implementation.



The Qatar delegation in Kuwait.

MoECC team visits Kuwait

A delegation from the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change (MoECC) has toured a number of environmental institutions and scientific centres in Kuwait, a statement said yesterday.

The Qatar delegation learned about work mechanisms and scientific research related to preserving local environments.

The group was headed by Dr Ibrahim Abdul Latif al-Maslamani, assistant undersecretary for Protection and Natural Reserves Affairs.

Abdulhadi Nasser al-Marri, assistant undersecretary for Environmental Affairs, was also part of the delegation that was received by engineer Samira Mohamed al-Kandari, acting director-general of Kuwait's Environment Public Authority.

The Qatar delegation learned about the environmental permit forms, the laws and regulations regulating the permits as well as the strategy of the Environmental Research Centre and waste management.

The representatives of the MoECC were also briefed on the experience of Kuwait in environmental protection programmes, especially the monitoring programmes and electronic applications used.

The delegation met officials in the Kuwait ministry of municipality to learn about their experience in the seasonal spring camping.

The delegation also toured the Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research.



A snapshot from the Difi event.

Difi marks International Day of Families with talk

The Doha International Family Institute (Difi) held a talk on *The State of Qatar's Role in Involving the Family Perspective within International Platforms* with HE Dr Hind bint Abdul Rahman al-Muftah, Permanent Representative of Qatar to the United Nations Office in Geneva, to highlight the sociocultural value of the family in Qatari society.

The session was moderated by Difi executive director Dr Sharifa Noaman al-Emadi. Difi is a member of Qatar Foundation.

The session at the Qatar National Library on the International Day of Families, shed light on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which recognises the importance of the family while respecting the cultural and religious diversity of every nation.

During the talk, HE Dr al-Muftah stressed that the human rights declaration recognises the traditional concept of family, in line with the Islamic definitions, which view the family as the cornerstone of society – a union between husband and wife – that enjoys the right of protection through legislation and laws.

She highlighted Qatar's role in protecting the family through the Group of Friends of the Family, made up of Arab, African, and European countries.

HE Dr al-Muftah said: "Qatar has contributed to drafting four resolutions on family protection and plans to present a fifth resolution in the future."

"When countries try to impose practices that contradict with Qatari culture and values, and violate the human rights declaration, we seek to engage in constructive dialogue instead of cultural collision," she said. "And therefore, Qatar organises events and promotes constructive dialogue to promote this goal."

The session also highlighted the impact of the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 on the global public's view of Qatari culture.

"Qatar was able to provide a model for cultural integration and the promotion of Qatari family values," Dr al-Emadi said.

HE Dr al-Muftah emphasised the widespread praise that the sporting event received from ambassadors and diplomats in international forums, saying: "We have been able to showcase ourselves as a role model for social and cultural integration of many nationalities from different countries of the world."

"We have seen global fans wearing the Qatari ghutra and appreciating the bisht, while also witnessing visitors express a desire to explore and learn about Arab culture," she added.



Buccellati opens boutique at Place Vendome

Renowned high-jewellery brand Buccellati has opened its latest boutique in Doha, which is also the fourth boutique in the Middle East for the group, a press statement said yesterday.

The store, opened in collaboration with Ali Bin Ali Luxury, is located at ground floor of Place Vendome, a multi-billion mixed-use development in Lusail City that opened in April last year.

"The new boutique is divided into three comfortable spaces where the collections are beautifully displayed: the first room after the entrance façade hosts the coral table for the jewellery collections, the second room is set to have one-of-a-kind creations and high-jewellery display, and the third room has been projected to host silver objets d'art and giftware, together with the most iconic Maison's accessories for home and decoration," the statement said.

"The boutique has been designed in line with Buccellati architectural concept of all other boutiques around the world, with the typical historical windows on



the façade," the statement explained.

"Alongside the newest jewellery collections, the vitrines will present the iconic Macri, Opera, Ramage, Rombi, Hawaii and Tulle collections, as

well as the most popular Macri and Tulle watches collections, all inspired by the best Italian savoir-faire, and the unmistakable timeless and elegant look," the statement added.



The new Buccellati boutique at the ground floor at Place Vendome.

Elections in Turkiye – democracy worthy of republic's first centenary

By Dr Mustafa Goksu
Ambassador of Turkiye to Qatar

The whole world witnessed how the Turkish people marched in groups and units towards the polling stations throughout the country, on May 14, to exercise their constitutional right and their national duty, to choose the president of the republic and their representatives in the Turkish Grand National Assembly in its 28th session.

Despite the flames of the hot political climate, which anticipated Turkiye's summer this year, and reflects the vitality of the Turkish street, the voting process took place inside and outside the country in a safe atmosphere and complete freedom.

Centenary and independence

The importance of these elections comes from the fact that it has taken place at a pivotal stage in the history of our great Turkish nation, so it was not for nothing that researchers and observers called it the "elections of the century", as it coincides with the centenary of the Turkish Republic, which was founded in 1923.

From here stems the importance of this democratic round in the path of the country, which is stepping steadily to fill its natural position as a leading power in the region.

The facts of geography and politics say that the time has come for Turkiye's inevitable destiny to rise again, to meet the aspiration of its people for progress and

advancement economically, politically and socially.

Our country is on the path of its renaissance and the restoration of its leadership again.

It clings to the independence of its political decisions, as President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has always affirmed.

This independence stems from the will of our proud people.

Some forces do not like this. Therefore, some Western newspapers embarked on competing systematic campaigns of scepticism, targeting not only the country's political leadership, but also inciting some components of the Turkish people against each other, and claiming that the elections are taking place in an undemocratic atmosphere.

Some Western magazines have gone as far as insulting our religious symbols and breaking the Muslim crescent on their cover, in the course of its attack on the Turkish state.

The organisers of these fierce media campaigns have missed the point that "dictators" do not need fair elections, nor a remarkable public presence to vote, nor do they bother with going through election run-offs to ensure the people have the final say in who to lead the country.

We are accustomed to such campaigns with every election, and our great people have awakened to what is behind these lines, and their response was present on the day of the election, with a record number of votes in the history of our country.



Dr Mustafa Goksu

According to the head of the Turkish Elections Authority, Ahmed Yanar, the participation rate in the elections inside the country reached 88.92% of eligible voters: 60,697,000 citizens.

This high percentage far exceeds the voter turnout in countries that have been well-established in their political and electoral practices for decades.

In the US presidential elections that took place in 2020, in which the United States recorded the highest participation rate in the 21st century, the turnout of eligible citizens to vote reached 66.8%, according to the US Census Bureau.

As for the French elections of 2022, the participation rate in the second round of

the presidential elections reached 63.23%, as announced by the French ministry of interior, which is two points less than in the second round of the 2017 elections.

In the German elections that led to the election of Olaf Schultz as chancellor to succeed Angela Merkel, the turnout for the elections was 76.6%.

Second democratic round

The Turkish Elections Authority announced that a second round of presidential elections will be held on May 28, between President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and Kemal Kilicdaroglu.

Accordingly, voters will go to the polls to determine the next president of the Republic of Turkiye, while the second round of presidential elections for our citizens abroad will start tomorrow, May 20.

The Turkish ministry of foreign affairs has prepared everything necessary for the voting process, which will take place in ballot boxes placed in 151 Turkish representations in 73 countries around the world, while the voting process takes place at Turkish border crossings and airports from May 20-28.

I call on our compatriots abroad in general, and our Turkish citizens residing in Qatar in particular, to exercise their constitutional right and their patriotic duty to go to the polling station that has been prepared at the embassy of the Republic of Turkiye in Doha, between May 20-22, to choose the president, who will lead the country and its people for the next five years.



Doha Girls Centre plans 'Cup of Tea' event to mark International Tea Day

To celebrate International Tea Day, which falls on May 21, the Doha Girls Centre, under the Ministry of Sports and Youth, is organising a "Cup of Tea" event on Sunday at its headquarters from 4pm-7pm.

The event will be characterised by its creative touches, qualities, and innovative activities suitable for females aged 18-39.

A cybercrime workshop will be held in co-operation with the Economic and Cy-

ber Crimes Prevention Department.

The workshop aims to research and investigate cybercrime in all its forms, what constitutes a violation of the Qatari Penal Code, and research and investigate credit card fraud and how to be safe.

The workshop will be accompanied by a discussion and several competitions, in addition to flower arrangements under the supervision of the centre's supervisors.

Doha Girls Center director Sheikhha

Hussain Babssail said that it is important to celebrate international days and highlight them with various activities to introduce them to society.

Essentially, she said, it is a golden opportunity to witness the girls' talents and creativity.

Babssail invites all females to register for this event.

International Tea Day is celebrated annually on May 21, according to the UN.

The relevant resolution was adopted on December 21, 2019, and the UN's Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) was invited to lead the observance of this day.

International Tea Day aims to raise awareness of the long history and cultural and economic importance of tea worldwide and promote and foster collective actions to implement activities in favour of the sustainable production and consumption of tea. - QNA

GAC honours MoI, Customs officials

The General Authority of Customs (GAC) has honoured a number of officials of the Ministry of Interior (MoI) from the Canine and Drug Control sections.

On behalf of GAC chairman Ahmed bin Abdullah al-Jamal, assistant chairman for customs affairs Mohamed Ahmed al-Muhammadi presented certificates of thanks to 21 MoI officials for their distinguished efforts in seizing narcotics and other customs violations.

Al-Muhammadi also honoured 42 officials in the departments of Land Customs, Maritime Customs, Hamad International Airport Customs,

Air Freight and Private Airports Customs for their efforts in detecting and thwarting the smuggling of a number of narcotic consignments.

He urged the officials to exert more efforts to protect the security and safety of the country, stressing the GAC's keenness to enhance co-operation with its partners from the relevant government agencies, and support the cadres of its partners.

Lt-Col Hamad Lahdan al-Muhammadi, head of the Police Canine Section and the directors of GAC departments thanked the GAC for its interest in honouring the officials.

Ooredoo supports social entrepreneurship with latest CSR initiative

Ooredoo is the Platinum Supporter of a graduation ceremony for the latest generation of social entrepreneurs.



The Social Development Centre (Nama) concluded the fifth generation of its social entrepreneurs development programme, Rawasi 2022, in October 2022 and lauded the graduates during a recent ceremony.

Ooredoo director of corporate social responsibility (CSR), sponsorship and media Moza al-Muhammadi, who attended the graduation ceremony, said: "We were delighted to support such a worthwhile initiative and help celebrate the graduation of another generation of invaluable social entrepreneurs."

Nama launched Rawasi to create new generations of social entrepreneurs.

