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Amir opens Qatar Economic Forum 2023

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani patronised yesterday (Tuesday) the opening of the 2023 Qatar Economic Forum (QEF) - Powered by Bloomberg, being held over three days under the theme “A New Global Growth Story”, at the Katara Towers: Fairmont and Raffles Hotels.

HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohamed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani, and Michael Bloomberg, the founder of Bloomberg LP and Bloomberg Philanthropies, made the opening addresses.

His Highness the Amir attended the inaugural panel discussion with the President of Rwanda Paul Kagame, and another panel discussion themed “The New Energy Model”.

The opening was also attended by Paraguay President Mario Abdo Benítez, Armenia’s President Vahagn

Khachaturyan, Ghana’s President Nana Akufo-Addo, Zanzibar President Dr Hussein Ali Mwinyi, Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina Wazed, Kazakhstan Prime Minister Alikhan Smailov, Georgian Prime Minister Irakli Garibashvili and Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban.

A number of ministers, representatives of sisterly and friendly countries, heads of the diplomatic missions accredited to the state, high-ranking policy-makers, parliamentarians, thinkers, economists, businessmen, media, and representatives of regional and international organisations were present.

Earlier in the day, His Highness the Amir in a tweet welcomed the participants of the third edition of Qatar Economic Forum, looking forward that the forum provides a scientific and practical contribution to the participants. **To Page 2**

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani meeting Michael Bloomberg, founder of Bloomberg LP and Bloomberg Philanthropies.

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani meeting President of Ghana Nana Akufo-Addo

Amir attends QEF reception

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani attended the reception ceremony held on the occasion of Qatar Economic Forum (QEF) 2023, Powered by Bloomberg, at the Katara Towers: Fairmont and Raffles Hotels yesterday evening.

The reception ceremony was attended by President of Rwanda Paul Kagame, President of Armenia Vahagn Khachaturyan, President of Zanzibar Dr Hussein Ali Mwinyi, Prime Minister of Bangladesh Sheikh Hasina Wazed, Prime Minister Kazakhstan Alikhan Smailov and Prime Minister of Georgia Irakli Garibashvili.

The ceremony was also attended by a number of ministers from the sisterly and friendly countries, along with a number of senior businessmen, politicians, thinkers, academics and media professionals.

His Highness the Amir held a dinner banquet on the occasion of Qatar Economic Forum 2023, Powered by Bloomberg, in honour of heads of states and governments and senior officials from various countries of the world participating in the Forum yesterday. During the ceremony, the Amir discussed with the guests a number of topics of shared interest. **(QNA)**

More QEF stories on Pages 2,3,4 & Business Pages

‘Qatar has a stronger pipeline of FDI inflows’

Doha, which saw foreign direct investments (FDI) inflow of QR30bn in 2022, has a stronger pipeline of projects and the country could potentially become hub for the FDI into high growth Central and South Asian and African markets, according to a top official of the Investment Promotion Agency Qatar (IPA Qatar). “The (FDI) pipeline is stronger than ever,” IPA Qatar chief executive officer Sheikh Ali Alwaleed al-Thani told a panel session at the third Qatar Economic Forum, Powered by Bloomberg. It is understood that IPA Qatar will sign three memoranda of understanding with Siemens, Emerson, and Luxoft. Google Cloud on Monday officially opened its new Doha cloud region, which will meet the growing demand for cloud services in Qatar and the Middle East. **Business Page 8**

Media City Qatar and Bloomberg Media sign new agreement

Media City Qatar, an emerging, collaborative global home for media and creative talent in Doha, has signed a new multi-year contract with Bloomberg Media, securing the annual Qatar Economic Forum, Powered by Bloomberg until 2027. An official signing ceremony took place at the QEF yesterday. The contract was signed by Sheikh Ali bin Abdullah bin Khalifa al-Thani, CEO of Media City Qatar, and M Scott Havens, CEO, Bloomberg Media. **Business Page 7**

Qatar a trusted international partner: PM

HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohamed bin Jassim al-Thani yesterday affirmed that Qatar is continuing to strengthen its position as a reliable international partner, source of energy, and destination for investments and tourism, in order to achieve its National Vision 2030, the most important of which is the transition to a diversified and innovative economy.

He said, in a speech during the opening session of the third Qatar Economic Forum (QEF), Powered by Bloomberg, that this approach requires everyone to plan, be flexible and responsive, and show perseverance, especially after Qatar presented the best version of the FIFA World Cup at all levels last year, the official QNA reported.

He explained that the Qatar Economic

HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohamed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani speaking at the forum yesterday.

Forum is an important platform for discussing the most important economic issues and challenges facing the world today, and for discussing ways to address them in the spirit of co-operation and innovation, expressing hope that the

presence of its participants will constitute an important opportunity that will help look forward to a better future.

Addressing a ministerial session, HE the Minister of State for Energy Affairs Saad bin Sherida al-Kaabi said Qatar potentially will run out of gas for supplies from the North Field – both North Field East and North Field South. There is very big demand. Additional gas from the North Field will be available by 2026; all contracts have been awarded,” he said.

“We have signed a large contract with China. We have other deals that we are working on. With so many deals lining up, we will potentially run out of gas from the North Field – both North Field East and North Field South. There is very big demand. Additional gas from the North Field will be available by 2026; all contracts have been awarded,” he said.

Speaking at the forum, President of Rwanda Paul Kagame stressed the

importance of the strategic partnership between his country and Qatar, especially since the GCC is achieving growth and is full of many important opportunities, highlighting the need to invest to sustain economic growth.

He said negotiations have been completed and moved to the stage of achieving what was agreed upon with Qatar, noting that the country continues to build partnerships with Qatar Airways, with work under way to build Kigali Airport, which will be 70% complete by the end of 2023.

Meanwhile, Prime Minister of Hungary Viktor Orban affirmed that Qatar is a promising partner for his country in the field of energy in terms of future, pointing out that there are many countries seeking to establish such partnerships and to sign agreement with Doha in this regard. **Business Page 1**

‘Huge demand for North Field expansion gas’

HE the Minister of State for Energy Affairs **Saad bin Sherida al-Kaabi** said Qatar potentially will run out of gas for supplies from the North Field expansion by the year-end, because of “very big demand” for long-term contracts. “We have signed a large contract with China. We have other deals that we are working on. With so many deals lining up, we will potentially run out of gas from the North Field – both North Field East and North Field South. There is very big demand. Additional gas from the North Field will be available by 2026; all contracts have been awarded,” al-Kaabi said at a ministerial session at the Qatar Economic Forum Powered by Bloomberg in Doha yesterday. **Business Page 1**

QIA commits QR1bn to market-making on QSE

The Qatar Investment Authority (QIA) has committed QR1bn for establishing a permanent market-making programme at the Qatar Stock Exchange (QSE), which is set to attract more listings, introduce more ETFs or exchange traded funds and derivatives. This move by the country’s sovereign wealth fund comes after the QSE saw the largest foreign investment flows in its history in 2022. The commitment is set to run over the next five years and will cover 90% of the size of the market capitalisation listed on the QSE, offering an economic incentive by way of a rebate to market trading costs for established market makers. The permanent programme will help enhance liquidity in the market, improve price discovery, and diversify the capital markets in Qatar. **Business Page 8**

‘Travel demand to stay; no alternative to airplanes’

The airline industry’s impact on global economy and people’s lives is huge, Qatar Airways Group Chief Executive HE Akbar al-Baker said yesterday. Participating in a panel session at Qatar Economic Forum, Powered by Bloomberg he said: “People will travel and are still dependent on aviation because it plays such a large part of our life for leisure, business, trade and economic development. There is no alternative to airplanes,” al-Baker noted. Asked whether the aviation industry will be able to achieve net-zero emission by 2050, al-Baker noted: “I don’t think we will be able to achieve net-zero emission by 2050.” **Business Page 1**

QIA CEO sees AI as ‘wonderful’ technology

The Qatar Investment Authority (QIA) is examining artificial intelligence (AI) as a theme of investments and sees it as a “wonderful technology” in some applications, CEO Mansoor Ebrahim al-Mahmoud said yesterday. Participating in a panel session at Qatar Economic Forum, Powered by Bloomberg, he said: “From time to time we tell our teams to look at those things that are important and are coming. Make sure we build a portfolio that tap into this field. For example, the same thing for climate change, digitalisation, life science. These are long term themes.” In terms of AI, al-Mahmoud said it is a wonderful technology in some applications such as marketing, or understanding businesses. **Business Page 8**

Amir opens Qatar Economic Forum 2023

From Page 1

He described that the event discusses the latest trends in vital and promising economic sectors, and promotes co-operation and consultation between various countries for their development, looking forward that the forum provides a scientific and practical contribution to the participants and those interested.

On the sidelines of the QEF, His Highness the Amir met with the President of Armenia Vahagn Khachaturyan, President of Ghana Nana Akufo-Addo and Georgian Prime Minister Irakli Garibashvili and discussed bilateral relations between the countries and ways to develop them in various fields, in addition to exchanging views on the most prominent topics on the forum's agenda.

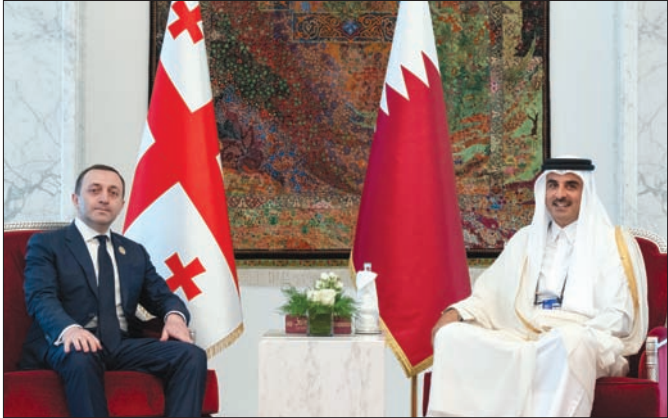
His Highness the Amir also met with Prime Minister of Georgia Irakli Garibashvili. During the meeting, the two sides discussed the bilateral relations and ways to enhance them, in addition to several issues of mutual interest.

On the sidelines of QEF, His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani yesterday received a verbal message from Kazakhstan President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, pertaining to bilateral relations between the two countries, and ways of supporting and developing them. The message was conveyed by Kazakhstan Prime Minister Alikhan Smaïlov.

Also, on the sidelines of QEF, His Highness the Amir met with the founder of Bloomberg LP and Bloomberg Philanth



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani meets with visiting dignitaries at the opening of Qatar Economic Forum 2023 yesterday.



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani attended the reception ceremony held on the occasion of Qatar Economic Forum 2023 yesterday evening.



PM holds bilateral meetings



HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohamed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani yesterday held a number of meetings with leaders on the sidelines of the 3rd Qatar Economic Forum. Zanzibar President Dr Hussein Ali Mwinyi's meeting with HE Sheikh Mohamed discussed bilateral relations, and ways to support and develop them, especially in energy and transportation, in addition to several issues of common interest. HE Sheikh Mohamed's meeting with Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina Wazed discussed the bilateral relations, and ways to support and develop them, especially in the energy field and joint work in the technology sector, in addition to several issues of mutual concern. HE Sheikh Mohamed met with Kazakh Prime Minister Alikhan Smaïlov. During the meeting, the two sides discussed bilateral relations and ways to support and develop them, especially in the field of investment, in addition to several topics of mutual interest. During the meeting, Prime Minister Smaïlov commended the distinguished partnership between the two countries, and extended his congratulations to Qatar for its remarkable success in hosting the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022. HE Sheikh Mohamed also met with Georgia's Prime Minister Irakli Garibashvili. During the meeting, they discussed bilateral relations and means of supporting and developing them, especially in technology field, in addition to several issues of common concern. **(QNA)**

Qatar, Hungary keen to expand areas of partnership: PM Orban

By Joseph Varghese
Staff Reporter

Qatar is a potential partner for Hungary and a country of key importance to Europe, the Hungarian Prime Minister, Viktor Orban, told the Qatar Economic Forum 2023, Powered by Bloomberg, yesterday.

Speaking to John Mick-lethwait, editor-in-chief, Bloomberg News, Orban said: "Talks are going on between Qatar and Hungary for an agreement for LNG supply. We hope it will lead to more co-operation between both the countries. European economy has made up for a great part of its energy needs with LNG coming from Qatar as the Russian gas was missing due to the ongoing conflict between Russia and Ukraine. In the last one year we have learned that Qatar is a country of great importance for Europe."

Orban explained that the agreement in natural gas will enhance the energy security of his country and lead to enhanced economic growth and co-operation between both countries. He commended the bilateral relations between Doha and Budapest over the past years, pointing out that Qatar helped Europe with the issue of exports and imports of gas and oil, as well as other arrangements related to information systems and security issues.



Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban at Qatar Economic Forum 2023 yesterday. **PICTURE:** Shaji Kayamkulam

He said that Qatar is interested in investing in the Hungarian market, expressing Hungary's respect for Qatar, as well as its openness to sign agreements between the two countries. "Some of these agreements will enter into force in 2026 and discussions are ongoing between the two countries. We hope to be-

come become a partner with Qatar based on a strategic view," explained Orban.

The Hungarian PM also stressed that a ceasefire between Russia and Ukraine followed by peace talks is the only way out to end the war between both the countries. "Our hearts are with the people of Ukraine and the



only solution to save lives is a ceasefire followed by peace talks. Instead of escalation, we should argue in favour of peace and negotiations.

"My view is that looking at the reality, looking at the figures, looking at the surroundings and looking at the fact that Nato is not ready to send troops, it is obvious that there is no victory for poor Ukrainians on the battlefield," said Orban.

He also addressed the relations between his country and the European Union countries, as well as other countries, in the economic aspect, noting that Hungary is strong and can rely economically on its domestic resources.

In this regard, he pointed out that 85% of Hungary's exports go to the European Union, and therefore Hungary must always consider its interests without compromising regional interests at the same time.

Hungarian PM ends Doha visit



Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban left Doha yesterday after an official visit to the country. He and the accompanying delegations were seen off at Doha International Airport by HE the Minister of Commerce and Industry Sheikh Mohamed bin Hamad bin Qassim al-Abdullah al-Thani, Qatar's ambassador to Hungary Abdullah bin Falah bin Abdullah al-Dosari and Hungary's ambassador in Doha Ferenc Korom. **(QNA)**

Forum snapshot



A view of the attendees during a session of the Qatar Economic Forum, Powered by Bloomberg yesterday. **PICTURE:** Shaji Kayamkulam

Sheikh Hasina sheds light on women empowerment efforts

By Shafeeq Alingal
Staff Reporter

Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said that her country has emerged as a model of women's empowerment, while also shedding light on the impressive socio-economic gains made by Bangladesh and the progress seen in education and creating a knowledge-based society.

She made the observations while addressing a seminar on 'Women's empowerment and its role in building institutions in the community: Bangladesh as a model' at Qatar University (QU). Sheikh Hasina presented the seminar in front of a wide audience of senior QU officials, dignitaries, representatives from the embassy of Bangladesh and QU students. She said, "I am very pleased to be here with you all. I sincerely thank Qatar University for the warm welcome. I am delighted to be among the future generation's leaders. I feel humbled to share the transformative development journey of my country, Bangladesh."

Sheikh Hasina noted that after years of efforts, Bangladesh now



Bangladesh PM Sheikh Hasina addressing the seminar yesterday.

ranks the highest in South Asia in reducing gender disparity. "We have gender parity in favour of our girls in primary and secondary education," she said. "We are among the world's top 10 nations for women's political empowerment. Bangladesh is perhaps the only country where the prime minister, speaker of the parliament, leader of the opposition, and deputy leader of the House are all women."

"We have 33% seats reserved for our women in local government bodies. I made it a point to break all glass ceilings by placing

our deserving women in top leadership positions everywhere."

"Bangladesh has the fourth largest Muslim population in the world, with over 91% Muslims. Our great Islam accords the highest respect to women and has many accounts of successful female leaders," she pointed out.

Further, Sheikh Hasina said Bangladesh has made impressive gains in the areas of food security, free and affordable housing, community healthcare, compulsory primary education, women's empowerment, financial inclusion, digital services, access to



Bangladesh PM Sheikh Hasina being honoured on the occasion.

electricity, disaster preparedness and climate adaptation.

She called on young women and girls to have a greater involvement in the STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics) fields. "Our government is setting up a technical training institute for them. We are preparing rural young women to allow them to work as digital freelancers from home. We must work together to end all forms of discrimination against girls," Sheikh Hasina said, noting that there are various programmes to train the young generation.

The Bangladesh primer minister said "today's Bangladesh is a changed Bangladesh". "It's dubbed as a role model for development. Hunger, poverty, malnutrition and illiteracy are vanishing fast. Our hard-earned development in the country is not a miracle. It is the collective work of our men and women. I have only tried to guide them in the desired direction," she said.

She explained that her government managed to build a solid foundation for Bangladesh's socio-economic transformation during her first regime from 1996

to 2001. She went on to say that the Ashrayan scheme is implemented to provide free houses for homeless families. "We have established over 18,000 community clinics and rural healthcare centres through which primary healthcare services are being provided to the people."

The initiatives include expansion of the social safety net to support the poor and marginalised sections of society and development in the education sector. She also noted that her government had taken a decision to give insulin free of charge from these centres. "All investment in the health sector has started to pay off."

Addressing the students at QU, she said: "Dear students, without an educated population no nation can prosper. So, since assuming office, our utmost priority is education."

"We want to build a knowledge-based Smart Bangladesh. In Smart Bangladesh, there will be a smart government, a smart economy, a smart population, a smart society and smart manpower. People will be made skilled in using digital devices so that they can contribute to the fourth industrial revolution," she

said. "The purpose of a Smart Bangladesh is to keep pace with a changing world and use digital devices in all areas of education, health, agriculture, industry, business and trade to achieve the goals. We are setting up digital labs in all educational institutions from primary to higher education levels."

Making a slew of suggestions to realise the development goals, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina asked students and youth to remain focused while representing values and keeping their spirits up,

"I would like to share a few suggestions for future leaders from my life's experience and struggles – first of all, represent a value; remain focused on your vision; make concrete plans to realise your vision; lead by example and be the change-maker; trust your people and team; invoke your maternal spirit; and embrace the new and the future," she advised.

QU President Dr Hassan Rashid al-Derham honoured Sheikh Hasina at the event. Following the seminar, the floor was opened for a Q&A session, where Sheikh Hasina answered questions from the audience.

Qatar one of most important partners of Rwanda: Kagame

By Joseph Varghese
Staff Reporter

Qatar is one of the most important and strong strategic partners of Rwanda, President Paul Kagame stated at Qatar Economic Forum 2023 yesterday. Kagame was interacting with Jennifer Zabasajja, correspondent, Bloomberg, on the opening day of the three-day event, powered by Bloomberg.

"We have to invest and grow. No country can manage that alone and there is the need to have partnerships for countries like Rwan-

da. We need to build partnerships with market leaders. Qatar is one of the strongest strategic partners for Rwanda as well as for many other African countries," said Kagame.

The Rwandan president stressed the importance of the strategic partnership between his country and Qatar, especially since the GCC is achieving growth and is full of important opportunities, highlighting the need to invest to sustain economic growth.

Kagame pointed to the partnership between his country and Qatar Airways in the aviation sector and said that negotiations have

been completed in this regard. "We have moved to the stage of achieving what was agreed upon with Qatar. Rwanda continues to build partnerships with Qatar Airways, with work underway to build Kigali Airport, which will be 70% complete by the end of 2023," he highlighted.

"We have a vision of what we want to do and Qatar is a partner of choice in aviation. We seek partnership with market leaders in infrastructure, manufacturing, innovation and startups," continued, the Rwandan president.

"We don't go out to the market or borrow for the sake of it. We

want to invest in sectors that will have good returns and justify our investment and also contribute to the well-being and development of our people," explained the president.

Kagame observed that economic progress can help address human rights issues, adding that Rwanda is looking for strategic partnerships with market leaders, as it invests in biotechnology, and started manufacturing vaccines with BioNTech, as well as building partnerships based on innovation and supporting emerging companies in this field.

He also referred to Rwanda's

pursuit of growth, highlighting the country's investments in infrastructure and industrialisation.

Kagame added that the country needs resources that will not be available until it returns to the market, which is driving the country's will to ensure its position as a reliable country that is able to pay its debts.

"We need to be rethinking but also need to finding ways to doing better than we have done in the past. By making progress on the economic front, the basic thing is the needs of people and that is what we are looking at," he added.



Paul Kagame at Qatar Economic Forum 2023 yesterday.
PICTURE: Shaji Kayamkulam

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Qatar CSR Summit 2023 awards Carrefour Qatar



Carrefour Qatar has won the award for 'Best CSR Initiative in the Retail Sector' at the recent Qatar CSR Summit 2023, held under the patronage of his HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohamed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani.

Through this award, Carrefour Qatar is recognised for its community involvement success, and its strategic relationship with the Education Above All (EAA) Foundation, through which it collected more than QR10mn of donations from the public to empower children's education in Qatar, a statement said.

Laurent Hausknecht, Carrefour regional director



Carrefour regional director Laurent Hausknecht receives the award.



four's regional director said: "We feel very proud to win the coveted Qatar CSR Summit 2023 Award, and we are honoured to serve and support our community here in Qatar. Our strong community relations and presence in this unique event have facilitated meeting val-

uable potential partners from both the public and the private sectors, and with new successful relationships, we will certainly go further on our journey in CSR, covering community involvement, environmental protection, inclusion and sustainability."

QRCS introduces plasma exchange to Gaza hospitals

Qatar Red Crescent Society (QRCS) has introduced plasma exchange (plasmapheresis) to Gaza hospitals, a statement said yesterday.

Dr Mohamed Qandil, an emergency medicine consultant hired by QRCS in Gaza, saved a patient at risk of paraplegia.

A five-day plasmapheresis procedure at the Nasser Medical Complex put an end to the patient's more-than-one-year suffering.

He stated that separating and changing blood plasma was a medical procedure that required referral for treatment abroad, due to lack of medical supplies.

This new technology, he explained, was first introduced into the Nasser Medical Complex two months ago. So far, it has been used to treat three patients. It serves to treat blood diseases, immunodeficiency disorders, acute polyneuropathy, and post-operative kidney transplants.

"During my postgraduate studies in



Qatar under a scholarship from QRCS, I learned at Hamad Medical Corporation how to perform plasmapheresis," he added.

The procedures are part of QRCS-funded "Specialised Surgical Operations for Poor Patients in Gaza"

project, which involves hiring some 20 consultants and specialists in several key medical specialties to work at Gaza hospitals, including cardiothoracic surgery, neurosurgery, orthopaedics, haematology, and oncology, with a total budget of \$862,500.

Labour ministry, owners of recruitment offices discuss improving services for public

The Complaints and Grievances Committee of Recruitment Offices at the Ministry of Labour held the first meeting with holders of licenses to practice the profession of recruiting workers from abroad for third parties (distinguished).

The meeting was held within the ministry's vision of communicating with the distinguished owners of recruitment offices, in order to ensure the optimal application of decisions and instructions to achieve balance in the labour market

It was aimed at educating license owners about the decisions, procedures and instructions issued by the Ministry of Labour, and in raising the level of services provided to the public.

The meeting was held within the ministry's vision of communicating with the distinguished owners of recruitment offices, in order to ensure the optimal application of decisions and instructions to achieve balance in



the labour market. The meeting discussed the challenges facing recruitment offices with labour-exporting countries and the difficulties facing offices with government agencies.

The members of the committee stressed the necessity of adhering to all procedures and facilities in returning the sums of money in the event that the workers were returned to the office, and to simplify and speed up the procedures for citizens and to provide them with the best services.

They explained that the decisions, procedures and instructions aim to provide the best services and advancement in the labour market,

especially domestic workers, in addition to preserving the rights of both parties, namely the license holder and the employer.

The members of the committee indicated that they are keen to respond to all inquiries submitted by the recruitment offices, noting that the meeting with the owners of recruitment licenses will be held periodically. They also affirmed the continuation of taking all measures, decisions and instructions that would preserve the rights of employers, in a way that reduces the burden regarding the obligations arising as a result of breaching employment contracts or the escape of domestic workers. (QNA)

Qatar attends WOAH general session in Paris

Qatar is participating in the 90th General Session of World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH), with a delegation headed by HE the Minister of Municipality Dr Abdullah bin Abdulaziz bin Turki al-Subaie. Representatives of 182 member countries and international organisations are taking part in the event, being held from May 21-25. WOA is an intergovernmental organisation, that focuses on transparently disseminating information on animal diseases, improving animal health globally and thus build a safer, healthier and more sustainable world. HE al-Subaie met with WOAH Director-General Dr Monique Eloit and discussed aspects of co-operation between Qatar and the organisation. Qatar's ambassador to France Sheikh Ali bin Jassim al-Thani attended the meeting. (QNA)



Al-Subaie meets French, other livestock, agriculture ministers and officials

HE the Minister of Municipality Dr Abdullah bin Abdulaziz bin Turki al-Subaie met with French Minister of Agriculture and Food Sovereignty Marc Fesneau on the sidelines of his participation in the work of the 90th General Session of the World Assembly of Delegates of the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH), which is being held in Paris until May 25. The meeting discussed ways to enhance co-operation between Qatar and France in agriculture, food security and livestock. (QNA)



HE the Minister of Municipality Dr Abdullah bin Abdulaziz bin Turki al-Subaie met with a number of ministers and officials of livestock and agriculture during his participation in the 90th Annual General Session of the World Assembly of Delegates of the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH) held in Paris, France.

HE al-Subaie met with Mauritanian Minister of Livestock Mohamed Abdallah Othman, Somali Minister of Livestock, Forests and Rangelands Hassan Hussein Mohamed, Chairman of the Food Safety Agency of Azerbaijan Goshgar Tahmazli, Chairman of the State Committee for the Development of Veterinary and Livestock of Uzbekistan Bahromjon Norqabilov. The meetings discussed co-operation between Qatar and these countries in agriculture, food security, as well as veterinary, livestock and ways to enhance them. (QNA)

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Qatar strongly condemns Israeli decision on settlers’ return to West Bank outpost

Qatar strongly condemned Israeli defence minister's decision to start implementing a law cancelling disengagement from the northern occupied West Bank settlements, that authorises settlers to return to evacuated Homesh outpost, as a flagrant violation of Palestinian people's rights.