The six-workshop programme highlighted the ways in which social entrepreneurs can help drive tangible social change by establishing business projects that focus on creating a positive impact within the community and adding value to society.

During the ceremony, Manar al-Jabri, director of Nama's Social Service Department, said: "The Nama Centre is working constantly to learn from international experiences in creating empowered social entrepreneurs who understand their national responsibility."

"The Rawasi programme was developed with the aim of nurturing youth talents in social entrepreneurship," she said. "We take this opportunity to express our appreciation and gratitude to the programme's sponsors, our Platinum Supporter, Ooredoo, and everyone who contributed to the programme's success."

CBSE EXAMINATION RESULTS

Stellar performance by DPS-Monarch students

The second batch of grade X of DPS-Monarch International School marked a stellar performance in CBSE Board examination 2022-23. Antony Binu Alapatt was the topper with 98.8%, followed by Aditya Vivek and Hasan Mohamed Sardhar (97.8%) as the second toppers. The other toppers are Adhishree Lalit (97.6%), Saarah Shakil (97.4%), Kavya Valluri (96.6%), Keshav Sumesh and Subbulakshman Sivakolundu Prabusankar (96.4%), Nicole Serrao (96.2%), Ganesh Senthikumar and Rithu Raja (95.8%), Aditya Sajit (95.6%) and Punnoose Kuncheria Purakel (95.4%). A total of 81 students appeared for the exam with the school average of 86% and with a Centum by nine students in various subjects. While 45% students scored 90% and above, 90% passed with Distinction and sustained the school result of 100%.

The students who scored 100 marks: Aditya Vivek (mathematics, social science, information technology), Adhishree Lalit (mathematics), Hasan Mohamed Sardhar (social science), Aditya Sajit (French - second language), Antony Binu Alapatt, Kavya Valluri and Keshav Sumesh (information technology). The following are the number of students who scored more than 90 marks in various subjects: 33 students in English, 27 students in mathematics, 26 students in science, 29 students in social science, 45 students in information technology and 22 students in second languages. Subject average is as follows: English 88%, information technology 91.2%, science 78%, social science 85.6%, second language 82.8% and mathematics 78%. The school management, principal, heads, co-ordinators and teachers have congratulated the students.



Antony Binu Alapatt



Adhishree Lalit



Aditya Vivek



Hasan Mohamed

IIS class X second topper



Fathima Femin, who came second in Ideal Indian School for the CBSE class X examination, with 97% marks.

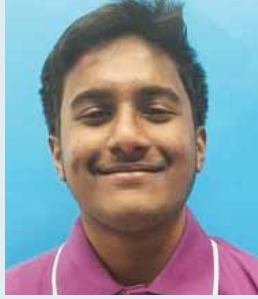
Podar Pearl School students shine



Vyapak Malviya



Varsha Muralidharan



Daniel Jacob Neil

Podar Pearl School achieved 100% success in the CBSE Class X Board Examination held in March 2023, with 81% of students securing distinction in aggregate. Two students secured Centum and six got 99% in Artificial Intelligence. Vyapak Malviya was the school topper with 92.8%, followed by Varsha Muralidharan (91.2%) and Daniel Jacob Neil (91%). The school management, principal and staff congratulated the students.

Noble International School scores 100% pass rate

Noble International School has achieved 100% success in the CBSE grade X and XII examinations this year. In grade X, the first three toppers were Adnan bin Amjad (97%), Raed Abdul Nasar (97%) and Jesna Varghese (96.4%). In grade XII, the toppers were Malavika (94.4%), Anzaba (91.2%) and Ayisha Diya (90.2%). In grade X, seven students scored above 95%, and 50% of the students scored more than

80%. Four students scored 100 each in Malayalam, and two students repeated the feat in Arabic. In grade XII, more than 10% of the students scored above 90%, and 91% scored above 70% marks. Three students scored 100 each in the IP subject. The school's management members, principal Shibu Abdul Rasheed, and vice-principal (academics) Jayamon Joy congratulated the students.



Adnan bin Amjad



Jesna Varghese



Malavika



Anzaba



Ayisha Diya



Raed Abdul Nasar

Finq marks International Nurses Day

The Federation of Indian Nurses Qatar (Finq) celebrated International Nurses Day recently. The event was graced by First Lt Khalid Hussain al-Shamari and Dr Mohamed Bahaudeen from Community Policing Department, Ministry of Interior; Dr Nabila al-Meer from Qatar University, Indian embassy charge d'affaires Angeline Premalatha; the first Qatari nurse Nasra al-Noobi; Hamad Medical Corporation's acting executive director of nursing Enaam al-Naemi and leaders of Indian apex bodies and associate organisations. The event had a panel discussion with retired nurses alongside those currently working, looking at the evolution of nursing practices to the present and to the future. It was an enriching experience to hear from experienced nurses and learn about their experiences and challenges over the years. One of the most memorable experiences of the event was the candle lighting ceremony followed by nurses oath-



taking, which helped the audience remember Florence Nightingale, the founder of modern nursing. The celebration continued with the recog-

nition of some senior nurses, the first-ever nursing quiz competition winners, performances from an exclusively nurses' music band, dances and kids' performances.



Buntotsava 2023 celebrated

Bunts Qatar, a socio-cultural association of Indian expats from the Karnataka state, celebrated their annual event, Buntotsava-2023. Indian Cultural Centre (ICC) president A P Manikantan was the chief guest. The guests of honour included Manipal Institute of Higher Education's former pro vice-chancellor Dr V Surendra Shetty, popular Kannada actor Pramod Shetty, ICC vice-president Subramanya Hebbagelu and event sponsor M Pallonji Qatar's general manager J Chidananda. The Seva Sampada award for outstanding community service was conferred on Tulu Koota Qatar's past president Asmath Ali and Hebbagelu. Visiting artists Dr Niranjan Murthy and Kishore Shetty, children and members who excelled in various fields were feted. Founder president Ravi Shetty was felicitated

on being awarded the Karnataka state Rajyotsava Award in 2022 and Deepak Shetty on being elected as vice-president of the Indian Community Benevolent Forum. The highlight of the event was a cultural extravaganza depicting the festivals of Tulunad, including folk dance, kambala, pili dance, yakshagana, keel kudure, kalari payattu and a larger than life size doll and Tulu comedy drama Avu Dala Apujji by well known Lakumi troop from Mangalore. Bunts Qatar advisory board chairman Deepak Shetty, vice-president Dineshchandra Shetty and general secretary Manas Shetty were present. The event was compered by Naveen Shetty Iruvail and Vibha Krishna Shetty. Bunts Qatar president Dr Padmashree Shetty welcomed the gathering and Avinash Shetty proposed a vote of thanks.

Birla Book Fair organised

The Birla Book Fair, hosted by the department of library at Birla Public School in collaboration with Crescent Bookshop, Qatar, was held from May 7 to 10. The event was inaugurated by the academic director-principal Harish Sanduja. Crescent Bookshop had set their stalls at three campuses of BPS (primary -I, primary-II & main campus) with a large

collection of books from different genres and authors for students from KG-1 to grade XII. The fair offered students a wide selection of books to choose from which included short stories, fiction and non-fiction, dictionaries and reference books. Accompanied by the class teachers, the students of all sections visited the fair and purchased books.



Parents of Indian students in UK universities meet



About 50 Qatar-based Indian parents of students in the UK universities recently had a networking session. What started as a small WhatsApp support group among a few parents for sharing information in mid-2020 during the Covid-19 lockdown period, has now grown into a large community of nearly 200 parents.



Lifesaver

A white-eared bulbul quenches its thirst from a backyard birdbath in Doha. With summer setting in and mercury poised to rise further, birdbaths are lifesavers for birds. **PICTURE:** Gulf Times news editor Bonnie James.

Urdu poetry collection launched



Renowned literary and cultural organisation, Majlis e Frogh e Urdu Adab, launched the late Dr Fartash Syed's book – Kulliyat - Baat Rahti Hai, a collection of his three books of poetry – Haashia, Bar-mala and Har Warq Par Usi Ka Naam.

Majlis chairman Mohamed Atiq presided. Prominent Urdu poetry aesthete Hassan Chougule was the chief guest. Majlis president Qamaruzzaman Bhatti represented the organisation on the dais. Secretary-general Obaid Tahir, compered the event.

The event started with a recitation from the Holy Qur'an by Hafiz Daniyal Akram.

Shaeqeen e Fun president Nawaz Akram welcomed the gathering. Majlis' patrons Ahmed Hussain, Riyas Ahmed Bakali and Hamid Rasul, Aziz Nabeel and Asif Shafi who played a major role in publishing the collection and other dignitaries were present during the launch.

Majlis members Raza Hussain Raza and Sanwal Abbasi and Anjuman Mohibban e Urdu Hind's general secretary and noted poet Aziz Nabeel spoke about Dr Syed's personality, poetry and life and read out articles on him.

Subsequently, the poetic session saw Dr Syed's verses being recited.

The young poetess Aesha Shafaq, who came from Pakistan, and Doha-based poets



Atiq Anzar, Aziz Nabeel, Ahmed Ashfaqm Ijaz Haider, Asif Shafi, Zawwar Hussain, Qaiser Masood, Syed Shakeel Ahmed, Ashfaq Deshmukh, Raza Hussain and Sanwal Abbasi participated.

In his presidential address, Atiq talked about Dr Syed's love and services for the Majlis. He said that since 2011, Dr Syed was shouldering a major part of Majlis' responsibilities until he passed away due to Covid-19. Atiq also paid tributes to the Majlis founder, Malik Museeb ur Rehman.

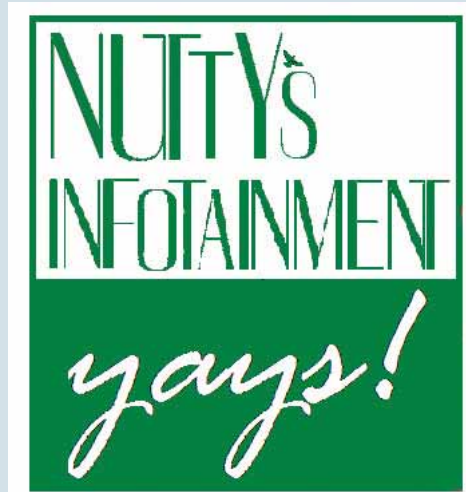
Qamaruzzaman Bhatti thanked the guests and especially those who played a

key role in the editing and publishing of the book, which include Aziz Nabeel, Asif Shafi, Aatir Usmani, Sahraash Fartash, Mushfiq Raza Naqvi and members of the Majlis.