In a statement on Monday, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs expressed Qatar's deep concern over Israeli occupation forces' years-long de facto policy, aiming to strip Palestinian rights guaranteed by international law and to undermine international efforts to implement the two-state solution. The statement called on the international community

to shoulder its responsibilities to compel Israel to stop its settlement policy in the occupied Palestinian territories. The ministry reaffirmed Qatar's firm position on justice for the Palestinian cause, the legitimate rights of Palestinian people, and the establishment of their independent state on the 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital. (QNA)

DFI partners with health ministry to host youth filmmaking workshop

The Doha Film Institute (DFI) and the Ministry of Public Health have partnered to hold a filmmaking workshop for the youth, focusing on health themes. Ten participants, aged 18 to 25, will participate in the workshop to produce two documentaries and two short fiction films through practical exercises.

The participants will have the opportunity to work individually on their projects and film at various locations throughout Doha. Completed films will also get the chance to be screened at DFI's annual Ajyal Film Festival.

Through practical and exciting exercises, participants will learn the fundamental techniques required to develop and produce a short film from basic narrative development to visual storytelling. Lebanese filmmaker Corine Shawi will provide hands-on mentorship during the workshop that offers a comprehensive introduction to the essential tools of filmmaking.

Fatma Hassan al-Remaihi, Chief Executive Office of the Doha Film Institute, said: "We are truly honoured to partner with Qatar's Ministry of Public



Health in this rewarding initiative that encourages emerging talent to build skills in one of the most effective tools for public awareness. Empowering the youth of Qatar is central to DFI's mission, and this workshop is a remarkable opportunity for the participants to exercise and showcase their creative abilities with narratives that will contribute to greater awareness of healthcare challenges in an innovative manner. Our aim is to inspire the next generation and add value to the learning experience by providing alternate avenues for productive expression."

Dr Salih al-Marri, Assistant Minister for Health Affairs, said "the collaboration between the

Ministry of Public Health and the Doha Film Institute provides a platform to raise awareness about vital health issues and promote positive behavioural change in our communities through the art of storytelling. We are confident that the programme's practical approach and the mentorship of experienced filmmakers will equip the participants with the essential tools required to develop and produce compelling films that can drive meaningful social impact. We eagerly anticipate the showcase of these films at the prestigious Ajyal Film Festival and believe that they will inspire and inform audiences on health-related matters."

Shawi's passion for film-

making started with her first long documentary, *Les Femmes Bommes*, at the age of 20. Over time, her interest in exploring various themes related to complex human connections and relationships grew. She directed several short documentaries, each exploring different themes.

Her latest long documentary, *Perhaps What I Fear Does Not Exist* (2022), was a four-year journey to find absolution for a broken family by helping her father walk again. The film premiered at the Dok Leipzig international competition and other festivals.

As a regional hub for education and community, the Doha Film Institute aims to partner with national organisations and governmental entities to empower the next generation, promote an environment of creativity and dialogue, and make learning accessible through the power of film. The institute has an ongoing calendar of educational workshops and training programmes that enable young filmmakers to pursue careers in filmmaking as well as enhance their knowledge and understanding of the latest trends and skills in cinema. (QNA)

Al-Sulaiti meets Georgia's Deputy PM



HE the Minister of Transport Jassim bin Saif al-Sulaiti met yesterday with Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Economy and Sustainable Development of Georgia Levan Davitashvili. The meeting discussed bilateral relations in transportation and ways to enhance and develop economic partnership. (QNA)

Saudi minister praises Qatar Islamic centre

Saudi Arabian Minister of Haj and Umrah Dr Tawfiq bin Fawzan bin Mohamed al-Rabiah has praised the efforts of the Sheikh Abdulla Bin Zaid Al Mahmoud Islamic Cultural Centre at the Ministry of Endowment (Awqaf) and Islamic Affairs in introducing Islamic culture and Qatari heritage as well as providing awareness programmes to Qatar's residents and visitors in multiple languages.

The Saudi minister paid an official visit to the country last week. The General Manager of the Islamic Culture Centre Dr Saleh bin Ali al-Marri introduced the centre's departments and work in presenting a comprehensive understanding of Islam and Muslims, in addition to hosting an exhibition of the Kiswa: the covering of the Ka'aba, as well as showing a film on the manufacturing of the Kiswa.

In a related context, Mufti of Akkar in the north of Lebanon Sheikh Zaid Mohamed Bakkar Zakaria visited the centre and expressed his happiness at its efforts in introducing Islamic culture, pointing to its efforts in this regard during the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 and praised the heritage and civilisation halls.

The centre's department of



Saudi Minister of Haj and Umrah Dr Tawfiq bin Fawzan bin Mohamed al-Rabiah is honoured by Fanar Director Dr Saleh bin Ali al-Marri.

introducing Islam is holding a programme for the Qatari-Russian Center for Co-operation on traditional medicinal herbs in Qatar.

The department of Islamic culture held a lecture dedicated to the Indonesian community, delivered by Preacher Ahmed Zainuddin, dealing with the virtue of honouring one's parents as a religious value and its importance to the individual and

society. The lecture was attended by 300 people.

During last week alone, 87 visitors visited the Imam Muhammad Ibn Abd Al Wahhab Mosque. They learned about the different sections of the mosque and its important role in the lives of Muslims. Additionally, 185 converts benefited from the centre's education programmes for new converts, in all three branches of the centre. (QNA)

Qatar calls for focusing on youth in crime prevention, justice policies

Qatar stressed the necessity of searching for additional initiatives within the mechanism of combating transnational organised crime and drugs that focuses on the role of the youth in preventing crime and in criminal justice policies, involving the youth as crucial actors in protecting society and providing them with additional opportunities to contribute to the development of their countries and the promotion of a culture of peace.

This came in Qatar's speech delivered by Legal Adviser to HE the Minister of Interior Major General Dr Abdullah Yousef al-Mal, before the 32nd session of the UN Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (CCPCJ), held in Vienna.

He said Qatar is putting a great effort into immunising Qatari youth against the dangers of crime and drugs. He added that Qatar has established the Qatar



Youth Council in 2022 with the aim of consolidating national identity and citizenship, as well as strengthening young people's leadership skills and humanitarian sensibility.

Regarding Qatar's contributions to the youth regionally and internationally, al-Mal explained that Qatar's Education Above All Foundation supports the right to education in developing countries, especially in

regions facing crises, conflicts, and war. He added that the Foundation's Educate a Child programme provides access to quality primary education to more than 10mn children in developing countries.

He noted the co-operation of Qatar with the UN Office on Drugs and Crime in implementing the Global Programme for the Implementation of the Doha Declaration during the period 2016-2021, which devoted two of its four pillars to youth empowerment: Youth Crime Prevention through Sports and Education for Justice, with the latter receiving the UN Secretary-General 2020 Innovation Award.

Al-Mal said Qatar is proud of its success in hosting the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022, which was a truly global youth event that strengthened ties amongst the world's youth and people. (QNA)

New shipping line to enhance trade exchange and fast transit

Mwani Qatar has announced the commencement of a new weekly shipping line (India to West Mediterranean), which connects Hamad Port directly with ports in the Indian subcontinent, Red Sea and the West Mediterranean region. Shipping company MSC's new line will contribute to enhancing trade exchange and offer fast and cost-effective transit, Mwani Qatar said in a tweet. Pictured are officials marking the occasion.



Qatar participates in World Meteorological Congress



Qatar, represented by the Civil Aviation Authority, took part in the 19th World Meteorological Congress at the headquarters of the World Meteorological Organisation (WMO) in Geneva, Switzerland. The delegation of the Civil Aviation Authority was headed by Mohamed Faleh al-Hajri, who is in-charge of managing the Civil Aviation Authority, in the presence of HE the Permanent Representative of Qatar to the UN Office in Geneva Dr Hind al-Muftah. The congress discussed an array of topics related to weather and climate, and the strategic plan to enhance the WMO's vision for a world where all nations are more resilient to the socioeconomic consequences of extreme weather, climate, water and other environmental events by 2023. (QNA)

ANNOUNCEMENT

I, **KANTAPORN LONGPRASERT**
holder of
THAILAND Passport No. AB5460078
QID No. 28676400458

hereby change my name
from
KANTAPORN LONGPRASERT
to
KANTA LONGPRASERT MERCIER

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

Fourth Qatar Global Award for Dialogue Among Civilisations launched

The ISESCO Chair in Alliance of Civilisations at the College of Sharia and Islamic Studies at Qatar University launched the 4th edition of the Qatar Global Award For Dialogue Among Civilisations 2023-24, in collaboration with the Qatar Committee for the Alliance of Civilisations (QCAC), alongside the Islamic World Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (ICESCO).

The Award was established in 2018 in co-operation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Qa-



national level to underscore Qatar's role in this multi-dimensional strategic file that gains a special

interest from Qatar, especially in the National Vision 2030. The new edition aims to activate the first field of national and international plans of the dialogue and alliance of civilisations, namely education in the context of the alliance of sciences, pay tribute to all knowledge without exception, identify the aspects of the relationship between sciences and knowledge, ways to practically activate the idea of knowledge integration in the education's curricula, overcome the challenges related to the rupture between knowledge

and conflict between them, curb cognitive biases through knowledge localisation and its centrality, device a common civilised framework for education and scientific research. In addition it aims to encouraging the innovative ideas and initiatives to achieve quality in education through bringing the natural, social and human disciplines together, as well as finding appropriate tools and approaches that embody knowledge integration. In statements to Qatar News Agency (QNA), Director General of

ISESCO Chair in Alliance of Civilisations Dr Ezz El Din Maamish said the topic of the new edition was "Science to Dialogue: Towards a Civilised Framework for Knowledge Integration" to address schism and fragmentation in social and human sciences from one hand, and natural sciences, their standards and approaches from the other hand. He noted that the award topic seeks to correct the track of the relationship among knowledge fields. (QNA)

which included conducting personal interviews by the institute's professors. There are many evaluation indicators for applicants. According to the academic calendar of the institute, the academic year 2023-24 will start on Aug 20, while those who wish to take admission for the academic year 2024-25 will be able to apply starting from Sept 1, 2023. (QNA)

DI announces admission results for master's programmes

Doha Institute for Graduate Studies announced the admission results for master's programmes for the academic year 2023-24, after a competitive evaluation process of more than 14,000 admission applications from various Arab and foreign countries. The total number of students admitted this

year reached 308 male and female students, with the percentage of Qatari students reaching 35%. The accepted students are divided into 19 master's programmes offered by the institute, with 207 of both genders in the School of Social Sciences and Humanities, and 101 in

the School of Economics, Administration and Public Policy. In a statement, Dean of Students Affairs at DI Dr Ibrahim Fraihat said the applications for enrolment in all the institute's programmes were subjected to a rigorous competitive assessment of the abilities of the applicants,

AAB in partnership with talabat for e-bike integration

Abdullah Abdulghani & Bros Co (AAB) is launching an innovative testing programme with talabat, aiming to introduce electric bikes (e-bikes) as an eco-friendly transportation solution within Qatar, a statement said.

A joint event was held at AAB tower where talabat was presented with a customised e-bike tailored to their specific needs. The collaboration emphasises both organisations' commitment to sustainable solutions and environmental stewardship in Qatar.

Abdulghani Nasser al-Abdulghani, CEO of AAB, said: "Our partnership with talabat aligns perfectly with our shared vision for a cleaner, more sustainable Qatar. The incorporation of e-bikes into our operational landscape offers an environmentally-friendly, efficient option for last-mile delivery, contributing significantly to the reduction of carbon emissions and noise pollution."

Francisco Miguel Condeco Caetano De Sousa, managing director of talabat in Qatar, highlighted the significance

of the partnership: "Integrating e-bikes into our operations signifies a step forward in sustainable innovation and provides our customers with efficient, eco-friendly delivery solutions."

The S02 electric bikes, crafted by Barcelona-based manufacturer Silence, can reach speeds of up to 100kph and are conveniently chargeable at home. The batteries can be swiftly removed and replaced, guaranteeing business continuity and an uninterrupted performance, the statement added.



HEC Paris tops FT Executive Education rankings 2023

HEC Paris, one of the leading business schools worldwide, has retained its number one spot in the *Financial Times* (FT) combined Executive Education ranking for the second year in a row, a statement said.

The FT Worldwide Executive Education Rankings combine the Open and Custom categories, where HEC Paris has taken the number one spot out of 50 providers by securing top places in both categories. This remarkable accomplishment follows the school's record-breaking position in 2022.

"We are honoured and happy to be recognised once again as the top Executive Education establishment in the world in the *Financial Times* Rankings. This is a testimony of HEC Paris commitment to delivering high-impact customised programmes, pioneering pedagogy, and transformative learning experiences. It is also a recognition of



the excellence of our faculty, of our participants, and the whole team, in Paris and Doha," commented, Dr Pablo Martin de Holan, dean, HEC Paris in Qatar.

From its state-of-the-art Doha campus in Msheireb Downtown, HEC Paris in Qatar offers a comprehensive range of world-class

executive education programmes designed for business professionals at various stages of their careers.

Through its customised corporate programmes, HEC Paris in Qatar, which operates in partnership with Qatar Foundation, is playing a key role in advancing Qatar's and the region's business

environment by enabling socially aware leaders to better address the societal and environmental challenges of the future.

The custom programmes enable companies to unlock their full potential by investing in the development of their executives, fostering a culture of innovation and growth.

"We are proud to be able to bring our expertise to Qatar and the GCC and assist the region's development goals, and learn from them as well. We train men and women committed to making a positive impact, who can meet future societal and environmental challenges and build a better, more sustainable, and more inclusive world," added dean Martin de Holan.

The continued recognition validates HEC Paris' focus on excellence and impact, and its belief in lifelong learning for a better, more sustainable world.

Education Malaysia Fair on May 26, 27

MY Aspiration (Malaysia) is organising its 14th edition of the Education Malaysia Fair on May 26 and 27 at JW Marriott Marquis Hotel, City Center Doha, a statement said.

The expo is to provide students from Qatar with extensive and insightful information on diverse and quality educational opportunities in Malaysia, it was explained. The event is supported by Education Malaysia Dubai and the embassy of Malaysia in Qatar.

MY Aspiration Malaysia will bring together seven reputable Malaysian Universities namely Asia Pacific University of Technology and Innovation, Management and Science University, Multimedia University, SEGi University and Colleges, Sunway University, Taylor's University and the University of Nottingham Malaysia.

The agency also represents 20 well established Malaysian universities and assists students with application handling and student visa process. Malaysian universities currently rank in the world's top universities and a total of 24 universities are ranked in QS World University Rankings 2023. It reflects the wider coming to



prominence of the country itself on the world stage. Overall, Malaysia emerged fifth for the number of university programmes ranked in Asia and sixth for the number of universities ranked by the education analysts Quacquarelli Symonds. A record number of 22 Malaysian universities are also in the Times Higher Education (THE) World University Rankings 2023 compared with 18 universities in 2022. As of December 2022, there are more than 120,000 international students from 160 countries who are currently pursuing their studies in international

schools, colleges, universities, language centres and training institutes in the country. From this, more than 20,000 students are from Bahrain, Djibouti, Iran, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Oman and the UAE, including expatriate students and 77 Qatari students from Qatar. Malaysia is also hosting branch campuses of prestigious universities from the UK, the US, Australia and China and students pay only a fraction of the cost when studying in Malaysia compared to what they need to pay in the main campus, the statement added.

Wellkins Medical Centre's free eye camp on May 27

Wellkins Medical Centre, a new multi-speciality medical centre in Doha, is partnering with Al Mahra Optics, Al Muntazah to organise a free eye camp on May 27, a statement said.

The camp will take place at Wellkins Medical Centre located at Ramada signal, opposite Westin Doha, with checkups available from 8.30am-12.30pm and 4pm-9pm.

Services offered include free vision checkups, consultations with ophthalmologists, and special discounts on lenses and frames.

Dr Asha Ann Jacob, specialist ophthalmologist at Wellkins Medical Centre, emphasised the importance of regular eye screenings.

"Annual eye exams are crucial for ensuring clear vision and monitoring overall eye health. It is recommended that everyone, especially those over 50 and individuals with uncontrolled diabetes, undergo a yearly eye checkup to maintain good eye health and clear vision."

Dr Sameer Moopan, chairman and managing director, Wellkins Medical Centre, expressed his delight in collaborating with Al



Mahra Optics to provide this free eye camp and encouraged everyone to take advantage of the opportunity.

For more information about the camp and registration, the Wellkins helpline may be contacted on 44442099.

080MAZAD celebrates one year of dominating car plate and special phone number market

080MAZAD, a prominent company specializing in the trade of unique car plate numbers and special phone numbers, recently celebrated its one-year anniversary since its establishment. The company offers its services through its official Instagram page and also provides direct sales options to its customers.



The competition commenced on May 11 and will run until August 10, culminating in the draw scheduled for August 13, 2023.

The company stands out for its unwavering trustworthiness and precision in all its work, ensuring swift execution of transactions for clients. Additionally, it offers electronic contracting services, enabling the sale of numbers or their display on websites. One of its notable strengths lies in its youthful and promising management team, supported by a highly skilled and experienced workforce.

Mohamed Mustafa Al-Dahdouh, Director of the company, said: "It is our pleasure that the Company offers this competition to its valued customers, noting that the Company's staff are doing their best to develop the company, diversify its services, and are working continuously to develop the auction process, on the distinguishing numbers to be done with ease and flexibility, at selling or buying, and for that we praise the strength of the safety website for the customers."

He added that the company extends its services to include direct sales through



its Instagram platform. Moreover, it offers convenient facilities to customers who wish to make purchases via bank transfer, allowing them to streamline the process and save valuable time and effort.

Al-Dahdouh also emphasized that once the auction is launched, it will immediately be showcased on the company's Instagram page. Furthermore, customers visiting the website will have

the opportunity to witness a secure and engaging interaction with the range of products or services being offered.

He also revealed the opening of Al-Dahdouh Automotive and Trade Company soon in the Mowater city, expressing gratitude towards both existing and new clients, including those who recently joined the 080MAZAD Instagram platform.

Doha Clinic Hospital welcomes new consultant

Doha Clinic Hospital (DCH) has announced the addition of Dr Rafah Makki, an obstetrics and gynaecology (OB-GYN) consultant with 27 years of experience, to its team.

Dr Moustafa Tawfeek, general manager, said Doha Clinic Hospital is committed to providing the best possible care to the patients, according to a statement.

"As the first private clinic in Doha, DCH offers 24/7 on-site coverage for OB-GYN services, ensuring that the patients receive timely and high-quality care for each patient."

"DCH is always keen to serve the needs of the customers and community with the highest quality medical services and care. Accordingly, DCH recently upgraded its service options and expanded the staff to include doctors from a variety of nationalities, catering to a wider range of demographics."



Dr Rafah Makki

"Dr Rafah will be available for consultations in our Outpatient Department six days a week and welcomes new patients on a walk-in

or appointment basis. She will be providing gynaecological and laparoscopic surgery, comprehensive care for pre, during, and post-pregnancy, including deliveries, posterior repairs, and post-menopause patients. She is also fluent in both Arabic and English, making it easier for our patients to communicate with her effectively."

"DCH is a subsidiary of Mohammed bin Hamad Holding Group, established more than 20 years ago as the first integrated private hospital in Qatar."



Ford, Bentley models recalled

The Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MoCI), in co-operation with Almana Motors Company, has announced the recall of Ford Territory, 2023 model, as a defect in the steering column bracket welding might cause its detachment from the beam and increase the possibility of a crash. The MoCI, in co-operation with Al Waiba Motors, has announced the recall of Bentley Continental GT, and Continental Flying Spur, 2018-2020 models as a coolant pump

malfunction might cause a short circuit and increase the chance of fire.

The MoCI has urged all customers to report any violations to its Consumer Protection and Anti-Commercial Fraud Department, which processes complaints, inquires and suggestions through the following channels: - call centre: 16001, e-mail: info@moci.gov.qa, Twitter @MOCIQATAR, Instagram MOCIQATAR. MoCI's mobile application is available on iPhone and Android devices - MOCI_QATAR



A man inspects the house of Palestinian fighter Mutaz Khawaja, after it was razed by Israeli security forces in the West Bank village of Nilin, yesterday.

Army demolishes West Bank home of Palestinian fighter

AFP
Nilin

Israeli troops yesterday demolished the West Bank home of a Palestinian fighter who was killed after carrying out a deadly shooting in the heart of Tel Aviv in March.

“Forces of the army and the border police destroyed the home in the village of Nilin of Mutaz Khawaja, who carried out a shooting attack on March 9, 2023 in Dizengoff Street, Tel Aviv,” an army statement said.

Khawaja, 23, was a member of the Ezzedine al-Qassam Brigades, the armed wing of Hamas, the Palestinian group which rules Gaza.

He was shot dead by Israeli police after the attack, which

killed one Israeli and wounded two more.

His home village lies close to the Green Line which separates Israel from the occupied West Bank, and barely 20 kilometres from Tel Aviv.

Nilin mayor Yusef Khawaja said Israeli troops made all residents of the four-storey apartment block leave their homes before demolishing the fighter’s first floor flat at dawn.

The army released video of troops setting explosive charges before blowing up the apartment.

Large portraits of Khawaja had been draped over the side of the building, commemorating him as a “martyr”, an AFP photographer reported.

Troops clashed with “rioters” during the operation, the

army said. The mayor said three people were injured.

Israel, which has occupied the West Bank since 1967, routinely demolishes the homes of individuals it blames for deadly attacks on Israelis.

Human rights activists say the policy amounts to collective punishment, as it can render non-combatants, including children, homeless.

But Israel says the practice is effective in deterring some Palestinians from carrying out attacks.

Khawaja’s father Salah was defiant after the Israeli operation. “This hateful act will only strengthen our love for the homeland... Jerusalem and the faith, and, with God’s help, our roots will remain anchored here,” he said.

Red Cross warns of possible crisis on Sudan-Chad border

Reuters
Geneva

Sudanese refugees are streaming into Chad so quickly that it will be impossible to relocate them all to safer places before the start of the rainy season in late June, a senior Red Cross official said yesterday, flagging the risk of a disaster.

Some 60,000-90,000 people have fled into neighbouring Chad since violence erupted last month, the UN refugee agency said this week. Tens of thousands have converged in a makeshift camp in a village named Borota where Pierre Kremer of the International Federation of the Red Cross and

Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) was based last week.

“We know that we won’t be able to relocate all of them before the rainy season,” Kremer told a Geneva press briefing via video link from Nairobi. “It’s a bit of a race now to relocate as many as we can... We run the risk of a major humanitarian disaster in this area.” Access to the area is expected to be difficult after the rainy season starts because large streams, known as wadis, are set to cut it off from supplies.

Some 80% of those arriving are women and children, many of whom have been separated from their parents as they fled from Darfur where violence between warring factions in the capital has spread in re-

cent weeks. Kremer said there had been reports of snake and scorpion bites among the refugees who are sleeping on the ground.

The UN refugee agency (UNHCR) has said it is seeking to move refugees gathering in border areas to pre-existing refugee camps in Chad and establish five new ones.

A UNHCR spokesperson in Chad, Eujin Byun, told Reuters that many of the refugees reported losing family members and having their homes burned down. Teenagers were often travelling alone with infants, she said. “I’m overwhelmed to see them,” she said. “It’s a lot of children and it’s really heartbreaking as they don’t know where their parents are.”

Fresh harvest

A farmer holds a handful of freshly-harvested strawberries in a field in Yemen’s Houthi-held capital Sanaa, yesterday.



France minister says Assad should be tried

AFP
Paris

Syrian President Bashar al-Assad should be put on trial following “hundreds of thousands of deaths” and “chemical arms use” during the country’s civil war, the French foreign minister said yesterday.

Asked during a television interview if she wanted Assad to be tried, Catherine Colonna said “the answer is yes”, adding that “the battle against crime, against impunity is part of French diplomacy.” Assad last week returned to the regional scene with an appearance at a summit of

the Arab League, an international organisation he had been banned from for a decade.

Colonna nevertheless said Paris would not be changing its policy towards the Syrian ruler.

“We have to remember who Bashar al-Assad is. He’s a leader who has been the enemy of his own people for more than 10 years,” she said.

A lifting of European Union sanctions on the Syrian regime was “certainly not” planned, she added. “So long as he doesn’t change, so long as he doesn’t commit to reconciliation, to the fight against terrorism, the fight against drugs... so long as he doesn’t fulfil his commitments, there’s no reason to change our attitude towards him,” Colonna said.

Sporadic shelling as combat eases after Sudan ceasefire

AFP
Khartoum

Sporadic artillery fire still echoed in Sudan’s capital yesterday but residents said fighting had calmed following a US and Saudi-brokered ceasefire, raising faint hopes in the embattled city.

In the sixth week of war, witnesses reported a relative calm had taken hold, both in greater Khartoum and in the Darfur region’s cities of Nyala and El Geneina, which have been among the other main battlegrounds.

“We have not heard shelling in our neighbourhood since last night,” said a witness in southern Khartoum.

Residents had reported combat and air strikes in different districts of the capital minutes after the ceasefire formally started at 9:45pm (1945 GMT) on Monday.

The battles since April 15 have killed an estimated 1,000 people, sparked mass evacuations of foreigners and forced more than a million people to flee their homes internally and across borders, fuelling concerns for regional stability.

The week-long truce aims to allow desperately needed humanitarian aid for civilians, and restoration of essential services.

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said in a video message that the truce is “backed by a remote monitoring mechanism” supported by the US.

“If the ceasefire is violated, we’ll know,” he said. “And we will hold violators accountable through our sanctions and other tools at our disposal.” Fighting pits the army, led by Sudan’s de facto leader Abdel Fattah al-Burhan, against the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces of his former deputy Mohamed Hamdan Daglo.