Ahmed Hussain, Ibrahim Khan Kamal, Hamid Rasul, Riyaz Ahmed Bakali, Mehmood Ahmed, Farzana Safdar, Shahid Khan, Anwer Ali Raana, Khalid Latif, Haroon Rashid, Shahida Atiq, Liaqat Malik, Ashraf Siddiqui, Abdul Basit Qureshi, Saeed Ahmed, Mohamed Tariq, Javed Humayun, Zahid Sharif, Javed Bhatti and Abdul Razzaq were among those present.

The Met Gala rug story

By Shafqat Nabi



two equal halves called hemispheres. There are generally considered to be four hemispheres: northern, southern, eastern, and western. Which continent exists in all four hemispheres? N110. As chair of Ad Council, this American media guru (pictured) of Italian descent partnered with the Biden administration in 2021 to create a coronavirus vaccine campaign that featured Pope Francis. In what may now be construed as an unconventional job interview, she hosted a discussion with Elon Musk last month at a conference in Miami where she encouraged the audience to welcome Musk with applause and lauded his work ethic. "Many of you in this room know me, and you know I pride myself on my work ethic," she said, adding, "Buddy, I met my match." Who is this person and why is she in news?

Answers

- N11. Neyt by Extraweave.
N12. Pac-Man. In 1999, Billy Mitchell was the first person to claim a perfect score of 3,333,360 points.
N13. Potassium (K), Nitrogen (N), Iodine (I) and Iron (Fe).
N14. *Wings*, an American silent film known for winning the first Academy Award for Best Picture.
N15. Donald Duck (voice of Clarence Nash by premade animation). Other co-hosts included Bob Hope, Rosalind Russell, David Niven, James Stewart and Jack Lemmon.
N16. Scratching, sometimes referred to as scrubbing, a DJ and turntablist technique.
N17. Emil Jannings did not attend the event as he had decided to go back to his home in Germany before it was scheduled. The Academy granted his request to receive the trophy early, making his statuette the very first Academy Award ever presented.
N18. Medical profession.
N19. Africa.
N110. Linda Yaccarino. She would succeed Musk as the chief executive officer of X Corporation and Twitter.



Long-time expatriates honoured

Kannoth Mahallu people in Qatar hailing from Thrissur district of Kerala organised a family get-together with various programmes. Kannoth Mahallu committee Qatar chapter president M K Hamzamon presided over the function. Members and long-time expats Naseer M A, Abdul Jaleel M M, Hamzamon M K, Razak V H, Mukthar M M, Mohamed Rafi and Sharafudheen P K were felicitated. Various arts and sports activities were controlled by Mukthar Mohamed and Junaid V M. General secretary V A Ashik welcomed the gathering and secretary Shajudheen M M proposed a vote of thanks.



Tribe Nlyays

'The Island of Despair' features in which novel? Robinson Crusoe. In the novel, the protagonist, Robinson Crusoe, joins an expedition to purchase slaves from Africa but is shipwrecked in a storm. Crusoe awakes on an island to discover that only he has survived the storm. At first, Crusoe despairs over his situation, calling this island "the Island of Despair."

(Sanjana Kumari, Housewife, Doha)

Do you have some interesting bytes to share? And, does your vibe attract you to the 'Tribe Nlyays'? Every week one question from readers will be featured here. Please do send it to us at infotainment.factree@gmail.com. And, please do mention the school/college/company (or just 'home-sweet-home').

ACCIDENT

Bodies found in search for Chinese fishing vessel crew

Two bodies were found yesterday in the search for 39 crew members missing after a Chinese fishing vessel capsized in the Indian Ocean, Beijing's state media reported. The ongoing search operation following the capsizing of the Lu Peng Yuan Yu Q28 "found and salvaged the remains of two victims", Xinhua news agency reported. The Chinese vessel overturned in the early hours of Tuesday, carrying 17 Chinese, 17 Indonesians and five Filipinos. No details were given on the nationalities of the two bodies found yesterday. The boat capsized within Australia's vast search-and-rescue region, Beijing's ambassador to Canberra said yesterday, noting it was 5,000kms to the west of Perth.

CONTROVERSY

Australian police tazer 95-year-old woman

Australian police have launched an investigation after a 95-year-old woman was injured during an "interaction" with police at an old people's home. Media said police had tazered the great-grandmother, who has dementia, on Wednesday at the care home in the town of Cooma, about 300km southwest of Sydney. State broadcaster ABC reported that the woman was believed to have been carrying a knife when police tazered her. A spokesperson for the Cooma District hospital declined to comment. The Yallambee Lodge aged care facility confirmed that an incident had taken place but gave no details, according to its operator, the Snowy Monaro Regional Council.

PEOPLE

Famed kabuki actor found collapsed, parents dead

One of Japan's best-known kabuki actors was found collapsed at home alongside both of his parents, who were confirmed dead, local media said yesterday. Ennosuke Ichikawa, 47, was found apparently drifting in and out of consciousness inside a closet in his Tokyo home by his agent, Jiji Press agency and other local media said, citing police sources. Rescue workers found his 76-year-old father, also a kabuki actor, and his 75-year-old mother unconscious, and the pair were later confirmed dead, Jiji and public broadcaster NHK said. Police are investigating details of the incident and have found what appears to be a suicide note written by Ichikawa inside the house, Jiji reported.

RULING

India's top court upholds bull-taming festival

India's Supreme Court has upheld a state government's decision to lift the ban on a popular bull-taming festival long blighted by allegations of animal cruelty. Animal rights groups had petitioned the court after Tamil Nadu amended a law in 2017 to allow the traditional Jallikattu festival. "The Tamil Nadu law is a valid piece of legislation and there is no flaw in it," Justice Aniruddha Bose declared on behalf of a five-member bench. During Jallikattu, young men try to grab charging bulls by their sharpened horns or jump on their backs. Unlike in traditional Spanish bullfighting, the animals are let loose into open fields where young men compete to subdue them bare-handed.

TRAGEDY

Two climbers die on Everest, toll reaches seven

Two more climbers have died on Everest, expedition organisers said yesterday, bringing the number of deaths on the world's highest peak this spring climbing season to seven. The latest fatalities were a 58-year-old Indian woman and a Nepali member of a team clearing trash from the mountain. Suzanne Leopoldina Jesus died at a hospital in Nepal after the Indian mountaineer was airlifted from base camp due to illness. The primary school teacher aimed to be Asia's first person on a pacemaker and the oldest Indian to climb Everest. In the other death, a Nepali trash collector died on Tuesday while descending.

Papua New Guinea to sign security pact with US

AFP
Port Moresby

Papua New Guinea will sign a security pact with the US that gives American troops access to the Pacific nation's ports and airports, its leader said yesterday, as Washington jostles for influence in the region with Beijing. US President Joe Biden has placed more importance on the Pacific over concerns about an increasingly assertive China, which is trying to woo nations with an array of diplomatic and financial incentives in return for strategic support.

Prime Minister James Marape said two agreements focusing on defence co-operation and maritime surveillance had been agreed with Washington and would be formally signed at the earliest opportunity after parliamentary approval.

"We are elevating to a specific defence co-operation agreement, something that is falling short of a treaty," he told a press conference.

"We are moving ahead, we are signing with the best military on the face of planet Earth."

The agreements, which can be renewed every 15 years, will give the US vital movement in Papua New Guinea's waters near sea routes to Australia and Japan, in return for access to US satellite surveillance, he said.

"It now gives us an opportune time to focus not just on maritime access but satellite access on... illegal activities on the high sea," Marape said.

A leaked draft version of the defence co-operation agreement showed American forces would have broad autonomy at some of the country's key entry points, but Marape said any access would have to be approved by his government. "The ports, the infrastructure... will not in any way stand to be exclusively used by the military," he said.

"They would always be asking our defence to have access to our facilities."

Biden - whose uncle died in Papua New Guinea in World War II - cancelled a historic first visit to the most populous South Pacific nation next week because of domestic debt ceiling crisis talks

China hosts Central Asian leaders



China's President Xi Jinping arrives at the welcome ceremony for the China-Central Asia summit in Xian, Shaanxi province, yesterday. China is seeking to build regional influence as G7 leaders hold a rival gathering in Japan. Beijing has said the summit is of "milestone significance". Beijing says trade with Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan reached \$70bn in 2022 and expanded 22% year-on-year in the first quarter of 2023. Central Asia has also become key to China's trillion-dollar Belt and Road Initiative, a defining geopolitical project for Xi.

Tesla 'held talks with India on auto incentives, battery making'

Reuters
New Delhi

Tesla Inc has held discussions with officials about incentives being offered by India for car and battery manufacturing, said a person with direct knowledge of the talks, as the automaker looks anew at entering the Indian market.

The US electric car maker has proposed setting up a factory in India to build electric vehicles (EVs), Reuters reported on Wednesday.

Plans to locally manufacture EV batteries are also being discussed, said the person with direct knowledge.

Tesla is "still testing the waters and trying to understand the local policies," said the person, who declined to be named as the talks were private.

During the visit, details of which have not been publicly disclosed by the company or any Indian ministry, Tesla yesterday met India's Deputy IT minister Rajeev Chandrasekhar, one of the highest-ranking officials the company held talks with, said a source in the Indian government.

Tesla and India's IT ministry did not immediately respond to an e-mailed request for comment.

Tesla's delegation included Karn Budhiraj, a senior supply chain executive based in the US, the two sources said.

The discussions in India represent a shift in stance for the US electric car maker.

Late last year it was focused on seeking lower import taxes on cars, which can be as much as 100%, and talks with the Indian government became dead-

locked.

India is keen for Tesla to build vehicles locally but the company argued it wanted to export first so that it could test the strength of demand.

Recent talks have touched on India's taxes on imported cars but have mainly centred on how Tesla could make use of a government scheme, the first source said.

India has set aside around \$6bn under two programmes to boost EV sales and manufacturing. Under the schemes, automakers and battery manufacturers can get certain cash-back incentives for selling and exporting locally made vehicles and parts.

"It appears Tesla has come with a different heart and head this time to take advantage of the auto boom (in India) ... Tesla can negotiate on things like taxes better if it first sets up a plant," said Mohan Shukla of New Delhi-based public policy advisory White Dolphin Media.

Tesla has described a goal of selling 20mn EVs a year in 2030, a level that would require massive new investment in assembly plants and battery production.

Outside the US, Tesla has a plant in Shanghai - its largest factory worldwide - and one in Brandenburg, Germany.