Those unable to flee have run low on water, food and basic supplies, and more than half the population, 25mn people, are in need of humanitarian aid, according to the UN.

“Seven days is not a long time if you look at the massive scale of humanitarian emergency in Sudan,” International Committee of the Red Cross regional director for Africa, Patrick Youssef, said yesterday. “But we are also in a situation where every minute counts and can provide a much needed respite,” he said.

The text of the truce deal says warring parties agreed to secure “unimpeded road access along designated corridors or routes for humanitarian assistance delivery.” Aid workers are waiting impatiently for those promised corridors to materialise. No permits had been authorised as yesterday, one international hu-



A damaged and looted pick-up truck remains on the roadside in Khartoum, yesterday, after a one-week ceasefire between Sudan’s army and paramilitary Rapid Support Forces officially went into force.



People board a bus as they evacuate southern Khartoum, yesterday after a one-week ceasefire officially went into force.

manitarian worker told AFP on condition of anonymity, due to safety concerns.

“The whole country is taken hostage,” and both parties have “singularly failed” to respect international humanitarian law, the UN’s expert on human rights in Sudan, Radhouane Nouicer, said yesterday.

“People feel alone and abandoned amid a chronic shortage of food, drinking water, homes destroyed, indiscriminate attacks in residential areas and widespread looting.” The pause in fighting longed for by Khartoum residents would also enable more of them to flee the city. The UN said nearly 650,000 had already done so during the war, in which numerous ceasefires previously announced were quickly violated. Before it began, there had been an absence of signals on the ground that the latest truce would be honoured.

Volker Perthes, the UN envoy to Sudan, told the Security

Council on Monday that “fighting and troop movements have continued even today, despite a commitment by both sides not to pursue military advantage before the ceasefire takes effect”.

The US and Saudi Arabia said this agreement was different because the seven-page document was “signed by the parties” and would be supported by the monitoring mechanism.

Neither side has directly blamed the other for breaking this truce — as they did within minutes after previous ceasefires collapsed. But the health ministry released a statement yesterday accusing the RSF of violating hospitals.

The ministry, loyal to Burhan, said RSF troops “stationed themselves” inside two hospitals in greater Khartoum yesterday, “assaulting medical staff and ejecting patients”.

The RSF called the accusations “lies”. Major fighting has devastated the Darfur region

near Chad, where the UN has reported hundreds of civilians killed in the West Darfur capital El Geneina.

Perthes in his Security Council address warned that “the conflict risks to expand and prolong... with implications for the region”.

“In parts of the country, fighting between the two armies or the two armed formations has sharpened into communal tensions, or triggered conflict between communities,” he said, after reports of civilians being armed in Darfur.

Sudan has a long history of military coups. The army in 2019 overthrew the veteran leader Omar al-Bashir after mass protests against his rule.

Sudanese were promised a gradual transition toward civilian rule, but Burhan and Daglo staged another coup in October 2021 before simmering tensions between the two men flared into the current war.

Milan photo expo reveals lives of women in Iran

Reuters
Milan

A photograph of a woman, wearing a white chador with an ornate pattern and standing in front of a hanging rug, is perhaps the most striking image of a new exhibition in Milan that aims to shed light on women’s lives in today’s Iran.

The woman is photographed from behind and the pattern of her chador, which completely covers her, seems to intertwine with the dense floral design of the rug.

The image is part of the first solo exhibition by Iranian photographer Farnaz Damnabi, which opened at Milan’s 29 Arts in Progress gallery yesterday.

Damnabi, 29, told Reuters the photo was taken in the holy city of Mashhad, one of Iran’s most conservative places, where women would only be photographed provided their faces were not shown.

“In my opinion, in various



aspects women are invisible but they are so powerful and courageous”, she said, adding that she became a photographer to bring the lives of ordinary people to a broader audience.

Damnabi, who lives and works in Tehran, travelled across Iran to document women’s lives, among other themes. The women are shown going about their daily lives at home,

at work, in the city and the countryside.

Women in Iran are among the most highly educated in the Middle East, with a literacy rate of more than 80%.

The photos were taken before massive protests broke out in Iran last year after the death in custody of a 22-year-old woman arrested for allegedly violating attire rules, leading to the worst legitimacy crisis for the



Iranian artist Farnaz Damnabi’s work is displayed at her solo show ‘Unveiled’ at 29 Arts In Progress Gallery, in Milan, Italy. **Right:** Iranian artist Farnaz Damnabi poses for a picture in front of her work.

country’s rulers since the 1979 Islamic revolution. The Islamic Republic has blamed the unrest on its foreign foes, and authorities responded with violations that may constitute crimes against humanity, according to a UN-appointed expert.

“What struck us is that some of the images... are snapshots that very few could capture”, said the gallery’s co-founder and co-director Luca Casulli.

U-TURN
IMF forecasts UK economic rebound

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) delivered a major U-turn on its forecast for the UK economy, saying it expected growth this year, just one month after predicting a contraction. Britain's economy is now expected to expand by 0.4% in 2023, the IMF said in its latest outlook document which partly cited weaker energy prices. The institution ripped up its previous forecast in April for a 0.3% contraction. Addressing a London press conference, IMF managing director Kristalina Georgieva defended the U-turn. She said it had been sparked by falling energy prices, easing concerns over Brexit and improving financial stability following recent UK political turmoil and US banking-sector woes.

PEOPLE
Disgraced entertainer Rolf Harris dies at 93

The artist, presenter and musician Rolf Harris, who was one of the UK's best-loved entertainers before he was convicted of underage-sex crimes in 2014, died earlier this month aged 93, his family said yesterday. The Australian-born Harris's family said in a statement: "This is to confirm that Rolf Harris died peacefully surrounded by family and friends and has now been laid to rest." Harri died at his home in Bray, west of London, on May 10 of "metastatic squamous cell carcinoma of neck" and "frailty of old age", his death certificate, dated May 23, records. It also says that Harris was cremated, without adding further details.

DECISION
Testing made mandatory for India cough syrup exports

India will make tests mandatory for cough syrups before they are exported, a government notice showed yesterday, after Indian-made cough syrups were linked to the deaths of dozens of children in Gambia and Uzbekistan. Any cough syrup must have a certificate of analysis issued by a government laboratory before it is exported, effective June 1, the government said in a notice dated May 22 and shared by the health ministry yesterday. India's \$41bn pharmaceutical industry is one of the biggest in the world but its reputation was shaken after the World Health Organisation (WHO) found toxins in cough syrups made by three Indian companies.

SUMMIT
India showcases Kashmir to G20 countries

India began showcasing Kashmir to tourism officials of G20 countries yesterday, hoping to attract foreign visitors to the picture-postcard territory. Jammu and Kashmir has been rolled by militant violence since 1989, disrupting a thriving tourism sector. Federal Tourism Minister G Kishan Reddy said a record 18.4mn tourists visited Kashmir in 2022 and the government was expecting that number to strongly grow and include more foreign visitors. Kashmir tourism officials said the 2022 number included only 20,000 foreign visitors, mostly from Malaysia, Indonesia, South Korea and Taiwan, and that the focus was now to attract tourists from Europe.

MEMORABILIA
Watch owned by China's last emperor sells for \$5mn

A Patek Philippe wristwatch once owned by China's last emperor sold for more than \$5mn on the auction block in Hong Kong yesterday. The Ref 96 Quantieme Lune timepiece, which boasts a crown-like moon phase, originally belonged to Aisin-Gioro Puyi, the final monarch of the Chinese Qing dynasty. British auction house Phillips said the watch had been expected to fetch about \$3mn but, after about five minutes of spirited bidding, it was sold for HK\$40mn (\$5.1mn). With the commission fee, the total price came to about \$6.2mn. Thomas Perazzi, Phillips' head of watches in Asia, said he was "thrilled with this groundbreaking sale" because it set records.

Harry loses court bid over police protection

Reuters
London

Prince Harry yesterday lost his legal bid to challenge the British government's refusal to let him pay for his own police protection when he is in the United Kingdom.

Harry, King Charles' younger son, was stripped of the police security usually afforded to royal figures in the United Kingdom after he and his American wife Meghan stepped down from their official roles in 2020 to move to the US.

The high court in London last year already agreed he should be allowed to challenge the original decision to end his protection. But yesterday it rejected his bid for a second court review over the rejection of his offer to pay privately for the highly-trained officers.

"RAVEC's reasoning was that there are policy reasons why those services should not be made available for payment, even though others are. I can detect nothing that is arguably irrational in that reasoning"

The decision to remove publicly-funded security was taken by the Executive Committee for the Protection of Royalty and Public Figures, known by the acronym RAVEC, which approves security for the royals and VIPs, such as the prime minister.

Last week, lawyers for Harry had argued RAVEC did not have the power to reject his funding offer, and even if it did have such authority, it was wrong not to consider an exception or hear representations on his behalf.

However, lawyers for the police and the government said it would be wrong to allow the fifth-in-line to the throne to pay, as it would mean wealthy individuals were able to "buy" spe-

cially trained officers as private bodyguards.

They argued it would be unreasonable for officers to be required to put themselves in harm's way if the committee had already considered it was not in the public's or the state's interest to do so.

It was very different to paying for policing for a soccer match, a marathon, or even a celebrity's wedding, they said.

In his written ruling, judge Martin Chamberlain agreed.

"RAVEC's reasoning was that there are policy reasons why those services should not be made available for payment, even though others are. I can detect nothing that is arguably irrational in that reasoning," he said.

His ruling comes less than a week after Harry's spokesperson said the prince, his wife Meghan and her mother were involved in a "near catastrophic" car chase with press photographers after an awards ceremony in New York.

The prince has spoken out about his fears for the safety of his family and regularly hit out at press intrusion which he blames for the death of his mother Princess Diana, who was killed when her limousine crashed as it sped away from chasing paparazzi in Paris in 1997.

Meanwhile last year, Britain's former counter-terrorism police chief said there had been credible threats made against the couple by far-right extremists.

The case is one of a number that Harry is currently pursuing at the High Court. His lawyers are also involved in a trial where he and others are suing Mirror Group Newspapers over allegations of phone-hacking and other unlawful activities.

Harry is also suing the publisher of the *Mail on Sunday* newspaper for libel over an article that alleged he only offered to pay for police protection after the start of his legal case against the British government.

China willing to expand Russia ties



Russian Prime Minister Mikhail Mishustin speaks with China's Vice Premier He Lifeng during a Russian-Chinese Business Forum in Shanghai yesterday. China's Premier Li Qiang said the country is willing to further expand economic and trade exchanges with Russia. Li made the comments in a congratulatory letter to the China-Russia Business Forum, which is being held in Shanghai.

UK unveils immigration curbs on foreign students

AFP
London

The UK government yesterday announced new visa limits affecting international students, with the ruling Conservatives locked in a war of words over soaring immigration.

Under the new measures only students on postgraduate courses designated as research programmes – typically lasting longer than two years – will be able to bring dependants to the UK while they study.

Since Brexit, Britain has ended free movement of people from the European Union, but net migration is set to hit record highs this year.

Much of that has been driven by bespoke visa schemes for people fleeing Ukraine, Hong Kong and Afghanistan. But student numbers have also surged, notably from India and Nigeria.

That has stoked political controversy, and cabinet infighting over the issue spilled into the open last week as right-wing Home Secretary Suella Braverman urged her own government to get tougher.

Ranged against her are the finance and education ministers, who value the skills brought in by foreign workers and the high overseas fees paid by students to UK universities.

In a statement to parliament, Braverman said the proposals struck the "right balance" and would likely see net migration "fall to pre-pandemic levels in the medium term".

Some 136,000 visas were issued to the dependants of international students last year – up eight-fold from 16,000 in 2019, she said.

In future, overseas students

will be prevented from switching "out of the student route into work routes" before they have finished their courses.

But the government said it was not planning any change to foreign students being able to stay in Britain for two years on the same visa, after their course, provided they have found employment.

There will also be "improved and more enforcement activity" and a clampdown on "unscrupulous agents" using education as a cover for immigration, according to Braverman's statement.

The minister – a Brexit hard-liner whose harsh rhetoric on

immigration has proved divisive – said overseas students played an important part in supporting the UK economy.

But she said that should not come at the cost of the government's intention "to lower overall migration and ensure that migration to the UK is highly skilled and therefore provides the most benefit."

Jamie Arrowsmith, director of Universities UK International, which represents British universities abroad, cast doubt on whether the new measures would dent the migration numbers.

Australia fetes Modi with focus on trade

AFP
Sydney

Australia offered Narendra Modi a rock-star welcome yesterday, during a visit by the Indian leader that was heavy on praise and light on his domestic controversies.

Thousands of supporters thronged the 21,000 capacity Qudos Bank Arena in Sydney Olympic Park. Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese too attended.

Lured by the world's most populous market and a counterweight to China's growing military, diplomatic and economic clout, Australia's prime minister turned on the charm.

To chants of "Modi! Modi! Modi!" Albanese introduced his "dear friend" to a jazzed-up crowd of Indian-Australians, who he praised for making Australia "stronger and more inclusive".

"The last time I saw someone on the stage here was Bruce Springsteen and he didn't get the welcome that Prime Minister Modi has got," Albanese said.

"Prime Minister Modi is the boss!" he said, breaking into a broad smile and boasting the pair had met six times in the past year.

It was an unusually personal show of support for Modi – a nationalist leader who faces reelection next year and has been criticised for sustained democratic backsliding and discrimination against India's hundreds of millions of non-Hindus.

Modi reciprocated his host's lavish welcome, offering a long list of interests that bind the two countries: from cricket to curry, yoga to Masterchef.

"The most important foundation of our ties is mutual trust and mutual respect," he said, promising trade between the two countries would dou-

ble in the next five years.

Behind the flattery and mutual backslapping lie some hardheaded strategy and politics for both men.

As Australia struggles with a more assertive China, it is looking for economic and political partners in an increasingly rough-and-tumble neighbourhood.

India's economic performance has been mixed in the past decade, with missteps curbing growth. But hundreds of millions of people have been lifted out of poverty.

India is now the second-fastest growing economy in the G20 and a multi-trillion-dollar market.

And for both Modi and Albanese, the Indian diaspora offers a rich font of votes and campaign donations, according to Ian Hall, an international relations professor at Brisbane's Griffith University.

Wrestlers protest



Indian wrestlers take part in a candlelight vigil to protest against the sport's local federation chief over allegations of sexual harassment and intimidation, in New Delhi, India, yesterday.

Indians splurge in bid to offload Rs2,000 notes

Indians are stepping up purchases of daily essentials, and even premium branded goods, using the soon-to-be-withdrawn Rs2,000 (\$24.46) notes as they aim to sidestep the need to exchange or deposit them at banks. The Indian central bank announced on Friday the country's largest denomination note will be withdrawn from circulation by the end of September. While it did not specify the reason for the move, it comes ahead of state and general elections in the country when, analysts said, cash usage typically spikes, often in unaccounted deals. The currency exchange is expected to be far less disruptive than a 2016 move to demonetise 86% of the country's currency in circulation overnight. Since the weekend, people have thronged outlets to spend using the Rs2,000 note to avoid the hassle of queuing up at banks to exchange them or invite scrutiny from the tax department by depositing large sums. Indian shops, for their part, eagerly accepted the note, using it as an opportunity to increase sales,

several of them said yesterday, the first day the exchange was allowed. "A lot of people are using Rs2,000 notes to pay for mangoes since Saturday," said Mohamed Azhar, 30, a mango seller near the Crawford Market area in India's financial capital of Mumbai. "On a daily basis, I get 8-10 notes now. I accept it. I have no option, it's my business. I will deposit everything at once before September 30. There is no fear since the note is valid." Michael Martis, store manager at a Rado store in a mall in central Mumbai, said his store had seen a 60-70% increase in Rs2,000 notes since the withdrawal was announced. "That has increased our watch sales to 3-4 pieces per day from 1-2 previously," said Martis. Food delivery firm Zomato said on its Twitter account on Monday that 72% of the "cash on delivery" orders were paid in Rs2,000 notes since Friday. However, the company spokesperson clarified in response to a query seeking details that the tweet was in made jest and was not factual.

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GULF TIMES

After two mass shootings, can Serbia rid itself of guns?

After Serbia was rocked by two mass shootings in two days earlier in May, Branko, 54, surrendered his unlicensed arms under a government amnesty: four assault rifles, nine handguns, eight grenades and many boxes of ammunition.

The huge cache of weapons handed over by just one veteran of the wars that tore apart Yugoslavia in the 1990s highlights the scale of the task facing the nation, where arms from a 19th century uprising against Ottoman rule and old British Bren machine guns parachuted to partisans in World War Two are also still hoarded.

“I surrendered my weapons as I was horrified at what happened,” said Branko — who asked to be identified by his old military callsign — referring to the May 3 shooting where a teenage pupil at a Belgrade school killed 10 people, and another the next day when a man killed eight in a village south of the capital.

Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic pledged to “practically disarm” his country, with the government quickly launching a month-long amnesty for illegal weapons.

More than 26,094 firearms, over 1.3mn rounds of ammunition and 6,333 pieces of ordnance had been handed in since May 8, interior ministry official Bojana Otovic Pjanovic told state TV RTS.

“There were weapons from 1847 and 1907, (old) English revolvers, a guidance system for anti-tank missiles, a fuse to which 4.6kg of explosives were attached,” Pjanovic Otovic said.

Political opponents — who have long demanded tighter arms controls — call the move a populist step that cannot solve Serbia’s illegal weapons problem, while organising mass protests against the violence they say permeates society.

“This cannot be done quickly due to the estimated quantity of weapons ... People here have no awareness about the dangers of holding illegal weapons,” said Jelena Jerinic, a law professor and a parliamentary deputy of the Ne Davimo Beograd opposition movement.

Many of the military grade weapons which flooded into Serbia and the rest of Western Balkans as Yugoslavia disintegrated ended up in private hands, turbocharging a culture of weapons ownership that Belgrade University history professor Aleksandar Zivotic describes as “ingrained in the (nation’s) foundations”.

Organised crime and various state-sponsored nationalist paramilitaries flourished during and after the wars, with dozens of people killed in gangland-style shootings until the early 2000s.

Authorities have struggled to assess the current scale of the problem. According to SEESAC, a UN and EU-backed regional gun-control initiative, the number of registered civilian firearms in Serbia increased almost 10% between 2012 and 2016 to 618,061. Officials’ estimates of unlicensed pieces range anywhere from 90,000 to 700,000.

Even in a country whose gun laws are tight by some European standards, Filip Svarm, editor in-chief of the Vreme weekly and a prominent analyst in the field, said it would take years for the state to disarm its citizens and he did not believe the amnesty and harsh sentences would solve the problem.

“The aggressiveness that is constantly fuelled in society affects some people in such a way that they now want to keep or get illegal guns,” he said.

Since May’s shootings, Vucic has halted issuance of new gun permits, tightened rules for existing owners and pledged changes to the law so it does not pay to keep illegal weapons.

It is not the first time the government has offered an amnesty — according to police data, 101,283 weapons and 2,517,520 rounds of ammunition were handed in between 2003 and 2017 — and it has already been steadily tightening requirements to legally hold a weapon. Opposition politicians, however, say enforcement can be lax.

Licensed gun owner Narcis Selimic, a marketing executive from Belgrade who has a 11-year-old son, was among those giving up his pistol, bought for personal protection in the 1990s, under the current amnesty.

“Because of this event in the school, I decided to...set an example to my friends,” he said.

Prices of illegal weapons on the 1990s black market in Serbia were as low as \$10 for a hand grenade and \$150 for an assault rifle, and many were smuggled outside the country. Nils Duquet, director of the Flemish Peace Institute, advocates a regional approach given the high number of weapons also found in neighbouring countries.

Serbia, along with Montenegro, has the highest estimated number of civilian firearms per 100 residents in Europe according to the 2018 Small Arms Survey, a Switzerland-based research project, at 39.1 per 100 residents.

Between 2012 and 2016 Serbia registered a total of 10,061 gun-related crimes, neighbouring Albania 6,815 and Bosnia 5,616, SEESAC’s data shows.

Duquet said that while the situation in Serbia was not comparable to the United States, which has far more frequent mass shootings, the country’s latest attempt to disarm may form a useful precedent closer to home as war rages again in Europe.

“In the future we will likely have a similar problem in Ukraine,” he said. — Reuters

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Building a new, better SDR

By Jayati Ghosh
New Delhi

With much of the developing world teetering on the edge of a debt crisis, the calls for a new issuance of special drawing rights (SDRs, the International Monetary Fund’s reserve asset), have grown louder and more urgent. But to have the desired effect, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) must modify its allocation criteria and clarify how SDRs can be used to support low- and middle-income countries through the current economic turmoil.

One proposal currently being considered is to expand SDR allocation beyond individual countries to include multilateral development banks and dedicated funds. The idea of channelling SDRs to multilateral institutions like the World Bank and regional development banks, which are uniquely equipped to assist emerging and developing countries, has become increasingly popular in recent years.

The Bridgetown Initiative, led by Barbadian Prime Minister Mia Mottley, has called for a new issuance of SDR500bn (\$650bn) “or other low-interest, long-term instruments” to support the creation of a multilateral agency that would accelerate “private investment in the low-carbon transition, wherever it is most effective.”

Similarly, the recent report by the High-Level Advisory Board on Effective Multilateralism (of which I was a member) recommends the “immediate, and thereafter regular” annual issuance of additional SDRs to aid countries facing foreign-exchange shortages. The report also suggests that IMF shareholders amend the organisation’s Articles of Agreement to permit “selective SDR allocation.” This proposed change aims to facilitate a more targeted and effective distribution that prioritises the most vulnerable countries over the world’s largest economies, which receive the lion’s share of SDR allocations under the current rules.

Another proposed amendment stipulates that “specific conditions” would automatically trigger SDR allocations to ensure a “swifter global response.” Notably, the report emphasises that eligibility for SDR allocation should not be conditional on the recipient country adopting an IMF-supported fiscal consolidation program.

Unfortunately, these proposals were not even discussed during the Spring Meetings of the IMF and World Bank in April. But we must continue to pursue these reforms, because increased international liquidity, delivered in a timely and efficient manner, is needed more than ever.

By modernising the outdated system of SDR allocation, the international community could also narrow the climate-finance gap. But, first, the many developing countries currently

at risk of a severe debt crisis must receive immediate budgetary support. Unless we create a global financial safety net, the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals stand little chance of being met.

The ongoing financial turmoil highlights the current system’s inherent inequities. Over the past few weeks, governments that control global reserve currencies, such as the United States and Switzerland, have pumped massive amounts of liquidity into the banking sector to rescue private banks. In contrast, debtor countries that have applied for debt relief under the G20’s Common Framework for Debt Treatments have been waiting for years for a fraction of those sums.

The sovereign-debt crisis currently engulfing the world’s poorest countries, which also happen to be the countries most affected by climate change, requires immediate action. At a minimum, low- and middle-income countries grappling with balance-of-payments challenges should be given the opportunity to bolster their foreign-exchange reserves through a new SDR allocation.

But even if a fresh allocation is eventually agreed upon, countries must understand how to make the most of it. Unfortunately, the IMF’s vagueness on this issue has caused much confusion, with some asserting that SDRs belong to central banks, not governments, and others insisting that they are loans rather than assets distributed by the IMF.

Consequently, many recipient countries’ newly allocated SDRs simply augment foreign-exchange reserves. While this can have a positive impact by increasing a country’s perceived creditworthiness, it can also hinder more effective uses of SDRs, particularly in times of acute shortages and fiscal constraints.

The Ecuadorian economist Andrés Arauz has highlighted these concerns, arguing that there is no legal basis for central banks to appropriate SDR allocations. The IMF’s own guidance says that members “enjoy a large degree of freedom in how to manage the SDRs allocated to them,” including the extent to which “central banks are involved in their management and whether the budget can directly use them for budget support.” According to the Fund, SDRs are “allocated and held by the member and instructions for its use come through the fiscal agency of the member” (emphasis added). In other words, governments can use SDRs as they see fit.

The confusion over the nature and status of SDRs stems, in part, from the IMF’s own misclassification of these assets. As Arauz points out, prior to the release of the IMF’s latest balance-of-payments manual (BPM6) in 2009, SDR allocations were treated as equity rather than as liabilities that recipient countries must repay. The BPM6, however, reclassified them as liabilities, essentially treating them as debt. This change, which was made without clear reasoning or transparent discussion, must be contested, because it can deter the use, transfer, and recycling of SDRs, preventing allocations from fulfilling their potential.

Some countries, particularly in Latin America, have demonstrated creativity in their use of SDRs. Ecuador, for example, used them to finance its 2021 investment plan. The same year, Paraguay channelled its allocation to investments in health, education, housing, and other public expenditures, and Argentina used its \$4.6bn allocation to pay off maturing debt, fulfilling its obligations to the IMF.

In other countries, central banks’ perceived role as the custodian of SDRs did not completely restrict alternative uses. Colombia, for example, used SDRs to facilitate a domestic debt swap between the government and the central bank and generate short-term liquidity. Although Mexico’s central bank asserted its ownership of the country’s SDRs, the Mexican government acquired international reserves from it through a currency exchange in late 2021.

The current crisis is an opportunity to construct a fairer, more sustainable international monetary system. A sensible reform agenda must include increased SDR issuance and the creation of more efficient and equitable distribution mechanisms. To achieve this, the G7 countries, as the IMF’s largest shareholders, must demonstrate a modicum of wisdom and leadership. — Project Syndicate

● Jayati Ghosh, Professor of Economics at the University of Massachusetts Amherst, is a former member of the UN Secretary-General’s High-Level Advisory Board on Effective Multilateralism.



BRIDGETOWN INITIATIVE: Led by Barbadian Prime Minister Mia Mottley, the plan envisions a new issuance of SDR500bn (\$650bn) “or other low-interest, long-term instruments” to support the creation of a multilateral agency that would accelerate “private investment in the low-carbon transition, wherever it is most effective.” (Reuters)

Russian air force, artillery ‘wipe out border attackers’

AFP
Moscow

Russia said yesterday that it had deployed jets and artillery to destroy an armed group that penetrated its border from Ukraine, while the Kremlin ordered its military to prevent any repeat attack.