In addition to India, Tesla has been in talks over the past year with officials in Indonesia and South Korea about potential investments. India is the world's third-largest automobile market. Prime Minister Narendra Modi's administration has set an ambitious target of having EVs account for 30% of India's total car sales by 2030 from around 1% today. Tesla's talks with India come at a crucial time for Modi, who is looking to attract investments in the run-up to national elections next year where he will be seeking a rare third term.

Amazon's cloud unit to invest \$13bn in India

Amazon Web Services (AWS), the cloud computing division of Amazon.com Inc, yesterday said it plans to invest 1.06tn rupees (\$13bn) in India by 2030, doubling down on its past investments to cater to an ever-growing demand. The latest investment will be used to build its cloud infrastructure in India and it will support over 100,000 full-time jobs annually, AWS said. The company runs two data centres in the Indian subcontinent - one in Mumbai which was launched in 2016,

and another in Hyderabad, started in 2022. AWS's total planned investment in India adds up to about \$16.4bn by 2030, the company said in a statement. The cloud platform offers more than 200 services, including storage, robotics and artificial intelligence. Amazon's cloud division has been investing in regions across the world to provide seamless connectivity. Earlier this year it said it plans to invest \$6bn in Malaysia by 2037.

Philippines military chief visits islands near disputed Spratlys

Reuters
Balabac, Philippines

When the Philippine military chief addressed a small contingent of navy officers on a remote island in Palawan province near the disputed Spratly archipelago in the South China Sea, he reminded them their mission was to "ensure there is peace".

But he also told them they have a "very important" role to play in guarding Philippine waters against intruders - and assured them of more resources and troops as the Philippines shifts its focus from internal security to territorial defence.

"We make sure that we are deployed where we are needed. In Palawan, we are needed here because this is a strategic location, so we have to be prepared," Centino said after sharing a feast with troops over a banana leaf-lined table bedecked with crabs, chicken, rice and fruits.

Centino's visit at the Narciso del Rosario naval station, site of

a new beaching ramp and staging area, was his second stop in the Balabac group of islands, where he also inspected a 300-hectare Philippine air base.

The Balabac air base, whose location Centino called "very strategic" was one of four new sites the US was given access to in February under a 2014 defence pact, which came at a time of concern over China's conduct in the South China Sea and tension over Taiwan.

The 2014 Enhanced Defence Co-operation Agreement (EDCA) allows for joint training, pre-positioning of equipment and the building of facilities such as runways, fuel storage and military housing, but not a permanent presence.

Some local government officials have expressed reservations over the expanded EDCA, but Billy Adriano, a resident of Balabac, said he welcomed it because "that will help in the security of the country".

Manila has started building a 3km runway at the air base, which will also host humanitarian assistance and disaster relief facilities and barracks that Americans could

use under the EDCA. "This is surrounded by islands, and this is where foreign vessels from international waters will enter and pass through our SLOCs (sea lines of communications)," Centino said of the air base's location.

"If we have to defend (our territory), we have to be able to detect and identify intrusions," Centino said, recalling an incident in which a foreign vessel slipped into the Sulu Sea near Palawan.

He did not say what vessel, but the Philippines in March 2022 said it detected a Chinese navy reconnaissance ship off the Cuyo Group of Islands within the Sulu Sea, where it entered and lingered without permission, ignoring demands to leave.

China claims sovereignty over almost the entire South China Sea with a "nine-dash line" on maps that stretches more than 1,500km off its mainland and cuts into the exclusive economic zones of Vietnam, the Philippines, Malaysia, Brunei and Indonesia. An international arbitral ruling in 2016 dismissed that line as having no legal basis.

Poll victory rally



Activists and supporters of the Congress party hold flags as they take part in a rally to celebrate the victory in Karnataka state assembly election, in Kolkata, India, yesterday.

Man charged over New Zealand hostel fire

AFP
Wellington

New Zealand police yesterday charged a man with arson over a hostel fire that killed at least six people in the country's capital.

The man will face Wellington District Court today, police said, adding that further "more serious charges" in relation to the deaths have not been ruled out.

Police said they were not seeking anyone else in relation to the blaze, which engulfed the four-storey, 92-room hostel in the early hours of Tuesday.

Hours before announcing they had arrested and charged the man, police removed the first two bodies from the charred interior of the Loafers Lodge hostel.

As a white car drove the remains away from the building in central Wellington, emergency workers bowed their heads and a man and a woman chanted in a mark of respect. Firefighters said they had located six bodies within the hostel but a collapsed roof on the top floor made it impossi-

ble to search everywhere. Police say the toll may rise.

The scale of the fire shocked the country, with Prime Minister Chris Hipkins describing it at the time as an "absolute tragedy" while promising a thorough investigation.

Some survivors crawled through smoke in the dark of night to escape the fire, while others were rescued from the rooftop by firefighters using ladder trucks.

The remains of at least four of those killed still lie in the charred building.

One of the survivors, Simon Hanify, said he only escaped by chance. Smoke alarms in the building often went off without reason, he said. "I wasn't even going to leave my room. But I felt like a cigarette. I thought I'd go outside because I usually share them with other people," Hanify said on Wednesday.

"There was smoke coming down the stairwell, on the ceiling and our hallway," he added. "I've been through fire before so I did a quick lap of our floor, knocking on doors, saying 'this one's real, evacuate'"

Khan won't join graft probe on bail

Reuters

Islamabad

Former prime minister Imran Khan, who is facing corruption charges, said yesterday that he would not join an investigation by the powerful anti-graft agency while he was out on bail.

The National Accountability Bureau (NAB), which has in the past investigated, put on trial and jailed all those who have served as prime minister since 2008, had earlier summoned Khan for investigation into the graft charges, a spokesman said.

Khan was arrested on the charges, which he denies, on May 9 and later set free on court-ordered bail that was extended to May 31.

In a statement addressed to the NAB's deputy director, and shown to Reuters by one of Khan's lawyers, the former prime minister called the allegations against him "absolutely false, frivolous and concocted".

He said he is in the process of applying for, and obtaining, bail in a number of other legal cases and would not be available before his protective bail expired on May 22.

Khan's arrest triggered a wave of violence that deepened political instability in the South Asian nation of 220mn.

Pakistan has also been facing its worst ever economic crisis, with critical International Monetary Fund (IMF) funding needed to avert a balance of payment crisis delayed for months.

His wife Bushra Khan, commonly known as Bushra Bibi, is also on bail until May 23.

On Wednesday, Khan said that police had surrounded his house in Lahore, in Punjab province, and that he expected to be re-arrested soon, after the government warned him to hand over supporters who it blamed for attacks on the army.

Punjab's information minister, Amir Mir, said the government did not have any plans to arrest Khan as he had been given bail by court.

"All we want him to hand over the terrorists hiding at his home," he said.

Khan has said authorities could search his home but only with legal warrants from a court, and has denied sheltering anyone involved in the violence.

Yesterday Khan's aide Iftikhr Durrani allowed journalists into some areas of Khan's Lahore home to "look for terrorists".

Montana becomes first US state to ban TikTok

AFP

San Francisco

Montana has become the first US state to ban TikTok, with the law set to take effect next year as debate escalates over the impact and security of the popular video app.

The prohibition signed into law on Wednesday by Governor Greg Gianforte will serve as a legal test for a national ban of the Chinese-owned platform, something that lawmakers in Washington are increasingly calling for.

"TikTok may not operate within the territorial jurisdiction of Montana," said a copy of the freshly-minted law at the state website.

The ban makes it a violation each time "a user accesses TikTok, is offered the ability to access TikTok, or is offered the ability to download TikTok".

Each violation is punishable

by a \$10,000 fine every day it takes place.

Under the law, Apple and Google will have to remove TikTok from their app stores and companies will face possible daily fines.

The move almost certainly will be challenged by lawsuits.

State political leaders have "trampled on the free speech of hundreds of thousands of Montanans who use the app to express themselves, gather information, and run their small business in the name of anti-Chinese sentiment", said American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) Montana policy director Keegan Medrano.

The ban will take effect in 2024, but be voided if TikTok is acquired by a company incorporated in a country not designated by the United States as a foreign adversary, the law read.

TikTok has gone on record saying that the ban's constitutionality will ultimately be decided by the courts.

US apex court backs Big Tech in terrorism cases

AFP

Washington

The US Supreme Court handed a victory to Twitter, Facebook and Google, saying yesterday that the social media giants could not be held liable by victims of terrorist attacks for postings that endorsed the Islamic State (IS) group.

The cases that targeted Google-owned YouTube and Twitter were seen as potential challenges to decades-old legal protections for tech companies.

The justices declined to wade into the debate.

In their decision, the court justices indicated that the cases were not fit to address the law, because the platforms did not in any case "aid and abet" IS terror attacks by hosting postings supportive of the extremist group.

A law known as Section 230 gives Internet platforms blanket immunity from the fall-out of content that comes from a third party, even if it is pushed out as a recommendation by the website.

Section 230, which became law in 1996, is credited with allowing the no-holds-barred expansion of the Internet but has increasingly been seen as helping cause the harmful effects of social media on society.

Without it, websites would be open to lawsuits for content posted by users, making the free-wheeling discussions seen on social media subject to much closer moderation.

A bitterly divided US congress has failed to update the rules, and many US states are passing their own laws to make platforms such as Facebook, Instagram and Tiktok more responsible for content.

The justices of the Supreme Court largely evaded the question.

They said that the allegations against YouTube and Twitter did not amount to a liable infraction and therefore the debate over section 230 was not pertinent.

"We therefore decline to address the application of Section 230 (in a case) that appears to state little, if any, plausible claim for relief," they said.

The justices gave no indication on how they could address the immunity issue in the future, nor were their stances on the matter

made clear at hearings in February.

"With this decision, free speech online lives to fight another day," said Patrick Toomey, deputy director of the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), which advocates for free speech.

The first of the two cases involved a US victim of the 2015 Paris attacks, claimed by the IS group.

The other case was brought by the family of a victim of a 2017 attack by the group on an Istanbul nightclub.

The family alleged that Twitter's failure to take down and stop recommending IS tweets constituted aiding an act of terror.

Google and Facebook's owner Meta did not immediately reply to a request for comment, but an association representing US tech companies said the decision was good news.

"The court correctly recognised the narrow posture of these cases and declined to rewrite a key tenet of US Internet law, preserving free expression online and a thriving digital economy," said Matt Schruers, head of the Computer & Communications Industry Association.

Canada requests foreign help to fight spreading wildfires

Canada called for foreign help on Wednesday to combat wildfires burning out of control and spreading across vast swathes of the western half of the country.

The fires that have devastated the oil-producing Alberta province have in recent days spread to neighbouring British Columbia and Saskatchewan as well as the Northwest Territories.