The incursion was the most serious since Moscow launched its large-scale offensive in Ukraine last year, prompting the Kremlin to express “deep concern” and order the evacuation of nine villages in the southern region of Belgorod.

The defence ministry’s announcement of use of its air force and artillery on Russian territory confirmed an unprecedented use of force domestically since the offensive began.

“In the course of the counter-terrorist operation, the nationalist formations were blocked and destroyed

by air strikes and artillery fire,” the ministry said.

“The remaining (fighters) were driven back to the territory of Ukraine, where they continued to be hit by fire until they were completely eliminated,” it said.

Authorities said 13 people had been injured as the Belgorod region came under sustained artillery and mortar fire during the fighting.

They also reported that one woman died during evacuations on Monday, and that a civilian was killed in the village of Kozinka.

Moscow said Russian forces killed more than 70 Ukrainian fighters, though AFP was unable to independently verify the claims.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said Moscow needed to avoid further Ukrainian incursions into Russia and voiced “deep concern”, calling for “more effort from us... so that this does not happen again”.

Belgorod’s governor Vyacheslav Gladkov said civilians were evacuated from nine border villages in the region, which has previously faced shelling attacks that have killed dozens of people since Moscow launched its offensive last year.

In Moscow, 70-year-old engineer Sergei Rusakov said the border incursion should act as a wake-up call for Russians in the south of the country.

“I think Belgorod residents need to think – not to lie on the couch but scratch their heads and ask themselves, is everything normal in the Russian state?” he told AFP.

In Kyiv, 46-year-old advertising agent Sergiy said the incursion was evidence that both Russian and Ukrainian forces could launch offensive operations and that the outcome of the conflict could still be unpredictable.

“I really hope that what is happening is in favour of our victory – whoever did it,” he said.

Members of two anti-Kremlin groups, the Freedom of Russia Legion and the Russian Volunteer Corps, have claimed responsibility while Kyiv denied involvement.

“We are not waging war on foreign territories,” Ukrainian Deputy Defence Minister Ganna Malyar said.

In a video purportedly released by the Freedom of Russia Legion on Monday, a camouflaged spokesman, surrounded by armed men in fatigues, said: “Russia will be free!” – a slogan frequently used by Russian opposition activists.

Several drones struck houses and a government building overnight but no one was killed, the governor said.

Gladkov added yesterday that it was too soon for residents who fled to return, and that authorities would give the all-clear when it was safe.

But Gladkov announced yesterday the lifting of the exceptional security measures.

Britain’s Ministry of Defence said that “Russia is facing an increasingly serious multi-domain security threat in its border regions, with losses of combat aircraft, improvised explosive device attacks on rail lines and now direct partisan action”.

Ukraine presidential advisor Mikhaylo Podolyak suggested that Russian “guerrilla groups” could be responsible.

The anti-terror regime gives special powers to security services with beefed-up security and communications surveillance.

A similar regime was in place in Chechnya between 1999 and 2009, when authorities battled insurgents during Moscow’s second military campaign in the mountainous region.

The attack on Russia’s region was reported ahead of a widely expected Ukrainian offensive, though President Volodymyr Zelensky has said his country is not yet ready.

Russia has been reinforcing hundreds of kilometres of front lines with tank barriers, trenches and troops.

Zelensky yesterday visited Ukrainian troops on the frontline in the eastern region of Donetsk, where Russian forces have concentrated their efforts to capture territory.

“Every day on the battlefield, Ukrainian marines prove that they are a powerful force that destroys the enemy, liberates Ukrainian land and performs the most difficult tasks in the most difficult conditions,” Zelensky said.

“And we need more of this force. So, from today, we are significantly increasing the potential of the marines and creating a marine corps,” Zelensky said.

Also yesterday, Russia said it had scrambled an Su-27 fighter jet to “prevent violations of the state border” by two US Air Force strategic bombers flying over the Baltic Sea.

Khan’s aide quits politics after 5th arrest

A high-ranking spokeswoman for former Pakistan prime minister Imran Khan quit their party yesterday after days of repeated arrests and release that followed deadly protests over Khan’s detention.

Khan was detained two weeks ago on graft charges, sparking days of street violence, before the Supreme Court declared his arrest illegal and freed him.

Rights monitors have since accused Islamabad of a crackdown on the former international cricket star’s popular Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party as it campaigns for snap polls. PTI senior vice-president Shireen Mazari said she had been subjected to “12 days of arrest, release, abduction and release”.

“I have decided that I am leaving active politics. From today onwards I am not a part of PTI or any political party,” she told reporters.

“All I can say is that I am not feeling well,” she said, appearing dejected in a brief news conference where she cited health and family issues for her resignation.

Mazari was among the most vocal critics of the military-backed establishment and its role in the downfall of Khan, who was ousted in a parliamentary no-confidence vote in April last year. PTI said Mazari



STRESSED OUT: Shireen Mazari

had been arrested and released five times since the protests, including on charges of inciting the protest violence.

More than a dozen senior party leaders have also been arrested, with at least eight still in detention.

Analyst Hasan Askari predicted more resignations in the coming days.

“It is a part of the process of isolating Imran Khan and telling him that one can’t be an effective political player in Pakistani politics if one fights with the establishment,” he told AFP.

Since he was ousted from office, 70-year-old Khan has waged an unprecedented campaign of defiance against the powerful

military establishment, long regarded as Pakistan’s powerbrokers.

He accuses the top brass of orchestrating his downfall and even plotting a November assassination attempt in which he was shot in the leg, allegations that the army denies.

His arrest at the Islamabad High Court came just hours after he repeated the claim and was seen by his party as a bid to quash support ahead of elections due no later than October.

People rampaged through cities, setting fire to buildings, blocking roads and clashing with police outside military installations during unrest in which nine people were killed.

The military has denied claims by Khan that “agencies” planned the violence to smear his party.

Islamabad has pledged to try in military courts those accused of violence against army installations during riots.

Human Rights Watch says more than 4,000 people, including PTI members, have been arrested in a huge roundup by authorities following the protests.

“Many have been charged under vague and overbroad laws prohibiting rioting and creating threats to public order,” HRW said in a statement on Saturday.

Bilawal raises heat on the G20 venue

By Emma Clark, AFP
Muzaffarabad

India is “abusing” its presidency of the G20 by holding a tourism conference in the portion of disputed Kashmir it controls, Pakistan’s Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari told AFP.

It is the first diplomatic event in the territory since Pakistan suspended trade and diplomatic ties with India in 2019, when New Delhi imposed direct rule on the part of Muslim-majority Kashmir it controls and enforced a heavy security lockdown.

“I wish I could say I was surprised, but I think that this is a continuation in what is becoming a norm now, of India’s arrogance on the international stage,” Bhutto Zardari told AFP in an interview on Monday in Muzaffarabad, the capital of Pakistan-administered Kashmir.

“They’re abusing their presidency of the G20 to push their colonial agenda, but if they think that by holding one event in occupied Kashmir they can silence the voice of the Kashmiri people, then I believe that they are truly mistaken.”

His comments prompted a sharp rebuke from Indian officials.

The Indian-controlled portion of Kashmir has been roiled for decades by an insurgency seeking independence or a merger with Pakistan, with tens of thousands of civilians, soldiers and Kashmiri rebels killed in the conflict.

Non-G20 member Pakistan controls a smaller part, and says holding the tourism meeting from Monday to Wednesday in the territory violates international law, UN Security Council resolutions and bilateral agreements.

China, which also claims the Indian state of Arunachal Pradesh in full as part of Tibet, has stood by Pakistan in condemning the meeting to promote tourism in the area – renowned for its lakes, meadows and snow-capped mountains.

It did not attend, while Muslim



UNHAPPY: Bilawal Bhutto

nations Saudi Arabia and Türkiye did not send government representation and some Western countries scaled back their presence.

Indian officials rejected Bhutto Zardari’s comments, saying he had no right to make them.

Harsh Vardhan Shringla, chief coordinator of New Delhi’s G20 presidency, told reporters: “Pakistan has no locus standi when it comes to the G20. They have no locus standi when it comes to Jammu and Kashmir, which is an integral part of India, and the meeting that is being held here today has nothing to do with them.”

And Manoj Sinha, who as lieutenant governor is the most senior official appointed by New Delhi to run Indian-administered Kashmir, said Pakistan “should make arrangements for food cetera for its people. It is essential that civic amenities are restored there. India has moved much ahead from concerns like these.”

India is attempting to portray what officials have called “normalcy and peace” in Kashmir by inviting the international community to a well-guarded venue on the shores of Dal Lake in Srinagar.

But residents have chafed under stepped-up security measures, with hundreds detained according to a senior official and thousands including shopkeepers receiving calls

warning them against any “signs of protest or trouble”.

“One of the most militarised zones in the world can never be seen as normal,” said Bhutto Zardari.

The nuclear-armed South Asian neighbours have fought three wars since they were created at the partition of the Indian subcontinent in 1947.

Since New Delhi revoked Indian-administered Kashmir’s limited autonomy in 2019, the rebels have largely been crushed – although young men continue to join the insurgency.

Dissent has been criminalised, media freedoms curbed and public protests limited, in what critics say is a drastic curtailment of civil liberties.

The Pakistani foreign minister ruled out any chance of a warming of ties unless New Delhi reversed the constitutional changes in Kashmir.

“Until this topic is addressed, it really stands in the way of peace in all of South Asia,” said Bhutto Zardari, the son of assassinated former prime minister Benazir Bhutto and the grandson of deposed and executed former premier Zulfikar Ali Bhutto.

Without it, no “meaningful dialogue” could begin on shared threats including militancy and worsening climate change. “We are patient people,” he added.

On the streets of Srinagar, the capital of Indian-administered Kashmir, a resident lamented the region’s plight.

“We are crushed between two countries because they have the enmity between two,” he said. “They are not giving the importance to the people who are living, who are crushed... they are fighting for the land, not for the people.”

He has a tourism business but declined to give his name for fear of consequences.

“Kashmir is the adopted child, we are not linked to India right from the beginning,” he said. “Everyone knows how adopted kids are treated – they are always outcasts.”

6 dead in Taliban attack on Hungary energy firm

Six security personnel were killed in an overnight siege by dozens of Pakistan Taliban militants on a Hungarian-owned oil and gas exploration site, police and the energy firm said yesterday.

Pakistan has seen an increase in militancy since the Afghan Taliban returned to power in 2021, with the Pakistani chapter of the movement carrying out attacks mostly targeting security forces and foreign interests accused of exploitation.

About 50 fighters attacked a site owned by the Budapest-headquartered MOL Group around midnight in the Hangu district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, district police chief Asif Bahadur told AFP.

“They were armed with light and heavy weapons and fired mortar shells, killing six security personnel at the main entrance” to the remote site near the Afghan border, said Bahadur.

Police said the dead included four members of the Frontier Constabulary, a paramilitary police assistance force, and two Pakistani security guards.

In a brief statement the Pakistan Taliban claimed responsibility and said its fighters had “attacked a Frontier Constabulary check post”. “The exchange of fire continued for more than an hour. Police forced the militants to flee,” Bahadur said, also

blaming the Pakistan Taliban. The MOL Group confirmed the death toll but said none of its employees were killed. Two wells near the attack site have “been temporarily shut down by remote access and the wells are now secured”, it said in a statement.

Noor Wali Khan, a second district police official, also confirmed the attack and the death toll. The MOL Group has operated a Pakistan subsidiary since 1999 and employs 400 people there, according to its website.

“We are assessing the information,” a spokesman for the Hungarian embassy in Islamabad said, adding that no diplomatic action was planned. Bahadur said the attackers came from the nearby North Waziristan district, which borders Afghanistan and has historically been a hive of militancy.

The area was heavily targeted by drone strikes and an Islamabad military offensive to rout fighters during the US-led post-9/11 war in Afghanistan.

The Pakistan Taliban – known as Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) – was formed in 2007 by militants who splintered off from the Afghan Taliban to focus their fight on Islamabad for supporting America’s invasion.

Since the Taliban returned to Kabul, Islamabad has said TTP fighters are using Afghan soil to plot their attacks.

Hanks, Johansson join A-list invasion at Cannes

AFP
Cannes

A literal bus-load of Hollywood A-listers arrived in Cannes yesterday, including Scarlett Johansson and Tom Hanks, for the premiere of Wes Anderson’s strange blend of sci-fi and 1950s Westerns, *Asteroid City*.

The typically quirky movie is set in a remote desert town where a group of child geniuses gather for a science competition that is interrupted by an alien visitor.

It required a full-sized coach to bring the star-packed cast to the red carpet at the Cannes Film Festival, including Hanks, Johansson, Steve Carell and Adrien Brody – to name just a few.

The Cannes Film Festival has had a relentless stream of Hollywood A-listers since kicking off last week, including world premieres for the new Indiana Jones and Martin Scorsese’s *Killers of the Flower Moon* with Leonardo DiCaprio.

There was a dose of scandal with a sneak peek at *The Idol*, the new HBO show starring Lily-Rose Depp and Abel Tesfaye.