Some 2,500 firefighters from across Canada backed by 400 military personnel have been deployed across Alberta to try to tame the wildfires, which have already burned more than half a million hectares of forests and grasslands and destroyed many homes and businesses.

However, they aren't enough, officials said.

"It's still a very significant and dangerous situation in Alberta," federal Public Safety Minister Bill Blair told reporters in Ottawa.

Blair said the Canadian Interagency Forest Fire Centre "is reaching out to foreign countries - the United States, Mexico, Australia and New Zealand ... we're asking them to come and help us".

Smoke from the wildfires has blanketed western Canada, leading to warnings about poor air quality posing risks to health.

In Calgary, the sky had an orange hue to it as the smoke grew thicker throughout the day.

Hundreds of kilometres to the east, residents of Regina and Saskatoon in neighbouring Saskatchewan province said they woke up to a thick haze and a strong smell of smoke in the air.

Across the region, almost 180 wildfires were burning - including 48 out of control - forcing tens of thousands to flee over the past two weeks.

Evacuation orders and alerts were lifted in some parts on Tuesday and Wednesday, including hard-hit Drayton Valley west of Edmonton in Alberta and Fort St John in British Columbia, as those fires were subdued.

Air quality indexes in several cities, however, indicated wildfire smoke that spread from the Pacific Coast to Manitoba province still poses a "very high risk" to health.

In recent years, western Canada has been hit repeatedly by extreme weather, the intensity and frequency of which have increased due to global warming.

This has brought floods and mudslides, forest fires that destroyed an entire town, and record-high summer temperatures that killed more than 500 people in 2021.

This spring's mostly hot, dry weather has resulted in what Alberta leader Danielle Smith described as an "unprecedented" crisis. - **AFP**

Floods in northern Italy kill at least 13

Reuters/AFP

Rome

Floods that killed at least 13 people in Italy's northern Emilia-Romagna region caused billions of euros' worth of damage and hit agriculture particularly hard, the regional governor said yesterday.

Torrential rains this week devastated the eastern side of the region, known as Romagna, with up to 300 landslides, 23 overflowing rivers, some 400 roads damaged or destroyed, and 42 flooded municipalities.

"We are facing a new earthquake," Emilia-Romagna President Stefano Bonaccini told reporters, recalling the seismic events that struck the region in 2012, destroying thousands of homes.

Fixing the damage would be "a gigantic undertaking", he said, and the region launched a fundraising effort.

Noting that since then "almost everything" had been rebuilt, Bonaccini said, "that experience showed us that it can be done, and we will rebuild everything (again), I am sure of that".

The death toll rose to 13 yesterday when four more bodies were found.

In the small town of Russi two people, aged 73 and 71, were found dead together in their home, local authorities said.

They were suspected to have been electrocuted while trying to move a fridge inside a flooded house, Italian media reported.

According to the Coldiretti agricultural association, more than 5,000 farms were left un-



A flooded road is seen in the town of Lugo yesterday, after heavy rains caused flooding across Italy's northern Emilia-Romagna region.

der water in the region, which includes a so-called "Fruit Valley", as well as corn and grain fields.

"We had already estimated almost €1bn of damage (from those floods), so imagine how much the figure will rise" with the new disaster, Bonaccini said, adding it was too early to give precise figures.

The floods are the latest in a series of extreme weather events that have slammed Italy over the past year, as once exceptional disasters become a regular part of life.

The government has promised an extra €20mn (\$22mn) in emergency aid, on top of the €10mn allocated in response to previous floods two weeks ago,

which killed at least two people.

Luxury sportscar maker Ferrari, which is based in Emilia-Romagna, announced a €1mn donation.

At least 10,000 people were forced to leave their homes, and many of those who remained in flooded areas were left with no electricity.

One of the dead was swept away from her home and washed up on a beach some 20km away.

With the floods disrupting road and rail transport across the region, airport workers' unions agreed to postpone a strike that was planned for today, following a request from the government.

In the town of Cesena, rain stopped and waters largely re-

ceded, allowing locals to regain access to their mud-wrecked homes, including couple Maurizio Cola and Raffaella Zanni who escaped early on Wednesday.

"We had to throw everything away, nothing was saved. Water arrived up to here. The bed expanded with the water," Cola told Reuters, while Zanni wiped away tears, mourning the loss of one of her most precious belongings: her wedding album.

It was the second time this month that Emilia-Romagna has been hit by bad weather.

Heavy rains followed months of drought which had dried out the land, reducing its capacity to absorb water, meteorologists said.

Heavy fighting in Khartoum as food aid needs grow

Reuters

Khartoum

Heavy air strikes pounded southern areas of Sudan's capital yesterday as clashes flared near a military camp, witnesses said, in fighting that has displaced nearly 1mn people and left residents of Khartoum struggling to survive.

Air strikes by the army targeting the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) were heard across several residential neighbourhoods in southern Khartoum, including near the Taiba camp, while a police reserve force aligned with the army battled the RSF on the ground, the witnesses said.

Strikes could be heard across the Nile in the Sharg al-Nil district as well.

The army has mainly used air power and heavy artillery as it tries to drive back the RSF, which spread out across large areas of Khartoum and its adjoining cities of Bahri and Omdurman across the Nile after

fighting erupted on April 15.

"The bombardment and the clashes don't stop and there's no way to flee from our homes. All our money is gone," said Salah el-Din Othman, a 35-year-old resident of Khartoum. "Even if we leave our houses again we're afraid that gangs will loot everything in the house ... we are living a nightmare of fear and poverty."

Violence also flared about 1,000km (620 miles) west of Khartoum in Nyala, one of Sudan's largest cities and the capital of South Darfur state, witnesses said.

One said heavy artillery including tanks could be heard firing for the first time since a local truce was declared.

Armed gangs had started carrying out robberies in El Obeid, another major city and a trading hub in North Kordofan state, witnesses said.

Both army chief Abdel Fattah al-Burhan and RSF commander Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo, known as Hemedti, are thought to have remained in Khartoum throughout the fighting.

On Wednesday the army released a video showing Burhan in army fatigues greeting troops at what appeared to be the army headquarters in central Khartoum.

According to latest estimates, more than 840,000 people have been displaced within Sudan and some 220,000 have fled to neighbouring countries.

The UN World Food Programme (WFP) said it was ramping up its operations across at least six states in Sudan to assist 4.9mn vulnerable people, as well as assisting those fleeing to Chad, Egypt and South Sudan.

"The fighting in Sudan is devastating lives and livelihoods and forcing people to flee their homes with nothing but the clothes they are wearing," WFP East Africa director Michael Dunford said in a statement.

The UN said on Wednesday that more than half of Sudan's 46mn population needed humanitarian assistance and protection, launching a \$3bn aid appeal.

It also said it had received reports of

"horrific gender-based violence".

The aid effort has been hampered by the deaths of humanitarian workers early in the conflict and repeated cases of looting.

Medical aid agency MSF said that on Tuesday armed men had broken into its warehouse in Khartoum and taken two cars filled with supplies.

Burhan and Hemedti took the top positions on Sudan's ruling council following the 2019 overthrow of strongman Omar al-Bashir in a popular uprising.

They staged a coup two years later as a deadline to hand power to civilians approached and they began to mobilise their respective forces.

The latest conflict broke out after disputes over plans for the RSF to join the army and over the future chain of command under an internationally backed deal for a political transition towards civilian rule.

Talks mediated by the United States and Saudi Arabia in Jeddah have so far failed to secure a ceasefire.

World's oldest near-complete Hebrew Bible sells for \$38.1mn at auction

A Hebrew Bible more than 1,000 years old sold for \$38.1mn in New York on Wednesday, setting a record for the most valuable manuscript ever sold at auction.

The Codex Sassoon - which dates to the late ninth to early 10th century - is the earliest near-complete Hebrew Bible known to still exist.

It was sold by Sotheby's following a four-minute bidding battle between two bidders, the auction house said in a statement. The Bible was bought by former US diplomat Alfred Moses on behalf of an American nonprofit that will gift it to the ANU Museum of the Jewish People in Tel Aviv, Israel, Sotheby's said.

The sale surpassed the \$30.8mn that Microsoft founder Bill Gates paid for Leonardo da Vinci's Codex Leicester manuscript in 1994 as the most expensive handwritten document ever sold at auction. The most expensive historical document remains one of the first prints of the US Constitution, which Sotheby's sold for \$43mn in November 2021. - **AFP**

49 kidnapped migrants rescued

Forty-nine migrants from Honduras, Haiti, Venezuela, El Salvador, Brazil and Cuba who had been kidnapped from a commercial bus in central Mexico have been found, Mexico's defence minister said yesterday.

The migrants were found in several groups in the central state of San Luis Potosi and the neighbouring state of Nuevo Leon to the north, including about 30 people early yesterday, Defence Minister Luis Crescencio Sandoval said.

Several hundred members of Mexico's armed forces had participated in the search, and Sandoval said they would look for any remaining migrants, as well as the bus drivers. The total busload was estimated to be about 50 people.

"We're going to keep looking, and the drivers are a priority," Sandoval told a government news conference. Some of the migrants told authorities that members of an organised crime group had boarded the bus when it stopped at a gas station, he said.

An unnamed Honduran migrant, speaking in a video released by San Luis Potosi state prosecutors, said the bus had departed from the southern state of Chiapas and was about three hours from the northern city of Monterrey when it was intercepted. - **Reuters**

Ukraine says it advances, repels Russia attacks at Bakhmut

Ukraine said yesterday that it had repelled a day of Russian attacks in and around the city of Bakhmut and made gains of a kilometre in some places while buying time for "certain planned actions".

The head of the Wagner mercenary force, which is spearheading the Russian attack on Bakhmut, said his forces had advanced up to 400m.

"We're pushing Bakhmut all the way to the end," Yevgeny

Prigozhin said in an audio recording on his Telegram channel.

While Russia boosted its forces in the city, attacked the suburbs to the north and engaged in fierce fighting in the southern suburbs, Ukraine's forces advanced 500m

in the north and in some areas in the south by 1km, Deputy Defence Minister Hanna Maliar said on her Telegram channel.

Kyiv has for days been hailing battlefield successes around Bakhmut that could eventually trap

Wagner's forces inside the city.

Moscow sees Bakhmut, a city of about 70,000 before Russia's invasion 15 months ago, as a stepping stone toward capturing the rest of the eastern Donbas region. - **Reuters**

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TIMES

The high stakes of Nato’s Vilnius summit

With Nato’s mid-July summit in Vilnius fast approaching, the question on everyone’s mind is how to avoid another debacle concerning Ukraine’s prospective membership in the alliance. When Nato leaders addressed the same issue in Bucharest 15 years ago, they failed to reach a credible agreement about how to address Ukraine and Georgia’s aspirations for membership. We have all been living with the consequences.

In the run-up to the 2008 summit, Ukrainian President Viktor Yushchenko and Georgian President Mikheil Saakashvili persuaded US President George W Bush that Nato membership was the best option for their countries. Bush, in turn, promised that he would deliver a Nato decision in Bucharest. It didn’t end well. French President Nicolas Sarkozy and German Chancellor Angela Merkel were hostile to the idea, arguing that Ukraine and Georgia were not ready for membership, and that one should not risk alienating Russia.

The first point was undoubtedly valid with respect to Ukraine, not least because large segments of Ukrainian society firmly opposed to Nato membership. It had been only a decade since Nato bombs fell on Belgrade, so the question of joining the alliance was still highly divisive. Had membership been put to a referendum, it is unclear what Ukrainian voters would have decided.

Obviously, Russia, too, opposed the idea. Russian President Vladimir Putin made that clear when he joined the summit (these were different times) and delivered a speech essentially denying Ukrainian statehood. The audience was stunned, but he has stuck unwaveringly to that position for years.

In the event, Nato leaders forged a compromise that represented the worst of all possible worlds. While the alliance made clear that Georgia and Ukraine ought to become members, it hastened to add that accession would not happen then and there. The door to future membership appeared to have been opened, both fanning the flames in Russia and inflating the hopes of those who supported the idea.

Yet neither side had any real foundation for believing what it did. Nato’s fuzzy compromise did not really pose a threat to Russia because it did not really bring Ukraine and Georgia materially closer to membership. Until Putin’s illegal annexation of Crimea in 2014, Ukraine maintained a policy of neutrality vis-à-vis Russia and Nato. Nonetheless, the legacy of Nato’s Bucharest debacle has remained a burden to the alliance ever since. Now that there is a renewed push for Ukrainian membership, the issue will take centre stage in Vilnius. The situation has changed profoundly since 2014. Russia’s full-scale invasion of Ukraine last year has rendered fears of provoking the Kremlin moot, and the question of Nato membership is no longer highly divisive in Ukraine. Putin’s war of aggression has fully united the country in support of it.

Still, the politics of the issue are no less complicated than they were 15 years ago. Plenty of policymakers in Washington and other Western capitals are wary of bringing Ukraine into the alliance too quickly. It remains unlikely that two-thirds of US Senators are prepared to ratify Nato membership for Ukraine in the run-up to the 2024 presidential election. The problem is not only that some Republicans oppose a “blank check” for Ukraine; it is that Joe Biden’s administration and congressional Democrats will not want to hand Donald Trump a useful issue with which to support his “America First” re-election bid.

Moreover, Nato membership for Ukraine arguably is not the most pressing issue at the moment. While the prospect of the US deploying troops to the frontline battlefield of Bakhmut is a long way off, maintaining a strong, consistent flow of military and financial support to Ukraine is urgent and fully achievable as long as there is political will for it. In the months ahead, concrete support will be far more useful to Ukraine than formal commitments on paper.

Nonetheless, the trauma of Bucharest will hang over this year’s summit. Many of Nato’s Eastern European members feel strongly that now is the time to correct past mistakes and flesh out the vague, unspecified promise that was offered 15 years ago. Another Bucharest-style debacle, they warn, would haunt the alliance for years to come.

In the end, the wordsmiths will have to produce a solution that provides a clear path to Ukrainian membership even as it falls short of immediate accession. Resisting aggression and safeguarding Europe are the reasons why Nato was created in the first place. At stake in Vilnius is not just Ukraine’s future but also that of the alliance. — Project Syndicate

The only way to eliminate polio is to take it head on

By Florence Gyembuzie Wongnaah
Stockholm

When Jonas Salk’s polio vaccine was found to be safe and effective in 1955, following a successful trial involving nearly 2mn American children, it marked a turning point in the fight against a highly infectious disease causing incurable paralysis or even death. Prior to Salk’s discovery, between 25,000 and 50,000 cases were recorded each year in the United States alone, and little was known about how the virus spread.

Salk created his injectable inactivated polio vaccine (IPV) by treating the virus with formalin. Around the same time, Albert Sabin was developing an oral polio vaccine (OPV), which uses attenuated (weakened) mutant strains that stimulate antibody production without causing the disease. Cheaper and easier to administer than Salk’s vaccine, Sabin’s live-virus version ultimately became more widespread in the global effort to eradicate polio, although it was introduced six years later.

The success of that effort cannot be overstated. Since 1988, when the World Health Assembly adopted a resolution to eliminate the disease worldwide and subsequently launched the Global Polio Eradication Initiative, wild polio cases have plummeted by more than 99%, from an estimated 350,000 cases to six reported cases in 2021. Two of the three strains of wild poliovirus have been eradicated, while the third remains endemic in only Pakistan and Afghanistan. This breakthrough can be attributed largely to mass immunisation, but also to improved sanitation and hygiene.

Yet there is growing evidence suggesting that the OPV has outlived its usefulness, given the increasing number of vaccine-associated polio cases resulting from the presence of the live virus. While circulating vaccine-derived poliovirus (cVDPV), as it is officially known, is still relatively rare, its incidence is rising, with nearly 1,000 cases occurring globally in 2020. Such an increase suggests that cVDPV poses a significant barrier to eradicating polio.

To be sure, the OPV does have benefits. Unlike the IPV, for example, it immunises the digestive tract, where polio replicates. Consequently, this version of the vaccine boosts immunity and prevents transmission, making it particularly useful in areas where the wild poliovirus continues to circulate (the IPV protects individuals from the disease but is less effective at averting its spread). Moreover, in areas with low-quality sanitation, the live-vaccine virus in human waste can spread among the community and help protect it.

In areas with low immunisation rates, however, this community spread can prove dangerous. On rare occasions, after a long period of spreading unchecked between unvaccinated children, the virus mutates into a form that causes paralysis, leading to cVDPV infections.

The Covid-19 pandemic contributed to the increase in both wild polio and cVDPV cases, because vaccination campaigns were paused as the health authorities’ focus shifted to stopping the coronavirus’s spread. As a result, in 2020, 56 cases of wild polio were reported in Afghanistan, compared to 29 cases in the preceding year. The second half of 2020 was a period of intensified polio transmission in Pakistan as well,

and the country’s surveillance system was severely affected. In Africa, Malawi recorded one case of wild polio in 2021, and Mozambique recorded eight cases in 2022; the latter were linked to a strain that circulated in Pakistan in 2019.

Yet cVDPV cases now outnumber those caused by wild polio, and outbreaks occur most commonly in Africa, even though the continent was declared free of wild poliovirus in 2020. They even occur in developed countries, including the US, the United Kingdom, and Israel, where immunisation rates are low. This does not bode well for developing countries with large numbers of zero-dose children, owing to the interruption in mass immunisation campaigns.

The pandemic also underscored the challenges of funding public-health programmes when facing multiple crises. In March 2020, the World Health Organisation redirected 60-70% of resources earmarked for polio eradication in Africa to fighting Covid-19. Moreover, according to one estimate, WHO guidelines for vaccination campaigns during the pandemic – precautions put in place to ensure the safety of health workers – increased operational costs by 50% or more.

Covid-19 has not been the only impediment to eradication efforts. Civil unrest, conflicts, and natural disasters have resulted in vaccine shortages, lower immunisation coverage, and inadequate vaccination outreach services. A recent study found that 22 of the 40 countries reporting cVDPV cases or isolates had polio vaccination rates below 80%. If suboptimal coverage continues and vaccination rates fall below the threshold required for herd immunity, the risk of cVDPV outbreaks will rise.

Given this, stopping OPV use is a critical step in eradicating polio for good. Instead, the IPV must be used exclusively, as is the case in the US, Sweden, and other developed countries. This should enable all states to maintain population immunity, although more robust disease detection will be needed to ensure the elimination of polio worldwide.

As the Global Polio Eradication Initiative works toward this switchover, it must account for the fact that the IPV is five times more expensive than the OPV. In addition to helping low-income countries develop the capacity to manufacture doses, the initiative should focus on facilitating deeper partnerships between vaccine donors and the developing world. It should also study how the pandemic has affected vaccine confidence and emphasise immunisation planning and reporting in conflict zones and disaster-prone areas. All of this will require more funding, resources, and support from donors.

The world has made great strides in the fight against polio, owing in large part to Sabin’s live-virus vaccine. But to eliminate the disease once and for all, it’s time to set aside the OPV. While vaccine-derived polio is relatively rare, it has caused paralysis in many people (including my friend), and the threat is growing. Addressing it head-on is our only hope of crossing the finish line.

— Project Syndicate

● Florence Gyembuzie Wongnaah, a public health, disease control, and prevention officer in the Ghana Health Service, recently earned a master’s degree in public health epidemiology from Karolinska Institutet in Stockholm, Sweden.

Unicef photo showing a child being administered polio drops.

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Islamic ruling on Al-Luqatah (lost and found)

Linguistically, ‘Al-Luqatah’ refers to anything that is found and picked up from the ground. Technically, as Imam Ibn Qudamah, a Muslim scholar, may Allah have mercy upon him, defined it as: ‘Property that the owner loses and a person finds and takes away (to preserve it in trust).’

Legal Validity

Muslim scholars vary about the ruling. The Hanafi and Shafi’i jurists maintain that it is better to pick up a lost property because a Muslim is duty-bound to preserve his Muslim brother’s property, as evidenced by the saying of the Prophet, *sallallaahu ‘alaihi wa sallam* (may Allah exalt his mention), when he was asked about *Al-Luqatah*: “Remember the description of its container and the string with which it is tied. Make a public announcement of it for one year. If nobody comes and claims it, then utilise the money but keep it as a trust with you. And if its owner comes back one day seeking it, then return it to him.” [Al-Bukhari and Muslim]

According to the Maliki and Hanbali jurists, it is a *Makrooh* (disliked) act to take away such property. This is also the opinion of Ibn ‘Umar and Ibn ‘Abbas, may Allah be pleased with them. They argued that by taking away such lost items, one is bound to use something that is deemed unlawful. They also argued that one may not be able to undertake his duty efficiently regarding it, in terms of advertising it, returning it to its lawful owner and preserving it.

Its Ruling in Terms of Liability

Al-Luqatah remains a trust with the person who finds it and keeps it, and he is deemed liable for it only if he abuses it. He is also deemed liable for it if he gives it to somebody else without the permission of a judge. If it is damaged while still in the finder’s possession, after publicly announcing that he has found it and asking people to refer its rightful owner to him, then he is not deemed liable for such damage because he volunteered to preserve it in trust. The *Ahadith* (prophetic statements) on this issue are very clear. The Prophet, *sallallaahu ‘alaihi wa sallam*, said in the above-quoted *Hadith*: “...But keep it as a trust with you!”