Due for release in June, it gives a nod to Britney Spears and toxic fame that



US actor Tom Hanks (left) and US actress Scarlett Johansson arrive for the screening of the film *Asteroid City* during the 76th edition of the Cannes Film Festival in Cannes yesterday. (AFP)

engulfed ‘90s pop stars, but has been plagued by rumours about onset turmoil and graphic scenes.

But Depp told reporters yesterday that the accusations were “not reflective at all of my experience shooting the show”, adding that “the bareness of the character physically mirrors the bareness we get to see emotionally.”

Depp’s father, Johnny Depp, also

caused an uproar with his appearance at the festival last week in his so-called “comeback” film, *Jeanne du Barry*, playing French King Louis XV.

In *The Idol*, she plays a pop star struggling to get back on track after a breakdown when she meets a manipulative cult leader played by Tesfaye.

While Depp’s performance was praised as “riveting”, many critics felt

the copious scenes went too far.

Variety slammed its “tawdry clichés” and said the show “plays like a sordid male fantasy”.

“We know we are making a show that is provocative, it’s not lost on us,” director Sam Levinson, who also created *Euphoria*, told journalists.

Meanwhile, the competition for the main prize at Cannes, the Palme d’Or, is heating up.

Jude Law has awed and disgusted cinemagoers with his portrayal of King Henry VIII in *Firebrand*.

The Zone of Interest, a unique and horrifying look at the private life of a Nazi officer working at the Auschwitz concentration camp, has been lavished with praise.

There was also a lot of love for Natalie Portman and Julianne Moore’s *May December*, which looks at the relationship between an older woman and a schoolboy, still married years after their relationship became a tabloid scandal.

A twisty courtroom drama about a woman accused of her husband’s murder, *Anatomy of a Fall*, is also seen as a frontrunner.

There are still movies to come, including from past winners Ken Loach and Wim Wenders ahead of the awards ceremony on Saturday.

Netflix expands password-sharing crackdown globally

Netflix yesterday expanded its crackdown on users sharing passwords with people beyond their immediate family as it seeks to shore up revenue at the leading streaming television service. “A Netflix account is for use by one household,” the company said in a statement.

Netflix said early this year that more than 100mn households were sharing accounts at the service, “impacting our ability to invest in great new TV and films.”

Netflix has experimented with “borrower” or “shared” accounts, in which subscribers can add extra users for a higher price or transfer viewing profiles to separate accounts, in a few markets.

Yesterday, it announced that it was expanding the policy to more than 100 countries.

As growth at Netflix cooled last year, the Silicon Valley-based streaming company set out to nudge people watching for free with shared passwords to begin paying for the service without alienating subscribers.

“This account sharing initiative helps us have a larger base of potential paying members and grow Netflix long term,” co-chief executive Ted Sarandos said on an earnings call. The streaming television giant told financial analysts recently that it had delayed a broad crackdown on sharing of account passwords “to improve the experience for members.”

Netflix said it made sure subscribers have seamless access to the service away from home or on various devices such as tablets, TVs or smartphones. Netflix in April said that its number of subscribers hit a record high 232.5mn in the first quarter of the year and that its nascent ad-supported tier was faring well.

The company said in a recent presentation to advertisers that it had more than 5mn subscribers to its ad-support tier.

Forum ends with key recommendations for the protection of whale sharks

The Qatar Whale Shark Conservation Forum 2023 wrapped up yesterday with the participating delegations touring the congregation sites of whale shark at Al-Shaheen field in the regional waters through which they watched one of the world's largest congregations of the species.

Organised by the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change (MoECC) in partnership with the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (Unesco) at the Aquatics & Fisheries Research Centre in Ras Matbakh, the forum offered the delegations a chance to have a glimpse of the regulations and rules laid out by the MoECC to conserve and protect the whale shark, including the cutting-edge technology utilised by the MoECC's researchers during the studies conducted on the congregation of this marine species.

Meanwhile, head of the organising committee, Director of the Wildlife Development Department Mohamed Ahmed al-Khanji emphasised that the attendance of a host of researchers from different world coun-

HIGHLIGHTS

- Ministry of Environment wraps up Whale Shark Conservation Forum 2023 with marine tours
- Recommendations highlight need to conduct rigorous tracking programme to better comprehend distribution of whale sharks and human activity's impact on them
- Need for regional convention for GCC states to conserve whale shark and its habitats, forming rescue team at MoECC to undertake mission of rescuing sharks upon their entry to ports
- Call for guidelines for responsible tourism to reduce disturbance to whale sharks, and for designating their breeding areas as natural reserve

tries has enriched the forum's sessions, pointing out that such an event has largely succeeded in achieving all objectives set out by the MoECC prior to its launch, in terms of extending bridges of communication with all relevant parties interested in the species including regional countries that exist within the course of shark migration.

He added that attendees shared ideas, information and facts related to whale shark regardless of the forum's recommendations which constitute a roadmap for

all parties to conserve this endangered species.

Commenting on the recommendations, al-Khanji outlined that the forum stressed the importance of all parties' action to sign international conventions that conserve the whale shark, such as the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, the Convention on the wildlife, et al, noting the importance of launching campaigns to assist sharks that are stranded in



their course of migration.

He stressed the importance of conducting a rigorous tracking programme to better comprehend the distribution of whale sharks and human activity's impact on them, as well as setting guidelines for the responsible tourism to reduce disturbance to whale sharks and designate their breeding areas as natural reserves.

In addition, al-Khanji underscored the importance of co-opting a regional research team to further monitor and study whale shark in the Gulf region and Red Sea, as well as utilising state-of-the-art technologies such as shark ultrasound in pursuit of evaluating its health in families, conducting a holistic survey for the Gulf region to identify its

habitat and ensure encouraging sustainable eco-tourism.

Al-Khanji recalled the importance of the concerned entities' co-ordination to hold awareness workshops for fishermen and formulate a set of effective rules and legislation to manage the migrating species such as whale shark, in addition to reporting death cases and capitalising on the bodies of dead animals to be used in scientific and awareness purposes in research centres and museums, imposing fines in case of attacking or hunting whale shark.

He emphasised the necessity of proposing a regional convention for GCC states to conserve whale shark and its habitats, forming rescue team at the MoECC to undertake the mission of rescuing

sharks upon their entry to ports, as well as incorporating whale shark into the Convention on the Preservation of Wildlife and its Natural Habitats in GCC states.

In the meantime, the organising committee organised a tour for delegations of participating countries in collaboration with the Ministry of Municipality inside the Aquatics & Fisheries Research Centre to introduce work mechanisms of the centre which largely help conserve marine species and ensure their breeding, such as aquaculture in local fish and shrimp through pursuing the best scientific and technological means.

Within the three main sessions during which 17 research papers from local, regional, and international experts were presented,

the forum discussed several topics relevant to the conservation of whale shark, including the influential factors that impact its life.

The forum focused on a plethora of objectives such as discussing the methods of conserving whale sharks and developing them to identify the most important challenges facing these endangered fishes generally, and determine the best methods to overcome these challenges, in addition to gathering stakeholders under one umbrella to discuss various topics related to whale shark and raising awareness of the criticality of protecting these fishes, as well as boosting co-operation and partnerships among attendees and discussing ways to develop regional strategies to conserve whale sharks. (QNA)

Spectre: Rolls-Royce's first fully-electric car debuts in Doha

Rolls-Royce Motor Cars Doha has unveiled Spectre, the marque's first fully-electric motor car, at an exclusive event recently in the company's showroom at The Pearl Island.

"We've commemorated the official debut of Spectre, the first-ever ultra-luxury electric super coupé, at the newly-inaugurated Rolls-Royce Motor Cars Doha showroom, signifying the beginning of a new era in the history of our great marque. This consolidates Rolls-Royce's position as a true house of luxury," said César Habib, Regional Director Middle East & Africa, Rolls-Royce Motor Cars.

Nasr Jairoudi, General Manager, Rolls-Royce Motor Cars Doha, said: "Words cannot express how excited we are to be a part of this milestone, the unveiling of a new expression of luxury here in Doha. Elevating the electric motor car experience, we are extremely excited for our clients to step into this unique and inimitable motoring masterpiece and embark on an electric 'Magic Carpet Ride'."

Taking centre stage in the epicentre of luxury, Spectre is the start of a bold new chapter for the House of Luxury. The introduction of Spectre marks the beginning of a new era for Rolls-Royce Motor Cars in the region, as the marque prepares to build only electric cars by the end of 2030. Elevating the electric motor car experience to new heights, Spectre has been conceived within the philosophy which infuses the marque, embodying the famous words of co-founder Sir Henry Royce: "Strive for perfection in everything you do."

In 1900, Rolls-Royce co-founder, Charles Rolls, prophesied an electric future for the motor car and more than 120 years later, the prophecy of its founding father has been fulfilled. "The electric car is perfectly noiseless and clean. There is no smell or vibration. They should become very useful when fixed charging stations can be arranged," he said.

Spearheaded by Rolls-Royce CEO Torsten Müller-Ötvös' promise to bring a fully-electric Rolls-Royce to market within the current decade, Charles Rolls' prophecy and Torsten Müller-Ötvös' promise led to a historic moment: the birth of Spectre - the most powerful Rolls-Royce ever.

Spectre is the next generation of Rolls-Royce, setting a new precedent in the creation of an entirely original class of motor car, the ultra-luxury electric super coupé.

A spiritual successor to the Phantom Coupé, Spectre is an emblem of artisanship in perfect harmony with electric technology, its visionary design reinvents timeless iconography.

Taking design inspiration from many sources including contemporary luxury yacht concepts, as the streamlined Spirit of Ecstasy leads Spectre forward with command and poise, this electric masterpiece



Alfardan Group president and CEO Omar Hussain Alfardan and Fahad Alfardan view the interior of Spectre.



Spectre making its debut at Rolls-Royce Motor Cars Doha.

acknowledges its forebear, the Phantom Coupé, with its generous proportions and split headlight treatment - a contemporary Rolls-Royce design tenet.

Spectre's uncompromising character is articulated through lines of sculptural purity. Its straightened form is exciting in every sense, the fender line evokes dynamism, while the waft line sharply tapers at the front creating the illusion of motion even when the car is still.

Stepping into Spectre also evokes feelings of wonder. Engulfed in supple and inviting leather, the interior draws inspiration from the timeless mystique of the night sky. With an intricate show of shooting stars, the Starlight Headliner is spellbinding whilst the Illuminated Fascia mesmerises with over 5,500

stars, a feature which took over two years to develop.

Additionally, for the first time on a series production Rolls-Royce, Starlight Doors incorporating 4,796 softly illuminated 'stars' are available. Each 'star' is positioned by hand, creating a subtle sense of motion within Spectre's cabin.

Alongside the stunning illuminated surfaces, Spectre is equipped with a completely redesigned digital architecture of luxury named 'Spirit', presented in quintessential Rolls-Royce style. The digital extension of the "Architecture of Luxury," 'Spirit' sets a new precedent for how technology and luxury are married with automotive excellence, not only managing the motor car's functions, but also seamlessly integrating into the marque's 'Whispers' application,

allowing clients to interact with their car remotely, and receive live information curated by the marque's luxury intelligence specialists.

The proportional demands of Spectre's scale required Rolls-Royce to embolden its wheel strategy. Spectre is the first production two-door coupé to be equipped with 23-inch wheels in almost one hundred years.

Built on Rolls-Royce's Architecture of Luxury, which was conceived from the very start with electric drive in mind, Spectre is the most powerful and most aerodynamic Rolls-Royce ever created, with every line of its body sculpted for ultimate grace and performance.

The Architecture of Luxury has been perfectly tailored to integrate Rolls-Royce's electric powertrain



Spectre has been conceived within the philosophy which infuses the marque, embodying the famous words of co-founder Sir Henry Royce: "Strive for perfection in everything you do."



Spectre's uncompromising character is articulated through lines of sculptural purity.



Engulfed in supple and inviting leather, the interior draws inspiration from the timeless mystique of the night sky.

into Spectre, enabling ideal battery placement within the floor plan. The mechanical setup has been honed over countless hours of specialised testing and ensures a truly optimal ride quality. Coupled with the planar suspension, Spectre delivers Rolls-Royce's hallmark 'Magic Carpet Ride' - an unparalleled driving experience that leaves you spellbound.

Intuitive, perceptive, and sharp, Spectre is the most connected Rolls-Royce the marque has ever conceived. With 141,200 end-receiver functions, 7km of cabling, and over 25,000 sub-functions, Spectre is able to process complex data and exchange information with unparalleled ease.

In harnessing this new processing power, the marque's engineers have created unparalleled levels of detail, refinement, and effortlessness, whilst ensuring the continuity of the Rolls-Royce experience, thus ensuring Spectre is without any doubt a Rolls-Royce first and an electric car second. Spectre offers over ten driver assistance systems - each a manifestation of this advanced intelligence - that accommodate the driver for a smooth and safe journey.

Positioning Rolls-Royce's entrance into the electric world as a stamp of leadership, Spectre converges the worlds of electrification and Rolls-Royce, heralding the beginning of an all-electric era for Rolls-Royce Motor Cars.