Types of Al-Luqatah

1. If it is an animal, the finder should see if it is able to protect itself or not. If it is able to, then he is not allowed to take it away. When the Prophet, *sallallaahu ‘alaihi wa sallam*, was asked about the Islamic ruling concerning a lost camel, he replied: “It is none of your concern. Leave it, for



it has its feet and a water-container (reservoir), and it will reach water and eat from the trees until its owner finds it.” [Al-Bukhari]

However, if the lost animal is not able to protect itself, such as a sheep, a sick camel or a horse with a broken leg, the finder is allowed to take it away. When the Prophet, *sallallaahu ‘alaihi wa sallam*, was asked about the ruling concerning a lost sheep, he replied: “Take it, for it is either for you, or for your brother (i.e., its owner), or for the wolf.” [Al-Bukhari]

2. As for lost property that is not an animal, such as money of an unknown owner, one should consider the following rulings:

The Ruling Concerning Trivial Fallen Items

For trivial items such as a loaf of

bread, a whip, a date or anything that people generally do not claim when they lose, according to the predominant custom, the person who finds such an item is allowed to claim it as his own without publicly announcing it. He is also allowed to utilise it. Jabir bin ‘Abdullah, may Allah be pleased with him, who was one of the Prophet’s companions, said: “The Messenger of Allah, *sallallaahu ‘alaihi wa sallam*, allowed us to utilise (such trivial objects as) a rod, a whip and a rope if we found it.” [Al-Bukhari and Muslim]

Announcing Lost Property Publicly

a) If someone finds an object, he should acquaint himself with the features that distinguish it from all similar objects. This will allow him to

identify the right owner if he comes to claim it and asks him about its distinguishing features.

b) If he knows its distinguishing features, he should advertise it in public places, markets and outside mosques, but not inside the mosques, as this is deemed a *Makrooh* act. He should then wait for a year.

How should the finder be compensated for announcing, publicising or maintenance expenditure?

Hanafi and Hanbali jurists maintain that the finder should incur such expenses. Imam Malik, may Allah have mercy upon him, maintained: “The owner is to be given two options: either to reclaim it from the person who has found it, by paying him back for what he has spent on it, or to give it to him

in return for the expenses incurred.” Shafi’i jurists say that the judge takes the money from the public treasury of the Muslim state and gives it to the finder of the lost property to use it for advertising purposes, or the finder may borrow this money and would consider it as a loan to the owner.

Returning Lost Property to the Person Who Claims It

If someone comes and claims that the lost property is his, its finder should ask him about its distinguishing characteristics. If the claimant adequately describes it and distinguishes it from similar items, or if he proves to him with clear evidence that it belongs to him - by describing its container or the string with which it is tied, for instance - then the finder should return it

to him, as the Prophet, *sallallaahu ‘alaihi wa sallam*, said by way of example: “If its owner shows up and satisfactorily describes its container, the string with which it is tied and the amount of money in it, then return it to him.” [Muslim]

A question arises here: After the claimant provides a satisfactory description of the lost property, should the finder return the property to him or should he take him to a judge to establish the evidence and act upon the judge’s decision? According to the Hanafi and Shafi’i schools of Fiqh (jurisprudence), the finder of the lost property is not obliged to return it. The followers of the Maliki and Hanbali schools of Fiqh have stated that he is obliged to return it to its owner if the latter gives a satisfactory description of it, in accordance with the dictates of the prophetic tradition mentioned above.

Claiming Lost Property as One’s Own

The finder of the lost property can claim such property as his own if he still has it, or he can claim its price as his own in case he sold it after advertising it for the required period of time. In such a case, he should give it or give its value to the owner should the latter come forward to claim it, as the Prophet, *sallallaahu ‘alaihi wa sallam*, said in this regard: “Advertise it for a year. If nobody claims it, then utilise it, and keep it with you as a trust.” One is not allowed to claim it as his own without advertising it for a full year.

Some scholars argue that it is not permissible to consider lost property as one’s own, and whoever finds it should, after advertising, give it in charity to the poor because it is considered other people’s property, and it is not permissible to use it without its owner’s consent, in accordance with prophetic textual evidence: the Prophet, *sallallaahu ‘alaihi wa sallam*, said: “A Muslim’s property is not lawful (for another Muslim) without the former’s own free will.” He, *sallallaahu ‘alaihi wa sallam*, also said: “Lost property is not lawful. Whoever finds it should advertise it for a year. If its owner shows up and claims it, he (the finder) must return it to him; if he does not show up, he should give it in charity.” [Al-Bazzar and Ad-Daraqutni]

Article source: <http://www.islamweb.net/emaainpage/>



Who is in charge at home?

This is a question that poses itself in an atmosphere where people have turned away from Allah The Almighty, and among families that do not know anything about Islam except its name and do not know anything about the Qur’an except its script.

It is a question that poses itself in order to restore rights to their owners in many families and to make the man realise his real position in the home and how he could lead it to safety.

Today, the woman is in charge in many Muslim houses. As a result, concepts are mixed up, scales are unbalanced and values have disappeared. How dangerous it is when the woman is in charge of the man and his children! Hence, the family has disintegrated and disunited in the presence of a husband without authority, a wife with a free hand who is driven by curiosity and whim, and children lost between quarrelling parents.

Unity of leadership is vital to the safety of any boat, and the boat that represents the home requires a leader to bear responsibility and maintain the stability of the entire family system. This is the normal state of affairs which is in harmony with the rules of the *Shari’ah* with regards to men.

Which of the spouses should logically assume leadership? Should it be the woman who has a flaming temper and emotions, which are naturally required by her main role in taking care of the children and adorning and perfuming the house with beauty? Or is it to be the man whom Islam obliged to provide for them, so that the woman may dedicate herself to her grand task and exert effort in it as much as she can?

Islam assigned the man to be in charge of the wife in order to achieve its normative system as every activity should involve a leader and authority, and it chose the man for this task because he is physically and mentally most fit to bear it.

Regretfully, many men have

willingly renounced their right to be in charge of their home out of ignorance of Islamic teachings. This has created great problems which have threatened the very stability of the home. People may think that if the man renounces his right to be in charge of the wife, this would make her happy. This is a huge mistake. The woman by her nature loves to take recourse in a strong support, and even when a woman proudly tells her friends that her husband obeys her and does not disobey any of her orders, thereby showing the weakness of the husband’s authority, she believes in her heart that there is a fault and weakness in the structure of the family.

Conversely, the woman who openly complains about the strong personality and full authority of her husband finds comfort and happiness which suit her nature. Here is an example showing the truth in this issue: When security is disturbed in a land, the people of that land can do whatever they like, but they will not find psychological stability and will tremble with fear and anxiety. However, if this land and its affairs are perfectly controlled by tough men, though some people may feel uneasy about that, they will all find inner stability, security and peace of mind.

Thus, if the man renounces his right to be in charge of the woman and this distresses her, it will not make her happy and it weakens the structure of the family and destroys its foundations. The Prophet, *sallallaahu ‘alaihi wa sallam* (may Allah exalt his mention), said: “A people who entrust their affairs to a woman will never succeed.” [Al-Bukhari] This is a general instruction even in the affairs of the home. We believe that the woman should demand that her husband takes charge of the family just as she demands that he financially supports it in order to maintain the stability of the marital life.

Article source: <http://www.islamweb.net/emaainpage/>

The doubtful things between Halal and Haram

On the authority of Abu ‘Abdullah, Al-Nu’mān Ibn Bashir, may Allah be pleased with them both, who said : ‘I heard Allah’s Messenger, *sallallaahu ‘alaihi wa sallam* (may Allah exalt his mention), say: “The Halal (lawful) is clear and the Haram (prohibited) is clear, and in between them there are some things that are doubtful, which most people do not know - if they are Halal or Haram. Thus ,whoever avoids the doubtful, safeguards his religion and honour, but one who engages in the doubtful, falls in the Haram.”

The example of this is like the shepherd who grazes his animals near Al-*Hima* (i.e. the ground reserved for animals belonging to the king); it is thus quite likely that some of his animals will stray into it (Al-*Hima*). Every king has a *Hima* and the *Hima* of Allah is what He has forbidden. Truly! There is a lump of flesh in the human body; when it is healthy, the whole body is healthy, and when it is corrupted, the whole body is corrupted. Certainly it (this lump) is the heart.” (Bukhari and Muslim)

Terminologies

Halal:

The word Halal has entered English dictionaries. It literally means lawful. In technical terms, it means the name given to the legal category of things which are permissible in Islam. Halal is that which has been made lawful through the Holy Qur’an or through the Sunnah of the Beloved Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him).

According to Islam, ‘the first principle established by Islam is that the things which Allah has created and the benefits derived from them are essentially for man’s use, and hence are permissible. Nothing is Haram except what is prohibited by a sound and explicit Nass (Qur’anic verse or clear, authentic and explicit Hadith) from the Law-Giver.’

This leads us to understand that the sphere of forbidden things is very small, while the sphere of permissible things is extremely vast.

Haram or Non-Halal:

Haram literally means the prohibited or unlawful. In technical language it means ‘that which the Law-Giver has absolutely prohibited, i.e.in the Holy Qur’an or in the sound clear Sunnah; anyone who engages in it is liable to incur the punishment in this world.’

As a matter of fact, ‘there is only small number of sound and explicit texts (in The Qur’an and Sunnah) concerning prohibitions.’

In the eye of Shari’ah, there are different degrees of Haram. It may be major, minor and disliked.

By the way, the right to make lawful and to prohibit is the Right of Allah alone.



Hima:

According to “A Dictionary of Islam”, *Hima* literally means “guarded, forbidden”, a portion of land reserved by the ruler of a country as a grazing ground; a private pasture. Truly, every prince has a *Hima*, which is forbidden to the people, and the *Hima* is the thing forbidden by him to men. In other words, the grounds reserved for animals belonging to the king which are out of bounds for others’ animals. So if the others’ animals extend beyond these bounds and graze in the king’s *Hima*, owners will be punished.

This is a beautiful simile to show us that those who violate Allah’s *Hima* [prohibitions] will be punished.

Guidance and Moralities

This *Hadith* addresses the believer’s conscience, which is the overseer whose duty is to take charge of work and see that it is properly done. In simpler words, it is the criterion that shows the Muslim’s adherence to the Halal, avoiding the Haram and keeping away from committing doubtful actions.

This *Hadith* urges Muslims to avoid doubtful actions since committing them could lure one to dare the prohibited actions themselves.

This great *Hadith* leads us to mention a number of rules concerning the Muslim’s behaviour and conduct individually and in society. Among them are:

1. The Halal is very clear in Islam. Examples: All wholesome things, including lawful foods and drinks, clothes, good adornments, marriage, etc. since the basic principle refers the permissibility of things as long as there is no a text [from the Qur’an or Sunnah] that forbids.
2. The Haram is also clear and limited. Examples: dead meat, blood, the flesh of swine, wine intoxicants, killing others, perjury, ingratitude, theft, bribery, adultery, fornication, usury, swearwords, insult, cheating, envy, hatred, lying and other similar things that good people avoid.
3. Whatever is conducive to the Haram is itself Haram.
4. Good intentions do not make the Haram acceptable.
5. The Haram is prohibited to everyone alike.
6. The prohibition of things is due to their impurity and harmfulness.
7. Necessity dictates exceptions.

However, this *Hadith* adds that ‘there is a grey area between the clearly Halal and the clearly Haram. This is the area of what is doubtful. Some people may not be able to decide whether a particular matter is permissible or forbidden, such confusion may be due to either doubtful evidence or because of doubt concerning the applicability of the text to the particular circumstances or matter in question. ‘In relation to such matters, Islam considers it an act of piety for the Muslim to avoid doing what is doubtful in order to stay clear of doing something Haram. This is similar to what was discussed earlier concerning the blocking of the avenues, which lead to what is Haram.’

By the by, a Muslim is allowed to deal with one most of whose property is Halal, even eating from his food, unless the Muslim recognises something Haram, which we are requested to avoid since eating Haram darkens the heart and spoils one’s actions.

This *Hadith* states that doing what is Halal, keeping away from what is Haram and avoiding doubtful things constitute an indication of a sound heart, which represents the centre of one’s leadership and source of good and evil.

The Beloved Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: “He who gives for Allah’s sake, prevents for Allah’s sake, loves for His sake, hates for His sake, has achieved a complete faith.”

Finally, if we direct our tendencies and activities toward good and for Allah’s sake, our Iman will be perfect, inward and outward.

Article source: <http://www.islamweb.net/emaainpage/>



PM attends Doha Institute graduation

HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohamed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani witnessed yesterday evening the graduation ceremony for the seventh cohort of master's students of Doha Institute for Graduate Studies at the Ritz-Carlton Doha. There were 174 male and female students from various disciplines. A number of ministers and other dignitaries attended.

PICTURES: Shermeer Rasheed



Embassy celebrates US independence and US-Qatar ties, Mardi Gras style

By Joey Aguilar
Staff Reporter

The US embassy in Qatar transformed the Qatar National Convention Centre (QNCC) into the vibrant streets of New Orleans, Louisiana, yesterday to mark the 247th US Independence Day.

The lively event, led by US ambassador Timmy T Davis, was attended by Qatar's Minister of Finance HE Ali bin Ahmed al-Kuwari, Minister of Commerce and Industry HE Sheikh Mohamed bin Hamad bin Qassim al-Abdullah al-Thani, and Ministry of Foreign Affairs' assistant director of Protocol Saeed al-Hajri, diplomats from various embassies in Qatar as well as other dignitaries.

Davis sang and danced at the event, joining a number of performers on a huge parade float that entertained the crowd.

The festivity featured jazz and brass music, in addition to a wide range of culinary delights, showcasing a New Orleans tradition that "grew from a French religious festival into a multicultural American celebration".

In his speech delivered in a space decked in the Mardi Gras colours of purple, green, and gold, the envoy underscored the importance of celebrating the rich diversity of the US and the deep-rooted bilateral ties between the US and Qatar.



US ambassador Timmy T Davis with Qatar's Minister of Finance HE Ali bin Ahmed al-Kuwari, Minister of Commerce and Industry HE Sheikh Mohamed bin Hamad bin Qassim al-Abdullah al-Thani, and Ministry of Foreign Affairs' assistant director of Protocol Saeed al-Hajri cutting a cake at the event yesterday.

PICTURES: Shaji Kayamkulam

tween the US and Qatar.

Citing the warm welcome and authentic hospitality he received since arriving to Qatar, the ambassador said: "I'm impressed by the genuine kindness that I see every day from the people of Qatar and others who call Qatar home... building authentic relationships is a genuine element of Qatari culture."

"In the spirit of building our bonds of friendship, today I

have a special opportunity to share with you all a snapshot of where I come from, my roots, my home, the city of New Orleans," Davis said.

"A city that has seen its share of struggle and which has even experienced Qatari generosity in the wake of Hurricane Katrina, New Orleans is a place where music, food, and culture thrive," he said. "The diversity in New Orleans comes from the



US ambassador Timmy T Davis joins performers on a parade float that entertained the crowd.

rich history of its people ... nicknamed the birthplace of jazz, it is a place where the music is just as vibrant as the food."

For Qatar's first Mardi Gras, three musicians performed American music throughout the night - the Doha-based "AF-CENT Band" of the US Air Force Central Command, and two bands visiting from the US: New Orleans go-go funk and brass

band "Brass-A-Holics", and Minneapolis, Minnesota bluegrass act "Barbaro".

Performers tossed beaded necklaces from the parade float, a popular Mardi Gras tradition, as guests enjoyed beignets and other New Orleans famous dishes.

Besides his achievements as US ambassador to Qatar, Davis also underlined the success of

the 5th US-Qatar Strategic Dialogue in Doha, during which the US Secretary of State Antony Blinken discussing various areas of bilateral relations between the two countries, ranging from trade and investment, education and culture to energy cooperation, labour rights, regional security and defence co-operation, and law enforcement and counterterrorism.

IMF: Qatar's medium-term growth likely to rise to 4-4.5%

From Page 1

The IMF noted that a decade of the nation's efforts to diversify the economy culminated in the successful hosting of the 2022 FIFA World Cup.

Qatar managed the coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic well, providing a safe environment for the first major global sport event since the pandemic.

Qatar is well placed to leverage the top-notch infrastructure built and capitalise on the momentum and visibility created by the World Cup as the government lays out its 3rd National Development Strategy to help achieve the ambitions of Qatar National Vision 2030.

"Qatar has smoothly navigated the recent global economic and market volatility. The Russian war in Ukraine highlighted risks from geopolitical tensions, including the impact on energy prices, and the role of natural gas in safeguarding energy security, opening up opportunities for Qatar," the IMF noted. "The banking sector turmoil originating from the US has had only a limited and temporary impact on the domestic financial system."

While in Doha, the IMF team met HE the Minister of Finance Ali bin Ahmed al-Kuwari, HE the Governor of Qatar Central Bank Sheikh Bandar bin Mohamed bin Saud al-Thani, other senior government officials, and private sector representatives.

Saudi Haj minister on visit to review facilities

Saudi Minister of Haj and Umrah, Dr Tawfiq bin Fawzan al-Rabiah, met HE the Minister of Endowments and Islamic Affairs Ghanem bin Shaheen al-Ghanem and Saudi ambassador to Qatar Prince Mansour bin Khalid bin Farhan al-Saud in Doha yesterday to review the efforts of the Saudi Umrah system and the facilities that it provides to pilgrims from Qatar.

Dr al-Rabiah said that his visit to Qatar is to inspect the facilities for the arrival and entry of pilgrims from Qatar to Saudi Arabia, for both citizens and residents, and noted that the procedures for the arrival of Qataris in particular, and Gulf nationals in general, have become very easy and simple, through direct registration with Qatar national identity card via the "Nusk" platform for the issue of Umrah and prayer permits in the honourable Raw-

da, to perform their rituals easily and comfortably.

The Saudi minister also welcomed brothers residing in Qatar who wish to perform Umrah, adding that as per the procedures on the visa platform of the Saudi ministry of foreign affairs, there is no restrictions on the basis of professions, and that through the electronic visa for residents of the Gulf, there is no need to visit the embassy.

He said that they can also visit the "Nusk" platform for details of various services such as accommodation and transportation, reserving Umrah permits, praying in the honourable Rawda, and obtaining information about Islamic historical sites.

Dr al-Rabiah said: "The requirements for Umrah have become within the reach for everyone, as there are no restrictions or requirements, or even

the need for a Muharram, so everyone is welcome in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia."

He stressed that the kingdom, under the leadership of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques - may God support him - is working to implement the continuous development work in the infrastructure and organisation of the holy sites and the Two Holy Mosques within the largest development work in the world, to ensure the provision of the best services to the guests of the Sacred House of God coming from within and outside the Kingdom, including the automation of procedures for booking services (such as accommodation and transportation within Saudi cities).

Dr al-Rabiah called on all arrivals to view the new services and facilities by visiting the website of the Saudi

ministry of Haj and Umrah and its electronic accounts, and visiting the "nusuk.sa" website and application, which facilitates the procedures for the arrival of all Muslims to Makkah Al-Mukarramah and Al-Madinah Al-Munawwarah, and to choose housing, accommodation and transportation services through the screens of their smart devices in simple steps from everywhere around the world, around the clock.

The app is available for download in the App stores of smart phones.

At the end of the visit, the Saudi minister expressed the depth of the relationship between the two countries and the two peoples of Saudi and Qatar, and called on citizens and residents to take advantage of the facilities provided by the kingdom to facilitate the guests of Al-Rahman visit.

New book takes readers on an architectural journey of Qatar

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"The unique thing is ... I've discovered that there was also a Deco style architecture, and I call it Arabian Deco because it has palm trees, it has eagles, so I think it is so unique and it is something that I want to feature," he said. "It is the first time this style has been highlighted in our architectural history."

Jaidah noted that he has done an extensive research for the book, which included a huge archive of photos he has taken for the last 35 years, in addition to having a research team within his firm, AEB Qatar.

An exhibition was also organised as part of the event, showcasing the book's highlights depicted through 3D-printed models and architectural illustrations with a focus on the buildings from the Arabian Deco era.

The exhibition is open to the public at the Mohamed bin Jassim House Museum at the MDD.

In a press statement, Msheireb Museums manager Abdulla al-Naama said: "We are proud to host the book launching of one of the renowned Qatari architects and authors."

"Our hosting of the event reiterates our mission of supporting the creative community and offering them a platform to reach out to the wider community," he said. "Besides, the book will be available in Msheireb Museums' library to allow researchers, academics, students and readers to purchase or have more information about our rich legacy. This is a crucial step to document our heritage and preserve it for the coming generations."

The book is now available at Msheireb Museum's gift shop, located on the ground floor of Bin Jelmood House.